



EXCERPT



**Leading Through Storms**  
*Successfully Navigating Ministry While Maintaining Your Mental Health*

March 18, 2025 | \$18, 192 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0914-7

In *Leading Through Storms*, Geoffrey Dudley weaves together personal narrative, biblical reflection, and leadership theories; teaches skills that will help leaders lean more confidently into their calling: and focuses on how leaders can lead themselves

## Prepare for the Storm

Forecasting the weather isn't new. Jesus said as much in Matthew 16:3, "And in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times." When we interpret the sky that says our weather forecast is bad, we prepare accordingly. The worse the forecast, the more we prepare. Depending on where you live, you may be familiar with the weather patterns and know how to prepare as soon as the forecast is announced. I live in an area of the Midwest often referred to as "Tornado Alley." We are always on guard for tornado forecasts.

One day my son and I were out for some bonding time. We had breakfast at a restaurant and were wondering what to do next. Should we go to the mall or go home and watch a movie? We had no idea that our minds would be made up for us. We are East Coast born and raised, which is why we were unaware of the forecast that day. As with many tornadoes, a hailstorm preceded the tornado. Tree limbs and hail flew by the windshield as I drove as fast as I could to get us home and into the basement. The car was battered along with the roof and siding on our house. We made it but just barely.

Tornados require you to shelter in a basement or closet to get away from flying debris. Hurricanes can cause flash floods that require you to seek higher ground. Preparation for snow or winter storms requires you to make sure you have fuel or heat along with enough food and a generator in case the power goes out. But how do you prepare when you don't even see the storm clouds gathering—when you don't see the signs of your times? Not only did I not see the storm approaching, but I also confused the thunderous applause I heard as I stepped off the stage of a wonderfully successful military chaplain ministry career with the rumble of thunder in an Elijah-type thunderstorm. Preparation is key to surviving the storms of life and will help you get through life. But when a cataclysmic storm catches you off guard, what helps you to survive?

I was not prepared for the multiple storms that came my way soon after I planted New Life: key staff abruptly resigning, church growth slowing down, and the banks not keeping their word. The voice of the late James Cleveland comes to mind, "The tempest would rage, and the billows would roll." Given that storms in life are inevitable, there are some things we can do to prepare for, even when we don't know they are coming—when we don't know the signs of our times.

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First and foremost, Joshua was a military man who found his confidence in order, structure, and routine. We had that in common. Without knowing what was ahead, I emulated Joshua's life in many ways. When he came to the unknowns, he sent spies to do a reconnaissance mission. When I planted the church upon my retirement, I had what the military called an ADVON team, which was like a reconnaissance team. It was a select group of leaders who did all the legal paperwork to establish the church plant. I could not have anything to do with the legal formation of the church to avoid any conflict of interest of me potentially persuading military members to leave the chapel services and start a church.



Makayla Payne, book reviews, excerpts, and original articles  
mpayne@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, author interviews  
kclayton@ivpress.com



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**Bishop Geoffrey V. Dudley Sr.** (PhD, Regent) is the founding and senior pastor of New Life in Christ Church, one of the fastest growing churches in the Metro East area of St. Louis, Missouri (O'Fallon, Illinois). He is also the CEO of iLead Enterprises, a leadership development platform for staff and workforce development.

When Joshua stepped into the Jordan it was with precision. The priests had their position. The people had their position. The cadence of the march had to be precise, and everybody had to fall in line. Military discipline is critical when you are confronted by your enemy whom you know little to nothing about. Sun Tzu says the art of war is to "know your enemy, know yourself." Suffice to say, when you don't know your enemy, your future, or the storms you are about to face, know yourself even more. Self-leadership, being self-aware, and having self-reflection as you move into a new church plant is critical.

Joshua led a million and a half people who were neither versed in wilderness trials nor spiritually mature. This meant in addition to knowing himself in order to defeat an enemy, he had to develop leaders to fight the pending battles. Leadership development was no small undertaking for Joshua. Not only did he have to develop their military fighting skills, he also had to develop them spiritually. Circumcision was a public deterrence for the men of Israel to be identified if they went to a house of ill-repute. Circumcision was also public pain leadership preparation (Joshua 5:7-8).

It is hard to prepare people who have never been circumcised by life or fought together. Stepping into promises they lacked life experience for took courage and consecration. As my mother used to tell me when I was a boy preacher, "Son, it's more than a notion." Our Jericho was going to be building the people and the church building at the same time with the forecast of storms the weatherman didn't tell us about. More about those storms later.

Israel crossed the Jordan and came to the first storm, the heavily fortified city of Jericho. Jericho was also the first fruit of the promise. Its walls were so thick and wide that chariots could crisscross as they patrolled. Joshua set up a military formation and game plan to confront their first storm. The only thing that brought down the fortified walls of Jericho was military precision, ATSO, and consecration. The wisdom of God is hidden from the ways of men (1 Corinthians 1:25), but it produces outcomes because the walls of Jericho fell and the Israelites marched in (Joshua 6:15-17).

We mistakenly see this story as a miracle without military meaning or organization. In other words, we think this miracle is not rooted in the warfare of the day. Noise was part of the ammunition of warfare. Gideon used it, "The three companies blew their horns and shattered their jars" (Judges 7:20 BSB). Goliath used it, "Goliath stood and shouted a taunt across to the Israelites" (1 Samuel 17:8 NLT). Here Joshua was using the arsenal of regimented order—military precision. God ordained noise to bring down the walls.

Even though I was not aware of storms ahead, the fervor of our worship, praise, and prayer life helped prepare us. People gathered from all around the metro to join in with the joyful noise of the new church plant. I didn't know these were preparatory steps for foreboding storms. They were a part of my theological foundation for starting a church. Military precision produced Israel's victory when the walls of Jericho fell. Worship, praise, and fervent consecrated prayer prepared me for the storms we had no clue were coming our way. Like Joshua had his own storms to get through, I, too, faced internal struggles that threatened to sink our ship. They were a part of the unseen turbulence ahead.

—Adapted from chapter three, "Consecrated Courage: Prepare for the Storm"



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No one is immune from the storms of leadership and the brokenness they leave in their wake, but *Leading Through Storms* is the emergency preparedness kit that will keep you anchored.

## **Bishop Dudley, CEO of iLead Enterprises**

**Bishop Geoffrey V. Dudley Sr.** (PhD, Regent) is the founding and senior pastor of New Life in Christ Church, one of the fastest-growing churches in the Metro East area of St. Louis, Missouri (O'Fallon, Illinois). Originally from Goldsboro, North Carolina, Dudley began ministry at the age of thirteen, was ordained by the United Holy Church of America in 1986, and is a retired Air Force chaplain and lieutenant colonel.

He is also the CEO of iLead Enterprises, a leadership development platform for staff and workforce development. iLead Enterprises is the learning management entity for Bishop Dudley (PhD, DMin) and his associates. iLead Enterprises is able to offer training and development content for leaders from all walks of life. He has started several businesses including iLead Enterprises, an online leadership development platform targeting staff and workforce development, and Changing Lives Ministries (CLM), a consulting company specializing in leadership, vision casting, coaching, and mentorship. CLM also provides ecclesiastical oversight for a network of churches.

He is an adjunct professor for strategic leadership at North Central University, Minneapolis, Minnesota. He has written four books: *How to Live My Life on Purpose*, *Morning Manna for Your Day*, *What's My Ministry: What Does God Want From Me?*, and *Prayer: Answers Guaranteed*.

He and his wife, Glenda, have two adult children who are both ministry leaders.

Learn more about Bishop Dudley's leadership training at [ileadacademy.net/](http://ileadacademy.net/)

Visit his Youtube channel at [youtube.com/@bishopdudleyphd4921](https://youtube.com/@bishopdudleyphd4921)



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