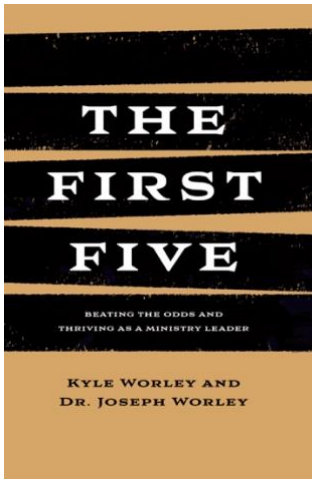
"The First Five" by Kyle Worley & Joseph Worley
Publication Date: November 10, 2026
Media Contact: jill.waggoner@lifeway.com

New book helps ministry leaders beat the odds and thrive in their calling

Kyle and Joseph Worley equip leaders to thrive beyond the first five years of ministry



BRENTWOOD, Tenn., August 1, 2026 — Why do so many ministry leaders struggle to make it through their first five years of ministry, and how can they thrive for decades instead? In "The First Five: Beating the Odds and Thriving as a Ministry Leader," Kyle and Joseph Worley offer a practical roadmap for sustainable ministry rooted in personal integrity, pastoral wisdom and professional competence.

Drawing on more than 60 years of combined ministry experience, this father-son duo addresses the challenges that cause many leaders to doubt their calling, burn out or leave ministry altogether. They provide actionable guidance on leadership development, spiritual health, pastoral care, communication, discipleship and long-term ministry effectiveness. The book also includes extensive tools, templates and ministry resources designed for immediate application.

"I had the privilege of growing up in the home and ministry of a faithful pastor-dad," said Kyle Worley. "Not only do I have the great honor of being his son, but I had the privilege of a lifetime to serve my first three years of ministry under his leadership. I got a crash course in the basic professional, personal and pastoral habits and principles that help ministry leaders thrive."

Together in this book, Kyle and Joseph share these practical insights with prospective ministry leaders just starting out, those in the first five years who find themselves disoriented and the people who lead these emerging leaders. Ideal for pastors, ministry staff, church planters, ministry residents and seminary students, "The First Five: Beating the Odds and Thriving as a Ministry Leader" speaks directly to the realities of modern ministry while offering hope for longevity and impact.

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To request an interview, please contact Jill Waggoner at jill.waggoner@lifeway.com or 615.330.6821.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kyle Worley is a pastor, teacher, co-author of "The First Five: Beating the Odds and Thriving as a Ministry Leader" (B&H, releasing November 2026) and the author of "Home With God: Our Union With Christ" (B&H) and The Dragon Slayer and His Special Suit (B&H Kids). He is the host of the Knowing Faith Podcast and one of the teachers in the Deep Discipleship Program for Lifeway.

Joseph Worley (D.Min from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) has served for over 40 years in pastoral leadership with three decades as senior pastor of the same church. He is the co-author of "The First Five: Beating the Odds and Thriving as a Ministry Leader" (B&H, releasing November 2026).

TALKING POINTS AND INTERVIEW ANGLES

- **Leadership burnout:** addressing hidden challenges driving pastors out of ministry
- **Building a lasting ministry:** the personal, pastoral and professional habits that sustain leaders
- **Healthy ministry habits:** the routines and rhythms that help leaders thrive for the long haul
- **Mentoring younger pastors:** what leaders wish they'd known in their first five years
- **The ministry training no one talks about:** practical skills every leader needs to succeed

POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What inspired you to write "The First Five," and why focus on the first five years of ministry?
- Why are the first five years of ministry such a critical season for pastors and ministry staff?
- What are some of the most common reasons ministry leaders experience burnout?
- What habits have you found are most important for building a sustainable ministry?
- What lessons do you wish someone had taught you during your first five years of leadership?
- Why is mentoring so important for developing the next generation of pastors and leaders?
- What ministry skills are often overlooked in seminary or ministry training but are essential?
- What advice would you give someone who feels overwhelmed starting in ministry leadership?
- How can churches better support, encourage and retain emerging ministry leaders?
- What was it like to write a book together, as father and son?

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