

GRIEF RESOLUTION FOR NAVY CHAPLAINS DENIED PROMOTION

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Although chaplains are not the only ones who experience grief when they fail to select for promotion,¹ their belief that God has called them to the chaplaincy and, therefore, that promotion is typical, magnifies chaplains' grief. The significance attached to non-selection is proportionate to the investment the chaplain has made to the military because the emotional investment is greatest when the attachment is greatest. The grief experience associated with lack of promotion can be as profound as when someone close dies.

This project developed a seminar to assist chaplains who failed to select for promotion to put their circumstances into perspective by understanding the grief process and recognizing God's sovereignty and other attributes at work in their lives. Twenty-three chaplains participated in the two-hour "Grief Resolution for Navy Chaplains Denied Promotion" seminar, which sought to (1) affirm the validity of the chaplain's ministry, (2) identify the integral role of the chaplains within the organization, (3) clearly demonstrate individual self-worth, (4) increase awareness of the negative impact of anger and resentment, and (5) educate chaplains in how to avoid destructive behaviors.

The findings of the project confirm that highly significant learning occurred in the lives of those attending the seminar, demonstrating the overall effectiveness of the developed materials. The project has resulted in a resource that will benefit the seminar participants, the military as an organization, and future chaplains who fail to select for promotion.

¹The U.S. military uses "fail to select for promotion" and "failure to promote" when an officer does not receive a promotion. In the civilian context, an employee that does not receive a promotion stays in the same position and pay level. However, in the military context, all officers, including chaplains, must experience promotion in order to remain on active duty. Officers that fail to select twice are terminated from active duty service.