

Why Holy Spirit Told This Former Youth Pastor to Quit His Job, Go to Israel

Jeremy Rivers, managing director of Passages, reflects on what inspired him to continue a long-term involvement with Israel. It all started when he hit rock bottom. As a youth pastor, despite enjoying his career, he wrestled with his emotional well-being.

“My wife and I found ourselves kind of in an unhealthy church culture. So there was a tension there, like I’m living out my calling, but at this point, my mental health, my spiritual health, my wife’s as well, they were starting to get hurt. ... One day, no one was at the church. It was just me alone in our sanctuary, lights off, and after I laid it all out with the Lord ... I knew that I needed to leave the role, but I was really having a hard time letting go of that.”

After Rivers followed God’s instruction to resign from his job, he felt like he betrayed the church, and he fell into depression, he says on the “Charisma News” podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network.

But God allowed him to meet up with a longtime friend who helped him get involved in Passages, a program that sends college students to Israel. He accepted an offer to join their staff, so he was able to further his calling to lead young people. He recounts a miraculously orchestrated event where he saw a former youth member of his on a trip to Israel while they were standing on a mountain in Nazareth.

“And there’s a participant standing there ... and he goes, ‘Pastor Jeremy.’ And so I was like, *OK, I haven’t heard that in three years.* And it jolted me right back into reality. And I looked at his face, and it was one of my former youth

members. And at that moment, now, I am crying. And it's like the Lord. From that moment in the sanctuary, to that mountain. It was almost like God designed that moment for me to say, 'Good job, you fought a good fight; I gave you an encouragement to let go of the title of youth pastor. And look, you didn't betray your call. It was just waiting for you right here.'"

To hear more about Rivers' encounters with God both before and during his journey with the Passages program, listen to the rest of the episode here.

For more information about Passages, visit .