**Dealing With Burnout**

We are reminded forthright in the Scriptures to be cautioned against burning ourselves out.*“And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary.”* (Gal. 6:9) *“Therefore, I remind you to keep ablaze the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands.”* (2Tim. 1:6) As often as we are reminded, we nevertheless enter into these difficult periods. Sometimes it is due to inattention; other times it is simply the time and chance of life finding us. Regardless of its root cause, it is a threat to all of us spiritually; a threat that if unchecked will lead to catastrophe.

**I. Signs Of Burnout**

A. What Burnout Is Not:

1. Mere Fatigue

2. Being Mad

3. Feeling Disappointed

B. True Burnout

1. Feeling Overwhelmed, Conquered, Defeated (Moses – Num. 11:14f)

2. Lack Of Passion; General Apathy

3. Feeling Stressed & Can’t Catch Your Breath

4. Feel Totally Alone & Want To Quit (Elijah)

**II. A Biblical Example – Elijah**

A. Elijah’s Burnout (1Kgs. 19:1-4)

B. God’s Five-Step Treatment Plan For Elijah

1. Food & Sleep (19:5-7)

2. What’s The Problem? (19:9, 13)

3. Go Somewhere (19:7, 8, 11, 15)

4. You’re Not Alone (19:11-12 – God; 19:18 – 7,000 in Israel; 19:16f, 19-21 – Elisha will join you) – Satan wants us to believe we are alone, even that we have to do something alone. Do not fall for this lie.

5. Reminders

a. Of The Good He’d Done (19:10, 14)

b. To Look To The Payoff (2Kgs. 2:1, 11)

**III. A Five-Step Plan For Us**

A. Pray (James 1:5)

B. Sharpen The Ax (Eccl. 10:10)

1. Your ax will get dull. Don’t neglect to sharpen it! Being overloaded is not a sign of success! Lee Iacocca, former head of Chrysler, was once in a board meeting where the board members were bragging about how long they’d gone since taking a vacation. He burned them up!

2. We need to remember that we are not our best when we are tired, frustrated, and agitated.

3. Benefits:

a. Regain perspective – Rome wasn’t built in a day (James 5:7-9).

b. Remember your purpose so you can get redirected (Acts 13:36)

C. Restructure

1. Prioritize –

a. Evaluation (Matt. 16:24-27)

b. Setting Goals (Daily, Weekly, Lifelong)

2. Get Organized – This will help you be efficient. We waste a lot of time wasting time! Redeem the time, don’t waste it! (Eph. 5:16)

3. In addition to Bible study, take up some self-help guides for this if you truly struggle with it. A great resource is Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit Of Less by Greg McKeown.

D. Learn To Say No

1. Delegate

a. It’s ok if it is not to your standard!

b. Provide an opportunity for others to serve if it is not exclusively your responsibility. (And most things aren’t!)

2. Don’t get distracted by distractors; Not every battle is yours to fight (Neh. 6:3)

E. Don’t Compare

1. Don’t compare yourself with others & other congregations (Jn. 21:20-23)

2. Don’t measure the value of what you do by merely visible results (Jms 5:7)

3. Remember Mark 14:8 – “She did what she could.” You cannot do it all.

4. Remember that just a cup of cold water brings God pleasure! (Matt. 10:42)

5. Rather than compare, consider (Heb. 12:3)

We know for a fact that the greatest and most faithful individuals in the Bible dealt with periods of burnout. Since this is true of them, it must be true of us. If we do not acknowledge the threat that burnout poses for us, our flame will completely go out.

This lesson is a simple program to get out of that burnout section of our spiritual walk. It is a reminder to fan the flame before it is extinguished. It is a reminder to stop and sharpen the ax for all of us. I hope that it has hit its mark!