



How Do I Avoid Burnout? (Part II)

1 Kings 19:4: (NASB) *But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree... and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers.*



Burnout is nasty. As we found out in Part I of our two-part series, it can demoralize and diminish the efforts and quality of care from medical professionals and first responders. But it does not stop there. Even though the rest of us may not have the lives of others in our hands, burnout is more than capable of continuing to ruin lives...if we let it. The good news about this ever-growing and worrisome phenomenon is that it can be handled. For regular people who get overly inundated with the unrelenting pressures of work, family and social issues, there are answers. Or, if we find ourselves feeling like we are drowning under the weight of Christian responsibilities, there are answers. The good news is these answers have both biblical and medical foundations.

We recommend Ep. 1116: **How Do I Avoid Burnout? (Part I)** that gave us a great start in understanding different types of burnout. Our modern-day burnout has similarities to what some of the most faithful servants of God experienced. This gives us a direct link to people in the Bible we can look to for answers and inspiration.



What it looks like, *The Burnout Gamble*, Hamza Khan, TED

- *It always starts off the same - the compulsion to prove yourself. "Came up, that's all me. No help, that's all me. All me, for real." "Me against the world. I'm going to hustle hard; I have so much to prove." And that leads perfectly into working harder. The 9-to-5 becomes the 9-to-7, becomes the 9-to-9. And before you know it, you're neglecting all of your needs - your sleep, your food, your family, your friends - the things that are supposed to give you the energy to work hard; you are now sacrificing for short-term gain. And this is where things start to get ugly. After this stage, you start to displace conflicts. "Hamza, we have to talk right now." "Not right now, I've got too much on the go." And then you start to revise your values, the things that are supposed to be the foundations of your person. The values, the attributes, the beliefs that you hold dear suddenly become malleable.*

We are going to look at the stories of Elijah and Moses, two incredibly faithful Old Testament servants of God. Both did monumental things in God's service and both also despaired about life. We suggest these stories to be pictures of spiritual burnout and job/life-related burnout.

We recommend listening to our three-part series on Elijah: Episodes 954: The Power of Courage, 956: The Power of Submission and 958: The Power of Legacy.



**Wear yourself out,
and get nowhere trying!**



Elijah is probably the most famous of all Israel's prophets. He confronted face-to-face the idolatrous, evil King Ahab for worshipping Baal. He prophesied a drought and famine as a consequence of Ahab's evil. He performed a miracle for a widow where her food multiplied, and he revived her dead child (1 Kings 17:8-24). In a dramatic showdown, he challenged 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:17-40). Baal, King Ahab's false god, could not consume a sacrifice without using fire. Then Elijah made an altar to Jehovah and even soaked the offering and the wood with water three times until it was overflowing. Elijah prayed, fire came down from heaven and the offering was consumed. The drought ended, but rather than turn to God, Ahab's wife, Jezebel, vowed to kill Elijah. Even though he was faithful and successful in the Lord's work, Elijah became depressed, rejected and isolated - even to the point of wishing for death. He was burned out. We pick up his story at this point.



Spiritual burnout: Elijah overcame insurmountable odds as he stood for God. As a result, he was faced with being hunted down:

1 Kings 19:3-5: (NASB) ³And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba...and left his servant there. ⁴But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree...and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers. ⁵He lay down and slept under a juniper tree.

Is this the reward for successfully and courageously standing for and serving the living God? The reward is doing the work. Sometimes the result is not what we expect, think, want or hoped for. The reward is finding solace in whatever the providence of God brings us.

What happened? It was like all the miracles Elijah accomplished had no value. He was coming down from a huge spiritual high of the prophets of Baal being destroyed and now has a false sense of failure. He was so exhausted that he was not thinking rationally, and that is a good lesson for us.



We are going to drop in on two events in Moses' life when he experienced burnout. This is after the ten plagues in Egypt, after the burning bush, the golden calf and receiving the Ten Commandments. In the latter part of Moses' life, he was responsible for about two million Hebrews living in the wilderness. Our first story from the book of Exodus is Moses sitting as a judge, hearing the people's cases. We will see he was burning out by trying to do too much instead of even recognizing he should have been delegating the work. The second story is in the book of Numbers. Moses was completely overwhelmed by the constant complaints of the people. With leadership and responsibility comes great stress if not managed properly.



Job/Life Burnout: By God's direction, Moses had rescued a nation from slavery and now found himself being completely buried by the challenges of the everyday life experiences of that nation:

Exodus 18:14-16: (NASB) ¹⁴Now when Moses' father-in-law...said, What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge and all the people stand about you from morning until evening? ¹⁵Moses said to his father-in-law, because the people come to me to inquire of God. ¹⁶...I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws.



Moses goes from being a leader and a hero, standing against Pharaoh to bring the people to freedom, to basically someone stuck behind a desk (realistically seated in a public area) all day handling a never-ending line of disputes.



Rest so you can reset!



Spiritual burnout: In his despair, Elijah rests to give up, but is instead strengthened to go on:

1 Kings 19:5-6: (NASB) ⁵...there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, Arise, eat. ⁶Then he looked and behold, there was at his head a bread cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again.

Even in his weakness, God's direct providence strengthens him and directs him. He is not done.

God finds a way to refresh us when we are at our breaking point. Elijah is just at the point where he basically said: Take my life, I am useless. God's response was to send rest, help and nourishment because Elijah's work was not finished. God does provide rest. Are we looking for that rest and are we willing to accept it when it comes?

This was clearly a supernatural event. Elijah did not wake up to find a bunch of fruit had fallen naturally from a tree around him. This was an actual, baked cake on hot stones.



Job/Life Burnout: Moses also is strengthened by God's messenger with a practical and godly solution:

Exodus 18:17-20: (NASB) ¹⁷Moses' father-in-law said to him, The thing that you are doing is not good.

It was not good for Moses himself, or the interests of the people he was caring for. Jethro, his father-in-law, cared about him, noticed what was happening and made it his business to give him loving counsel. Are we looking out for others in this way?

¹⁸You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. ¹⁹Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, ²⁰then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do.

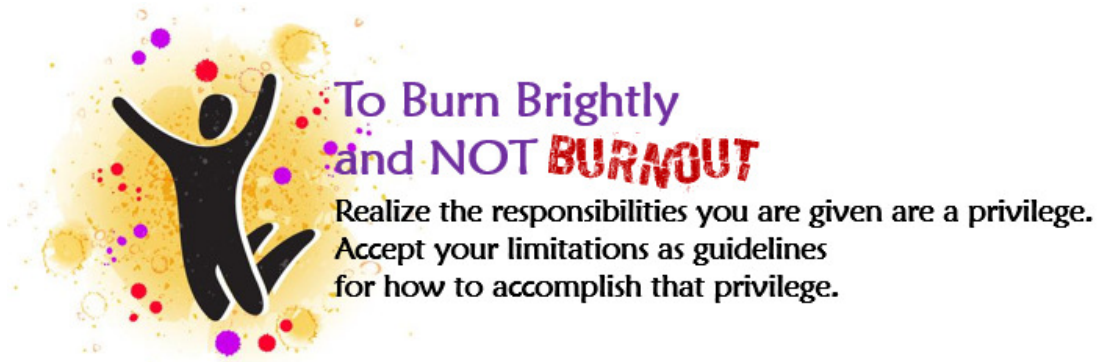
Then teach them - invest in others, so the workload is spread. This is often difficult when we think it is just faster if we do it ourselves, or when we know (or think we know) we can do a better job. Delegation is important.



From a natural standpoint, this applies in dividing up duties in a marriage, in a household with children, at work, even with families caring for elderly - giving the older one's tasks to help (folding towels, organizing a drawer) so they feel contributory.

For witnessing work like Christian Questions, we organize the volunteers of our various departments - our newsletter, social media efforts, the website and content development, for example. Co-laboring helps spread the time burden and emotional responsibility. Two are truly better than one. It allows others to develop their talents to use in the Lord's service. Training others may be a good investment in the long run.

When Elijah and Moses were ready, the help appeared. Moses was given help by his father-in-law. Elijah was given help by an angel of God. Reset. Let God's providence help us find the things in our lives that will draw us to that resting and resetting point.



Psalms 61:1-2: (NASB) ¹Hear my cry, O God; give heed to my prayer. ²From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Just because we have been able to “do it all” before, does not mean we cannot break. Circumstances change and we need to be able to see God's providence for our rest and ability to move forward.

recap
recap

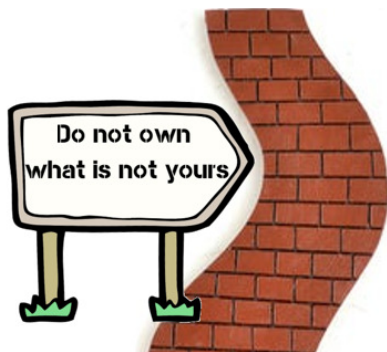
Quoting from Ep. 1116: How Do I Avoid Burnout? (Part I):

Life is like a pathway. We have to lay the foundation of faith, brick-by-brick, when things are not quite as stressful. To get to the other side of an experience, we want to walk on this pathway that, unfortunately, is never straight. Life is never straight; there are always things that happen we do not expect, but the trick is to not veer off the path. This is our path of righteousness, our connection to God. Things may try to blow us off that path, and like Job's friends, they may try to entice us off the path. If we have built a firm foundation, we will not step off, and God will deliver us to the other side.





In Part I, we discussed five steps on the pathway to getting away from burnout. These fit nicely with today's lesson, so we will end each segment with one of the steps.



Your trauma, circumstances and future all belong to God. This gives us permission to rest and reset.

Understand that as long as we truly seek to do God's will, our limitations are acceptable and even blessed.

**It is one thing to admit we are overwhelmed.
How do we learn to manage those heavy burdens?**

Managing unwieldy circumstances must begin with properly assessing what the issues are and then planning a systematic response. Burnout short circuits this kind of logic and presses us further into the feeling of failure, rather than looking up for what may be obvious answers.



Diminished values, *The Burnout Gamble*, Hamza Khan, TED

- You start off every day with a finite amount of willpower. And with every decision you make during that day, some of that willpower is eroded. This is a concept known as "ego depletion." Now, imagine being in a state of ego depletion perpetually. And then you start to deny the problems that you're having. "Hamza, your work is suffering." "No, it's not! What are you talking about!?" "Hamza, you're not pulling your weight." "Yes, I am!!" People become antagonistic to you. And then you begin to withdraw; naturally, you pull away from work; you pull away from your family; you pull away from your friends. And before you know it, a certain randomness begins to creep into your life. You start drinking maybe, you start smoking maybe. Maybe not. Things that you didn't think you would do, you are certainly starting to exhibit now; you're starting to do things that people are noticing as odd. And then, you begin to diminish and devalue the role of people in your life; your co-workers, your family, your friends are less than humans now. They are just these nagging voices in your life that you want to get away from. Nobody's good enough.*



**Separate yourself
and shut others out.**



Spiritual burnout: Though cared for and strengthened, Elijah was not ready to respond. He needed further attention and repeated direction: 1 Kings 19:7: (NASB) *The angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you.*

We easily shrug off the kind of help we may need because we are far too consumed with our own thinking and conclusions.

Didn't we just read in 1 Kings 19:3 that Elijah had a trusted servant with him? Elijah left him there and isolated himself unnecessarily. There was no one to be accountable to, or to give counsel or correct his irrational thinking. If we are part of the body of Christ, we are not supposed to be doing this alone.

The angel comes to Elijah a second time. The angel is not giving up because Elijah is not done in God's service.

Back to Moses. We are now going to drop in on our second story in the book of Numbers. It has been about two years since they left Egypt. The people are in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. They are starting to complain about their food. Even though they were slaves in captivity, they complained about not having the fish, garlic and cucumbers they used to eat back in Egypt.

Do we complain about what we do not have, or are we thankful for what we DO have?

They would rather be slaves as long as they got melons.

All they are getting in this wilderness is miraculous manna every single day. God is mad and now Moses is really fed up with the peoples' demands and is getting overwhelmed without a solution.

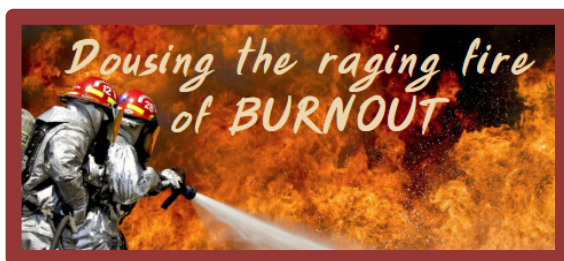
Job/Life Burnout: Moses is responsible for these people as a leader, and it is getting worse:

Numbers 11:10-12: (Easy Living Version - ELV) ¹⁰...People from every family were sitting by their tents and complaining. The Lord became very angry, and this made Moses very upset. ¹¹He asked the Lord, Why did you bring this trouble on me? I am your servant. What did I do wrong? What did I do to upset you? Why did you give me responsibility over all these people? ¹²You know that I am not the father of all these people...But I must take care of them, like a nurse carrying a baby in her arms. Why do you force me to do this? Why do you force me to carry them to the land that you promised to our fathers?

It was just too much. The voices of the people were too loud and demanding. It is easy to see how even a great man can fall apart when there is no apparent way out.

Both Moses and Elijah were seeing themselves as a solo act. They were both great men in the service of God, but both were deeply troubled and felt they could not go on.





Reveal your vulnerability and frustration by accepting help.



Spiritual burnout: After receiving strength a second time from the angel, Elijah is now able to continue in God's service:

1 Kings 19:8: (NASB) *So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.*

The help led Elijah to an unforeseen destination. Here, he would begin the process of refocusing. He had to go through a long process to get to where God needed him to be. Once Elijah was vulnerable to the help given to him, he could make progress.

Forty days and forty nights - Moses was in the wilderness for 40 years. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for 40 days, and there are other instances of "40" in the Bible. It represents a period of testing, of proof, putting things into perspective.

Let's go back to our original story with Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, who gave him specific, logical and God-based help as a solution.



Job/Life Burnout: Remember, Moses was exhausted trying to settle disputes of the people all day long:

Exodus 18:21-22: (NASB) ²¹Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. ²²Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.

This solution was pretty obvious - delegate. But Moses was blinded by his own mind from seeing it! It took another set of eyes concerned about Moses and the work to be done. Often we cannot find our way *out* of burnout. We have to work *through* it. God's providence provides. If we become vulnerable to the help sent to us, we can find solutions.





1 Corinthians 15:58: (NASB) *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*

Our goal is to work for the Lord in everything we do. We want to do this in the most efficient, God-honoring way possible. When we are completely dedicated to the “team” approach - to the mutual protection, we supply one another during trials; we can work harder. Co-laboring for the Lord is a huge blessing. We can both BE a blessing and RECEIVE a blessing without taking on too much.

Aren't we supposed to exhaust ourselves in working in the Lord's service? Isn't it a good thing to give it our all until we have nothing left? Yes, but we still need enough energy to serve God throughout our entire lifetime. Christianity is a team sport. Yes, our walk is personal, but we must help bear the burdens of each other. We should not be exhausted in service to the point of being worthless tomorrow. We should rely on one another.



What is the next right thing to do?
What is the next thing NOT to do?

Strong leaders with heavy responsibilities need help.

**Is the solution giving a burdened individual the right kind of help?
What happens if they still falter?**

We have all heard the saying “to err is human.” Just because someone has the appropriate tools at their disposal does not mean they will rise out of the ashes of burnout and conquer. The recovery from the depths of burnout takes time, trust, effort, and most importantly, a change of perspective.

 **Burned out, *The Burnout Gamble*, Hamza Khan, TED**

- *And then comes the inner emptiness. Everybody's got goals and their own definitions of success. For the most part, you're able to visualize them, but when you're in this stage, stage 10, those goals become obscure. You don't know where you're going; you don't know where you are. You begin to question everything. And then comes the depression. This is different than sadness. This is a deep, dark, pinging, throbbing pain; a hollowness, an emptiness; a perpetual haze over your life. And before you know it, you're burned out. Physically, mentally and emotionally, you're gone.*



Only focus on the hardship, challenge and impossibility.



Spiritual burnout: Elijah had just been nourished and miraculously built up, and yet he only saw one thing:

1 Kings 19:9-10: (NASB) ⁹Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, What are you doing here, Elijah? ¹⁰He said, I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Loneliness and failure are massively powerful emotions. Elijah's expectations and were in conflict with reality.

It sounds like he was impatient with God. He wanted to see the nation of Israel turn back to God and the evil king and queen either repenting or removed from power - after all, Elijah put in so much effort to do so, but nothing happened and he was frustrated. We can have that same unrealistic idealism and impatience with God. We are doing all we can to proclaim God's kingdom and a hope for mankind, but people do not listen and nothing changes. This can discourage us.

We are back to Moses and all the food complainers. They are sick of eating manna every day and are waxing nostalgic for their time as slaves because at least the food was good!



Job/Life Burnout: Moses was at a breaking point. He saw God's providence as his own responsibility - as if he had to solve this problem by himself:

Numbers 11:13-14: (ELV) ¹³I don't have enough meat for all these people! And they continue complaining to me. They say, Give us meat to eat. ¹⁴I cannot take care of all these people alone. The burden is too heavy for me.

And he was right! He could not take care of all these people alone...and he did not have to. Anyone would fold under the pressure of trying to shoulder God's power through earthly means. He needed God.

Moses saw God's providence as his own responsibility. Do we get stuck in that mode of thinking, that it is all on us? We are just a conduit through which God's spirit is supposed to flow.



Listen and change your position so you can see things differently.



Spiritual burnout: God was about to further demonstrate to Elijah that His power and will can be manifest in unusual ways:

1 Kings 19:11-12: (NASB) ¹¹So He said, Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD. And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹²After the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire...



Elijah was likely focused on God's ability to destroy sin in a display of power, and yet God was not in any of those things. Elijah saw clear evidence of the power of God with the prophets of Baal. Elijah figured such a great display would change everything, but it did not. But it did accomplish God's will - Elijah just did not realize it yet. We also have expectations based on previous experiences.

Elijah needed to be shown. God is helping him "douse the raging fire of burnout" by showing him the wind, earthquake and fire. What comes next will be the gateway for God to open the door.

Job/Life Burnout: Moses is plainly told that a godly change of approach will give him peace again:

Exodus 18:23-24: (NASB) ²³*If you do this thing and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people also will go to their place in peace.* ²⁴*So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said.*

Moses was humble and listened. We have to be willing to hear advice from a trusted source who has our best interest in mind - especially those who know us best, like a spouse. *Taking action here removed burnout's fuel.*

From a practical standpoint, how do we remove the fuel? For my own example, after being in a corporate environment for decades, my job was so stressful I was coming down with autoimmune diseases and complete exhaustion; the kind where on Sunday night your stomach lurches with the very thought of Monday morning. I absolutely burned out and made the tough decision to take a 4-month, unpaid sabbatical and completely restructured my job when I returned. I realize many won't have that kind of ability, but we need to find what it is that will change the outcome for our own good and those around us. We probably aren't going to solve the problem immediately - it might take years, but be able to formulate a goal, a way out, a hope and a plan. Remember last week, in our guest Hannah's position as an emergency room nurse, she was burning out. Her solution was to go back to school, take on even more stress temporarily and earn the degrees necessary to change her title and become a Nurse Practitioner. We can handle a lot as long as there is a light at the end of the tunnel that isn't a train coming the other way. Analyze, plan and pick a direction.

Listen to input coming your way. The answer will not necessarily come from within you.

It took a car accident years ago to get me to stop, think, reconsider and rebuild my life. I had to literally be stopped dead in my tracks, have my car totaled and be out of work for weeks so I would finally listen. We need to listen and change.





To Burn Brightly and NOT BURNOUT

Follow instructions and implement.

Even if you are not able to yet douse the fire of burnout, you will be taking strong steps to be able to soon.

Psalms 37:5-6: (NASB) ⁵Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. ⁶He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday.

Galatians 6:9-10: (NASB) ⁹Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. ¹⁰So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

We should not become weary in well-doing. No matter how crazy our life is, if we see a need or are asked to help someone, it strengthens us. It has a positive effect on our being, even when we are exhausted.

It might bring on more stress, but it also brings greater blessing.

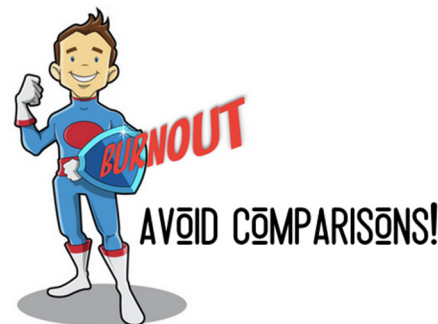


It is in the chaos that all of the elements are displayed that need to be dealt with. If we examine the chaos and find the pieces, we can then piece together where we need to go.

The path that leads away from burnout looks like it is winding and longer for some than others. Keep trying!

**Moses bounced back more easily than Elijah.
Does that mean Elijah was weaker and had less faith?**

One of the key factors in repelling burnout is avoiding comparisons. Each of us, no matter how heroic we are, has our own battles personally tailored. Elijah's courage and faith were not the issues. He was processing a major victory as looking like a major defeat. He needed to find his resilience, understand what was happening and put it in perspective in order to move forward.



Burnout is an international phenomenon.

 **Death by work, *The Burnout Gamble*, Hamza Khan, TED**

- Now, we're going to define stress as the result produced when a structure, system or organism is acted upon by forces that disrupt equilibrium or produce strain. I had an unhealthy relationship with stress. But I wasn't alone. We are arguably in *The Golden Age of Stress*. This is possibly the most stressful

we have ever been as a species. But it's not just affecting us personally. It's affecting the entire economy; we are losing \$300 billion a year in lost productivity caused by absenteeism, turnover and healthcare expenditures. This also includes death; I kid you not. The Japanese call it "karoshi," the Chinese call it "guolaosi." These words literally mean "death by work." "Death by work." Take that in - 1,600 people in China die every day from work. I'm not talking about laboring in the fields; I'm not talking about working in a factory. I'm talking about sitting behind a desk, staring at a screen for upwards of 10, 12, 15 hours a day. Dying because of hemorrhage, internal failures, seizures. It's brutal.



Obey, but half-heartedly. Minimize or hide from God's presence and His providence in your experience.



Spiritual burnout: Elijah is miraculously shown that God is present and above all. Shouldn't this change everything?

1 Kings 19:12-14: (NASB) ¹²...After the fire a sound of a gentle blowing. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice came to him and said, What are you doing here, Elijah? ¹⁴Then he said, I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Elijah simply cannot shake the isolation. As long as he remained isolated, he would be burned out. He could not get out of his own way.

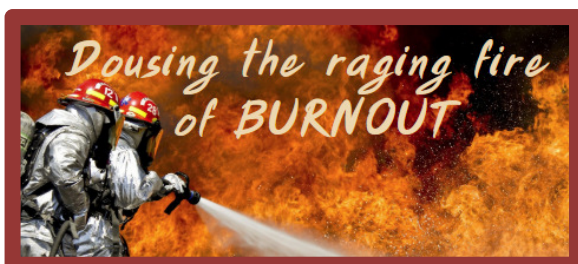
Here he faithfully did everything he was supposed to and is met with death threats from Jezebel. No good deed goes unpunished. It is easy to be hurt when our service for the Lord is criticized when we are trying our best. The solution is to focus on Christ and not on self. This is easier said than done.



Job/Life Burnout: Revisiting Moses's isolation, we can see the severity mirrored that of Elijah's:

Numbers 11:15: (ELV) *If you plan to continue giving me their troubles, kill me now. If you accept me as your servant, let me die now. Then I will be finished with all my troubles!*

Here it is - the ultimate burnout: *Kill me now!* Never underestimate the overwhelming power of feeling like you are a failure and have been deserted. We can use these faithful men of God, Elijah and Moses, as examples.



Go back to your God-driven destiny with assurance and direction.



Spiritual burnout: Having seen God's display, Elijah is now given work to do. He is also given a plain answer to his isolation:

1 Kings 19:15-16,18: (NASB) ¹⁵The LORD said to him, Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; ¹⁶and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat...you shall anoint as prophet in your place. ¹⁸Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.

God showed confidence in Elijah. He also revealed to him another 7,000 faithful men. This would set Elijah in motion once again. He was NOT alone. God could have revealed the other 7,000 before the 40-day journey or at any given time, but He did not. He allowed Elijah to go through his own experiences until revealing the others at the appropriate time.

Go back to your God-given destiny with assurance and direction! God knows and will help us. Look up, look around and look outside of ourselves.

Job/Life Burnout: After the "kill me now" plea, God answered Moses:

Numbers 11:16-17: (ELV) ¹⁶The Lord said to Moses, Bring to me 70 of the elders of Israel. These men are the leaders among the people. Bring them to the Meeting tent. Let them stand there with you. ¹⁷Then I will come down and speak with you there. The spirit is on you now. But I will also give some of that spirit to them. Then they will help you take care of the people. In this way you will not have to be responsible for these people alone.

God had a clear and unequivocal answer. Again, delegation was the first step. God did not intend for Moses to burn out and be of no use to anyone. Step 1 was to bring in more help. We will see Step 2 in the next segment.

Not only does God tell Moses He was going to bring in help, but He says: I have given you my power and influence, my spirit, *but I will also give some of that spirit to them.* The help coming would not only be good men, but God would be working with them. He gave Moses the ability to let go.

God's got this! But do we let Him keep it?

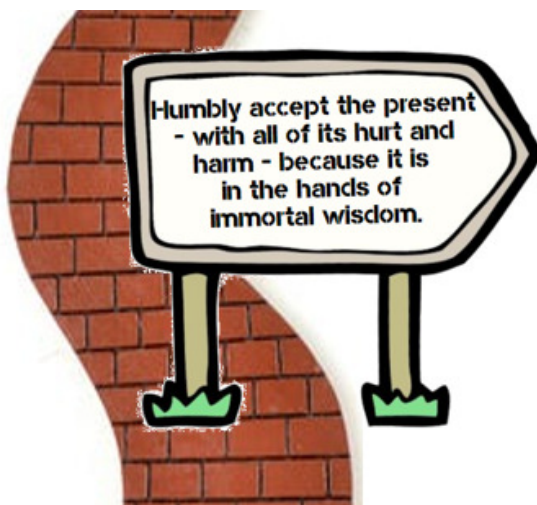


**To Burn Brightly
and NOT BURNOUT**

Feelings aside, always keep listening for godly instruction. This can only happen if we are very attuned to God's will, which comes from study and prayer.

Isaiah 30:21: (NASB) *Your ears will hear a word behind you, This is the way, walk in it, whenever you turn to the right or to the left.*

Our feelings, personal drive or ego are what bring us to burnout. Therefore, we need to ask God for help.



To have any hope of overcoming burnout, we need to have the same kind of tenacity that got us in trouble in the first place.

If there was just one thing to remember that could keep us from burning out, what would it be?

Boiling tough issues down to just one thing is never an easy task. Burnout takes our heart away from its true loyalty to God and introduces it to loyalty to a lie. The lie is that we are alone and incapable of managing our responsibilities. Believe in the truth of God's providence and not the lie of pride. God's providence can give us the help necessary to see us through. He will make our experiences bearable so we can learn and grow through them.

 **The one value, *The Burnout Gamble*, Hamza Khan, TED**

- *Find that perfect space, find that sweet spot of productive anxiety. For me, it was the first three stages; for you, it could be different. Whatever it is, it's going to keep you in perpetual productivity with a little bit of anxiety. Another one: reduce the impact of stress. A year and a half ago, a couple of friends and I got together and we wrote a blog. We produced a blog called "Year One." And what we did is, we reverse engineered the careers of 175 people who we deemed to be extremely successful: athletes, politicians, artists, activists, you name it. And we distilled their careers down to a very early point in their lives, to hone in on one particular attribute. Something that has guaranteed them lasting success. And overwhelmingly, we found that one value gave the most guarantee of lasting success: resilience. Resilience is your ability to adapt to stress.*

As we discussed in Part I, resilience is an important asset to have. It is a childlike quality, and as Christians we are to be as little children. When young siblings argue and fight, two minutes later they are asking the other to go play. They bounce right back.

A quote came up in our discussion when preparing for this podcast: *Be the person you are, not the person you sometimes feel like you are.* For those of us who lose focus, doubt ourselves or have low self-esteem, we need to remember we have value in Christ. Do not be afraid and move forward.



Be resigned to only see failure where God has led you.



God never leads us to failure. He leads us to experience, growth, maturity and to eventual victory. During the burnout phase, we are resigned to only see failure.

Spiritual burnout: Elijah never let go of what he had been given to do, and when it did not turn out to have the heroic ending he thought it would, he lost his focus and his drive.

Let's go back two chapters to when Elijah was stronger:

1 Kings 17:1: (NASB) *Now Elijah the Tishbite...said to Ahab, As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.*

Elijah's initial proclamation: I represent the living God, and He wants the loyalty of His people back. The end result did not seem as dramatic and bold as the beginning, and it looked like he failed. He was resigned to only see failure where God had led him.

We are using Elijah as an example of spiritual burnout. In Part I we defined "spiritual burnout" as whatever factors lead to spiritual disconnection, doubt and lack of peace and passion for the ministry. This can be from working too hard/spreading ourselves too thin in the Lord's service OR being so distracted by the cares of life that we get too far away from God. This is especially prevalent in church leaders.

For the average believer, spiritual burnout is a weariness in the Christian walk or when coldness has set in and God seems far off.



A special warning to church leaders: A large percentage are on call 24-hours a day, they have to deal with conflict in their church, and the demands on time and energy can be difficult on spouses and family members.

Congregations can have unrealistic expectations of their leaders. All of these can lead to a feeling of isolation and a sense of failure or self-doubt. They need to be on special guard for spiritual burnout.

When we get into the position where others rely on us, we feel that responsibility. But we also must feel, recognize and acknowledge the fact that we are not there to FIX anything; we are simply there to provide tools and encouragement along spiritual and biblical lines.

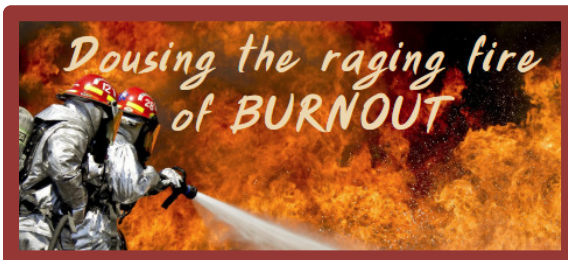


Job/Life Burnout: From Moses' standpoint: Sure, I've got 70 more helpers to listen to the people whine about food, but that still does not solve my problem:

Numbers 11:21-22: (ELV) ²¹Moses said, *There are 600,000 soldiers here, and you say, I will give them enough meat to eat for a whole month!* ²²*If we were to kill all the sheep and cattle, that would still not be enough to feed this many people for a month. And if we caught all the fish in the sea, it would not be enough for them!*



In Moses' mind, this was "checkmate." There was no way for Moses to make this happen.



Accept that God's providence is bigger than our own imagined results. Humbly and consistently follow His plan.



Spiritual burnout: Elijah HAD done God's will and served with courage. He would now be called upon to pass on the brightly burning torch of God's work:

1 Kings 19:19-21: (NASB) ¹⁹So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, while he was plowing...And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him. ²⁰He left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, Please let me kiss my father and my mother, then I will follow you. And he said to him, Go back again, for what have I done to you? (Once Elisha said goodbye) ²¹...he arose and followed Elijah and ministered to him.

Realize that your role, no matter how significant it may seem, is just one of many cogs in the machinery of God's engine of righteousness.

After all the frustration, anxiety and burnout, Elijah gets up and does what God tells him to do. Elijah was to pass on the mantle of responsibility to Elisha to continue his ministry.

We are just a tiny part of the big machinery God has in place and we should not overestimate our role.



Job/Life Burnout: Moses will now take the word "impossibility" out of his vocabulary:

Numbers 11:23: (ELV) But the Lord said to Moses, Don't limit my power! You will see that I can do what I say I can do.





Step 2 of what God did is found in the rest of Numbers 11. The Lord brought quail in from the sea, and as far as one could walk a day in any direction, quail were flying three or four feet off the ground (or according to some translations, the ground was covered with them, three feet thick). People could easily catch them. The least anyone gathered was 100 bushels. God delivered, but there were consequences in the form of a plague to those who complained against God's miraculous provisions.



**Do not complain against
GOD'S PROVIDENCES.
Be content!**



**To Burn Brightly
and NOT BURNOUT**

What looks impossible or failed
through the eyes of burnout may
- through the power of God's providence -
be the victory and answer we sought all along.

Isaiah 40:31: (NASB) *Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.*

What looks impossible from our own little perspective is not only possible, but it is probable. That does not mean we can miraculously do the job that is burning us out. We need to change our perspective to do what we are capable of in God's sight with His providence driving us, rather than our own ambition, ego or vision of the future.



The Christian walk is a team event. It is God's presence, providence, spirit and family that is most important.

Remember the example of putting on our own oxygen mask before we can help others. We need to make sure we stay spiritually and physically healthy so we can be of great service to God and to those around us.

Burnout can be handled. We need to let those around us guide us in godly directions and let God's providence show us we are one of many and move forward to victory.



*So, how do I avoid burnout?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Julie!) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on March 23, 2020
Ep. 1118: How Merciful Am I?

Bonus Material

Matthew 11:28-30: (NIV) ²⁸Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Psalms 28:7: (NIV-MIT) The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to Him in song

Psalms 61:2: (NKJV) From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I

Isaiah 40:28-31: (NIV) ²⁸Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom. ²⁹He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. ³⁰Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint

John 14:1: (NLT) Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.

Philippians 4:6-7: (ESV) ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Exodus 33:14: (ESV) ...My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.

Luke 16:10: (ESV) One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.

Acts 14:15: (ESV) Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.

John 10:28: (ESV) I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.



1 Kings 19:4: (ESV) *But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.*

1 John 2:5-6: (ESV) *⁵But whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.*

Romans 5:5: (ESV) *And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the holy spirit who has been given to us.*

Proverbs 111:10: (ESV) *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.*

Psalms 31:23: (ESV) *Love the Lord, all you his saints! The Lord preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride.*

Genesis 2:3: (ESV) *So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that he had done in creation.*

Hebrews 4:9: (ESV) *So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.*

Exodus 20:8: (ESV) *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

Fatigue makes cowards of all of us. — Vince Lombardi

You can't run away from trouble; there ain't no place that far. - Uncle Remus in Walt Disney's Song of the South (1946 movie)

