

2022-10-04: Dealing with Burnout (OCCM)

Visual Aid

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/1dd74ty6rcbm8vg/Dealing%20with%20Burnout.pptx?dl=0>

Introduction

I'm very happy to be joining you here today at OCCM and here at UCF – I graduated from UCF in 2013 and I haven't actually been back on Campus since then. And we didn't have OCCM back then, we had OCF (Orthodox Christian Fellowship). OCF at UCF – not sure if that is still around or not. The topic that we have for you today is one that most college students struggle with these days. Dealing with Burnout. Raise your hand here if you've experienced burnout before... yeah, let me tell you – it doesn't get easier.

But today, God willing, we'll talk through some of the causes of Burnout and some exercises to help deal with burnout.

Exodus 18 - Burnout is Not Good

Let's start by opening the Scripture and reading together from Exodus 18. At this point in the story of the Exodus, Moses has taken the Israelites - the people of God - out of Egypt and they've crossed the Red Sea and God is sending them manna from heaven and God gave them water from a rock. God has been doing wonders in their sight. And now we'll read about Jethro - Moses' father in law - coming to visit Moses and the Israelites from his own land.

⁷ So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him. And they asked each other about *their* well-being, and they went into the tent. ⁸ And Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them on the way, and *how* the Lord had delivered them. ⁹ Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the Lord had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. ¹⁰ And Jethro said, "Blessed be the Lord, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, *and* who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. ¹¹ Now I

know that the Lord *is* greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, *He was* above them.” ¹² Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, took a burnt offering and *other sacrifices to offer* to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law before God.

¹³ And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. ¹⁴ So when Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, “What *is* this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?”

¹⁵ And Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God. ¹⁶ When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws.”

¹⁷ So Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “The thing that you do *is* not good. ¹⁸ Both you and these people who *are* with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing *is* too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself. ¹⁹ Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. ²⁰ And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. ²¹ Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. ²² And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be *that* every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear *the burden* with you. ²³ If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace.”

²⁴ So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. ²⁵ And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. ²⁶ So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves.

²⁷ Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way to his own land.

So in this chapter we see that Jethro, Moses' father in law, came and spent time with Moses. Moses told him all the things God did with them. Then Jethro offered a burnt offering to God. Then he kind of just observed Moses. He saw that Moses stood "from morning to evening" listening to the people's problems and judging between them.

So Moses basically had a never-ending todo list. Do you know how many Israelites walked out of Egypt with Moses? It's estimated 2.4 million. Moses is standing from morning to evening with the people lined up. It would be impossible to ever finish. And it's not like he's doing things that are pointless or of no value. They're important! He's helping people. He's serving God. He's being a leader.

How many of us have a todo list of things that never seems to get shorter? As you get older it only gets longer. I remember my to-do lists...

- When I was in College, I had my schoolwork, my Sunday School Service, my deacons service. I kept telling myself "wow I can't wait until I graduate, I'm gonna have so much more time"
- And then I graduated and I started working... and work takes way more time than school ever did... and the service kept increasing, and I started to serve in the Asaph Hymns Institute
- And a year later I started grad school
- Then I bought a house, got married, had kids
- The list NEVER gets smaller. I remember when I was doing grad school and I told my wife the same thing I said in College "I can't wait to finish grad school I'm gonna have so much extra time." And she said stop talking crazy. You're just gonna find something else... sure enough I joined LEAD right before graduation and started looking into Seminary right after.

So Moses was in that same situation but x100! And Jethro was clear with him "the thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out." Jethro was clearly telling Moses - you're going to get burned out. And he recognized that burnout is NOT a good thing. Remember that by this time Moses was over 80 years old. So he gave Moses some advice - write out God's law for the people, and put judges over them - rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. And Moses heeded his father in law's advice.

So it's established here pretty early in the Bible - and pretty early in human society that burnout is a bad thing. And we aren't the first ones to experience burnout. And there are solutions and exercises to burnout.

Outline

One strategy that I learned from Abouna Daoud a long time ago was to treat something like burnout as a disease.

A disease manifests as symptoms, and then you find out the Diagnosis (in this case Burnout) and you start to look for the root cause while pursuing treatment plans. It's the same with burnout. We will look at the Symptoms, some common Root causes and some treatment plans.

And in general, I'll say that we're going to look at it holistically - we'll see the Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual Symptoms, Root Causes, Treatments.

Let's start with Symptoms. I'm going to show you two very short videos - about 10 seconds each - of people who are burned out. People of completely different backgrounds, ages, genders, etc. They are burned out for completely different reasons, but they respond to burnout in exactly the same way.

Symptoms

Video 1 (Alexandra)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/9k73p2kpy4sm1ve/Alexandra%20Burnout.mp4?dl=0>

This is my daughter Alexandra about 3 years ago. She had a very long and difficult day with a very hectic and full schedule. She had to wake up at the crack of dawn - 11:30am. She then was forced to change her diaper and eat breakfast. She had about two hours of play time. And then had to go down for a nap. After a three hour nap, she had about two more hours of play time before having to eat dinner. Then another hour of play time before her dad came home. Then she had another four hours of play time with him. At that point the day was long and she was burnt out. We'll watch a few seconds of her reaction here

Video 2 (Malcolm in the Middle)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/xi1yq8ubc41l4nh/Hal%20Lightbulb%201080p.mp4?dl=0>

This second example is from an old show called Malcolm in the Middle.

I love this clip. It's hilarious; it gets me every time. But look how he responded to his wife - "WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE I'M DOING??" This is a man dealing with some real burnout. He's been changing a lightbulb for probably four hours.

Symptom 1: Stress

Stress is a bad thing that is not normal; not created for us by God. God created humans and didn't intend for them to have stress.

Stress is closer to being a sickness - like the flu. And sometimes you won't feel stressed out and think "oh I need to do more" - can you imagine if you didn't have the flu and thought "oh I need to go get the flu" - of course not!

So stress is a physical symptom of Burnout, and one that I'm sure all of you are familiar with.

Symptom 2: Lack of Productivity

Another symptom of burnout is being less productive. And this is a mental thing - it's the Law of Diminishing Returns.

The more you try to do in less time, the less productive it will be. The higher the quantity, the lower the quality.

Imagine you are reading 30 pages of a book in an hour and it's taking the whole hour. Then you up it to 40 pages in an hour. You'll get less from the 40 pages than you got from the 30 pages.

It's like a farmer who has two people help him run the farm and they get everything done in a timely manner. So he hires two more... he starts to make less money! Because even though he has more employees, he only has three wheelbarrows! Each person is doing less work than before.

When we are burned out - doing too much, trying to fill our time, etc. we become less productive.

This happens to me all the time. I look at the list of things I have to do - I have this and this assignment for work, I have assignments for school, exams to study for, Sunday school lesson to prepare, and whatever else - sometimes I will look at this list and I'll stare at it for like 10min, I'll write it out in ten different ways, and then I'll go play video games.

Symptom 3: Sacrificing Relationships

We also find that we sacrifice relationships with others when we're burned out. Someone asks you to go out or to spend time together and we say "I wish I could man but I'm so busy. I have to study for this and that and I have work and etc." And actually we start to isolate ourselves and this isn't good for us.

Symptom 4: Deaf to the Voice of God

Probably the most important, most common, and most affected symptom is that we simply can't hear God's voice.

The Lord said in the Psalms "Be still and know that I am God" - but when I'm burnt out, there is no "being still" or "knowing God." When I'm burnt out, the first thing I'm going to sacrifice is my prayer and Scripture time. It's the first thing I won't have time for. Sometimes I may even sacrifice my Church time - I don't have time for Vespers this week, I need to study. I don't have time for Tasbeha this week, I have exams. Or I may be standing in the Church and I'm physically there, but mentally I am somewhere else completely... I'm thinking about all the things I need to do.

Conclusion

We saw these symptoms in both videos. Alexandra was definitely stressed. And standing there crying about it wasn't going to make her any more productive. And she wasn't about to stop crying on my behalf. And I don't think she was thinking of God at that moment (or being still). The same with our friend Hank - stressed, less productive, not bothered by his relationship with his wife.

So we've essentially defined burnout. And usually when you are burnt out, we said the first thing you sacrifice is your Spiritual Life. Usually the second thing is sleep or your health - "I'm gonna stay up all night to get this done"; or just chowing down on fast food and chips. Usually the third thing is relationships. And the last thing we'll sacrifice is the things that are burning us out in the

first place.

Root Causes

So now we're going to go through four root causes. These are not all the root causes. And our goal today isn't that you memorize them, but try and see what you relate to. You may relate to one or more of them. You may not be burned out right now, but you feel burnt out at other times. So try and relate to one or more of these.

For each one, we will see some examples of it, and then we'll see the appropriate Treatment for it, of course using the Scripture and the Church Fathers as our guides.

And you'll notice that most of our treatments are spiritual in nature. We'll have some practical applications, of course, but do you have any idea why our treatments must be spiritual in nature?

Because we are spiritual in nature! We are physical and spiritual. Outward man who is perishing, is physical. Our inner man who is being renewed day by day is spiritual. And we focus on nourishing our outward man; our physical, but we forget to nourish our Spiritual. And it's unfortunate because it is our Spiritual Man that will help us navigate the world and give us strength to complete the things we commit to, and revitalize us from burn out.

In any case, let us go through each of these root causes one by one.

Root Cause 1: Fast-Paced Life

- Fast food - when it came out it was revolutionary. Walk in, pay, get food quickly. No sitting or waiting. A little while later they got rid of the walk-in step! Even faster. Now they're making it even faster! In the app, you put in your order so they know what it is before you even get there. All of this to shave off a few seconds. These apps cost thousands of dollars to produce... and probably millions to distribute and implement. And all of that to save you a few seconds.
- Internet - obviously revolutionary. Most revolutionary invention of the 20th Century - completely changed the course of humanity. We have answers at our fingertips. Ask a question, translate a word, find a picture of something, remember the name of an actor in a movie and you don't even remember the name of the movie. Fast-paced life. Sometimes when we don't have signal on our phone, or the internet is slow, we get so anxious. We might even get mad at the phone. We're not used to waiting.
- Social Media and Texting - we no longer have to call someone and exchange pleasantries or anything like that. Shoot off a text "Hey man hope you're doing well. I was wondering..." and put it in the back of your mind. And if someone doesn't reply within a few minutes - God forbid if your phone tells you that he READ the message and still didn't reply. We have these crazy thoughts going through our head. And actually this also contributes to burnout because we are not satisfying our social needs to actually see people and read their faces and hear their voices and feel their touch.
- Driving - People (especially in Orlando) are willing to risk their lives and limbs to shave off a few seconds. Weaving through traffic, cutting off 18 wheeler trucks, whatever it might

be. All of that to save a few seconds. Sometimes not even because they get stuck at a red light and everyone they passed comes right back to them.

This fast-paced, always-busy life leads to being overtired or fatigued which are other words for burnout.

We are ALWAYS running

So what do you think the treatment is?

Treatment 1: Rest and Retreat

Rest: Remember that the fourth commandment in the OT is to honor the Sabbath. Keep the Sabbath holy. The day of rest. So this is a commandment from God and not just any commandment it's one of THE ten commandments. Like the top ten list. Raise your hand if you've never murdered. Raise your hand if you've never stolen. If you've never committed adultery. Great. We always say those are the important ones. But keeping the Sabbath and resting - we never really consider that one. But God had it right there in the top five. That means it's important!

Some people say "I don't rest because the devil never rests" - when did the devil become your role model?? God, Himself, rested. He took time - 1/7 of the time to admire His creation and rest on the seventh day. Are we more capable than God??? This was also the solution for Moses - delegate so that he can rest. So how do we rest? What do we mean by rest?

We ALWAYS get this wrong. The true concept of Rest that was assigned by God for the Sabbath and performed by God in the 7th Day of Creation is not what we think it is today. Today we think Rest is sleeping all day, or rest is playing video games and just numbing our mind. But the true concept of Rest is to Delight. When God rested on the seventh day, He didn't just leave humanity and the world to do what they wanted - He admired His creation. Genesis tells us that God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. Rest doesn't mean running errands, or numbing our mind, or just going to sleep. It means delight. Delight in three things...

1. Delighting in ourselves - The Physical and Mental Rest come from delighting in ourselves.
 - Physically resting of course is the Physical rest - this is what even Moses had to do.
 - Mental rest comes from doing something you love - if you love painting, reading, cooking, programming, singing, playing games, solving puzzles, playing sports, woodworking. Having healthy hobbies to do in moderation and that give you rest. It's important to have time to ourselves to do the things we love. And we use those things to glorify the Lord in His Creation and in using and revitalizing the mind and the talents that He gives us.
2. Delighting in others - Emotional Rest comes from delighting in others.
 - Spending time with family or friends. Talking to them, sharing with them, relating to them. Sometimes we let Social Media numb this idea for us, but it hits different when you're physically with someone. You see their facial expressions, hear their voice, feel their touch. And it's healthy - we need it.
 - Sometimes you spend time with family or friends and you get home - even though it was a long day, even if you did something labor intensive - and you just feel rested.

Delighted.

3. Delighting in the Lord – This is Spiritual Rest.

- Reading His word. His Psalms. Singing hymns. Speaking to Him. Remember that the true rest comes from God.
- Giving yourself retreat. Look what St. Paul writes in Hebrews: "For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls." (Hebrews 12:3)
- Remember the words that David wrote in the Psalms - "Be still and know that I am God" - to hear God's voice, and to rest spiritually means to be still. To have some quiet time to hear God's voice and delight in God's presence.

If life is fast-paced, then the solution is to Be Still.

How do we do it Practically? A concept called "Retreat"

- The Lord, Himself, practiced the concept of Retreat.
 - We read in Luke 4, after the Lord cast out a demon in the Synagogue of Capernaum, and then healed Peter's Mother-in-Law the same day, and then that night, "all those who were sick with diverse diseases were brought unto Him and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them", what did He do the next morning?
 - He departed and went into a deserted place.
- We need to practice Retreat. We need to escape the fast-paced life and we need to do it on a regular basis.

Imagine if someone was running a business and didn't take inventory every day... he would just wait until his shelves were empty, and then order more stuff. The business would fail! He wouldn't be ready for customers. No, he needs to take stock every day and see what needs to be ordered. So by the time the shelves are empty, he can restock them. This is the purpose of Retreat, to take inventory.

You can practice Daily Retreat in a very easy way every morning (or if your schedule doesn't allow, then every evening). 20 Minutes per day. Read your Bible. Then give yourself some time to think and reflect about what you read, what you're going to pray about, how you want your day to progress, what happened the last day and how to improve it, etc. And then stand for prayer.

As the Saint, HH Pope Kyrillos VI says, **"there aren't good or bad days - there are days with prayer and days without prayer."**

Root Cause 2: Improper Concept of Satisfaction/Success

Some people have their whole lives mapped out based on salary.

- I was visiting one of my 8th Grade Boys one year and I asked him what he wants to be when he grows up... he said "I wanna have passive income" - and I'm like "okay.... What's the plan for that" - "well I wanna make my first million by 25 and then buy a bunch of real estate, hire someone to manage it all, and basically let it be passive income." I was so surprised...

- Another common one that I hear from Middle and High School Youth nowadays– they want to make YouTube videos and TikToks. Or they want to play Video Games on Twitch. And there’s no backup plan.

Sometimes we have an improper concept of satisfaction and success. We think that Success means having the most money or having fame – TikTok fame or YouTube fame. How many followers I have. But these things have no end. This is what the Lord says to Jeremiah about the Israelites.

“For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns – broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jeremiah 2:13)

- The Lord is the fountain of living water. He is the satisfaction and the quenching of our thirst.
- And we forsake Him, and then build for ourselves cisterns that cannot hold water. Standards that cannot be satisfied.

Goals that cannot be met.

- I want to make my first million by 25 and my second million by 27, etc. It doesn’t end. There’s no upper limit to money.
- We can get the most impressive car, and six months later there’s a more impressive one.
- We have the best iPhone but the next year there’s a better iPhone.
- Newest fashion, best shoes, most incredible handbag... and two weeks later it all needs to change.
- We are concerned about our self-image – what do other people think of how I dress or what I drive or what phone or watch I have.
- Or what headphones I have! Part of the reason Apple changes the designs of things so often is because now people can tell which version of AirPods you have in your ear. And you don’t want to be caught using the old ones.

All of these behaviors stem from an improper concept of satisfaction and success, and lead directly to burning out. In this case we burn out because we can’t keep up – and more than that, no matter how hard we try to keep up and if we do actually keep up, it doesn’t give us the Satisfaction that the Lord gives us.

People miss out on the most important parts of their life simple because they’re “grinding”

- Husbands and wives miss out on the best parts of their marriage, because they want to work extra hours in the beginning and save up.
- Parents miss the best parts of their kids’ upbringing, so they can work extra hours
- Youth miss the best parts of their parents’ lives – the time when they live with their parents and can sit with them and talk to them and actually communicate and learn from their wisdom and teach them new things and establish a real relationship – just to take extra classes and finish a semester or a year early. Or to take a job on the side and have expendable income.

You won't get these days back. It's good to be goal-oriented and to have goals and to strive for them, but they should be reasonable, and you have to weight them against what you'll be missing out on.

So what do you think is the Treatment for this one?

Treatment 2: Set your eyes above

The treatment here is to focus on Eternal Life. We read throughout the Scripture

- "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3:2)
- "Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you." (Proverbs 4:25)
- "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." (Romans 8:5)
- "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:33)

Set your eyes on the final goal. Look past this life that we are in, and into the next life that is to come and realize that THAT is your target to be achieved. The land of the living.

So what's a practical exercise here? If you're sitting here and you're relating to this root cause and you want to change, what is your next step? In reality, whether you relate to this or not, we should all be taking this step which is to ask ourselves this question – "Is this for God's glory?"

When I make a big purchase, when I decide on my major, when I choose what to wear, when I decide where to celebrate my birthday party, when I am picking places to go with my friends, let me live with this question: "Is this for God's glory?" By doing this, wearing this, buying this, going there, will I be glorifying God? I wish we had bracelets that instead of "What would Jesus do" they said "Will this Glorify God?"

Set your eyes above the things of the earth.

Root Cause 3: Comparing Myself to Others

Another thing that I may be doing that is causing me to burnout is comparing myself to others. And this one is very dangerous. Just like the last one, comparing myself to others has no end.

We read in the Scripture that "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones." (Proverbs 14:30). Envy rots the bones.

When I compare myself to others, I can never find peace.

- I want to be a manager because so-and-so is a manager, and I won't rest until I'm a manager like so-and-so.
Well I work myself to the bone and I finally become manager, but guess what? There's a district manager! Now I wanna be district manager, no matter what it takes... And if I'm

really unlucky, so-and-so is the one who got promoted to district manager.

- I want to switch my major to Biomedical Sciences because so-and-so is doing it. So-and-so got an internship, so I need to look for one. So-and-so is volunteering at the hospital, so I need to do that too. Our goal becomes to match or beat so-and-so and we lose sight of what is important.

We see this in the service as well

- I want to serve in Sunday School because so-and-so is serving Sunday School. I want to be better than him or her!
- I want to be ordained as a reader or a subdeacon because so-and-so is, and I know more hymns than him.
- I can't believe I got placed to serve in Kindergarten when so-and-so is serving in Middle School. I know more Bible than her

We also see the opposite where comparing myself to others gives me lower self-esteem

- She's serving in Middle School but I'm serving in Kindergarten. Maybe Abouna doesn't think I can handle it. Maybe he thinks I'm not strong in the Bible.
- All my friends my age got ordained Oghnostos except me... maybe it's because I have a bad voice.
- And all of these non-existent things live rent-free in my mind and this leads to Burnout

There is no peace and no end to envy. Envy rots the bones.

Of course envy itself can be its own discussion or series and can be studied very deeply, but here we are looking at Envy that leads to burnout.

So what is the treatment for that?

Treatment 3: Share the Burden

St Paul tells us to "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2)

- You can share your burden with someone you trust - choose someone who is spiritually wise. This can mean your Father of Confession or another Spiritual father, another servant in the Church, your parents, your spouse, your sibling or your friend.
- When you share your burden you are ADMITTING your limitations and your problem - and thus, you are looking at YOURSELF instead of at someone else. It's the opposite of comparing yourself with others. It's an opportunity for Circumspection
- You are also getting someone else to lift with you.
- This could be in the form of emotional support - Someone else knowing what you're going through sometimes is enough Emotionally to lift away some of the pressure

Root Cause 4: Giving from what I don't have

- Don't have time but still try to give it - Burnout

- Don't have physical strength but still try to give it - Burnout
- Don't have knowledge but still try to give it - Burnout

It ends up being a grind. Just excessive work. Basically trying to live a life that God has not given us - trying to do something that God didn't give us. Everyone is given something. Gifts, passions, capacities, etc. If we try to give outside of those capacities it leads to burnout.

Sometimes it's because others place expectations on us that are not in our capacity.

- I was riding with HG Bishop Youssef in the car once and he was on a phone call with someone and HG sounded very frustrated. And after he hung up, he started to tell me "the people are expecting too much... the man has a legal problem. So I told him to consult a lawyer. I'm not a lawyer I'm a bishop. So he says I cannot afford a lawyer. So I told him to find a paralegal. He said 'I don't know any paralegals. Can you send me the phone number for one?' Again... I'm a bishop!!!' So I told him 'go on the internet and search paralegal in your area' And he said 'I don't have internet' - can you believe this? I told him take your computer and go to starbucks and search for a paralegal in your area."
- Can you believe the expectation this person was laying on HGBY - HGBY who is managing the geographically largest diocese in the world, with almost 100 priests and 50 churches and even more communities? Who is shepherding thousands and thousands of people.
- HG also told me another story about a man who called his priest and said "Abouna my wife kicked me out of the house can you go over there and get my suitcase with clothes in it" or a man who called his priest and said "Abouna can you take my wife to the airport"
- Sometimes people place expectations on us that are outside our capacity.
 - Is HGBY capable of looking up paralegals? Of course! But it would mean that something else that's more important falls through the cracks.
 - Is Abouna capable of taking someone to the airport? Definitely! But it will mean something else doesn't get done.

Sometimes it's because we want to please others.

- We want to satisfy others or make other people happy. It's coming from a good place - maybe from Empathy or just a desire to see others happy. We look at others' needs and say "I have to fulfill them" and it leads to us burning out.

See what Solomon writes to us in the Proverbs - "it is a trap to dedicate something rashly and only later consider one's vows" (Proverbs 20:25)

So what do you think the treatment is for this one?

Treatment 4: Learn to say no

It's much easier to get INTO a situation than to get out of it.

- trouble
- debt
- relationship

- weight problems
- bad grades
- fill up schedule as opposed to emptying a full schedule

Before making any decision or taking on anything new, I need to carefully consider it as Solomon wrote. I need to pray about it and let the Lord guide my decision. I need to see if it's the right thing to do. I need to recognize that I have limits. I have bandwidth

Something that I do all the time:

- I walk into the grocery store and I know EXACTLY what I'm getting. I'm getting milk for my kids, and a couple steaks for my wife and I.
- So I walk into the store and I know I'm getting a gallon of milk and two steaks. I can carry that in my hands... I don't need a cart. I don't even need a basket. I walk right by them.
- And I'm heading for the steaks when I see the specials right there at the front of the store... pasta is buy one get one free. Let me grab a few of those. Honeycrisp apples are on sale maybe a bag of those. I know the milk is coming so I'm saving room in my arms. But then I see the chicken is on sale - would be good to get it now instead of next week when it's more expensive. Let me pick that up.
- And I'm balancing all this stuff and it's too much for me to carry. I finally get to the steaks and grab two. I go to the milk aisle and I don't know how I'm gonna carry this milk.
- Why didn't I grab a basket? I didn't want to admit that I have limitations.
- If I grab a basket, I will know when it's full. But if I don't have a basket, I could theoretically keep stacking things on top of each other infinitely. No limits!
- And we do the same thing with our time and our capacities. We don't want to recognize that we have limits. That our bandwidth is limited.

So we need to recognize that. If I agree to something that is one hour... I need to also drop something else that's one hour. Always ask yourself "what is this going to cost me? What am I going to have to say no to by saying yes to this?" If we don't ask ourselves this question, what do you think will be most impacted? What is always the first to be impacted? My spiritual life. My bible time. My prayer time. My quiet time. And then my sleep and my physical health. So it's important to ask this question - if I take on this thing that will take an hour, then I'll lose an hour of studying today. Then maybe tomorrow to make up that hour, I'll have to buy a lunch instead of making my lunch.

With this also means learning to say no. If you can't say no... you're gonna have a bad time. It's much better to say "I'm sorry I can't" than to say yes and not do it. Remember the parable Christ told about the servant who did the will of his master.

Don't say no to everything! But carefully and prayerfully consider something before saying yes to it.

Actually, if you keep your Spirit Nourished, then God the Holy Spirit will guide you to say no, and give you the strength to say no. Or guide you to say yes and give you the strength to complete what you obliged to yourself.

Conclusion

Review

So let's go back to the Root Causes. What is the Treatment for each one?

Fast-Paced Busy Life – Rest and Retreat

Improper Concept of Satisfaction/Success – Set your eyes above – “Is this for God's glory?”

Comparing ourselves to others – Share the Burden

Trying to give from what we don't have – Learn to say no

What if I can't?

What if...

- I don't have time for rest...
- I don't have time to share the burden...
- I don't have time to consider every little decision...

“The thing that you do is not good.” (Exodus 18:17)

The Lord has an escape plan! Stop and assess!!

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:6)

If you can't do these things, then you're too busy and that's unacceptable. As Jethro told Moses - "What you are doing is wrong." A change is needed.

Something has to give. God always has an escape plan so place your trust in Him.

Concluding Prayer

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, Who abides in us would give us comfort when we are burned out, guidance to say no when we should, strength to humble ourselves and share our burdens with others, and wisdom to nourish our Spirit through rest and daily retreat, continually delighting in the Lord so that our inner man may be renewed day by day.

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