

DEALING WITH BURNOUT

Int.

1. Aim: To discuss the way to deal with burnout which causes some people to quit and fall away.
2. Do God's faithful people ever tire of doing good?
 - a. Yes! I say that because Paul addresses the very issue in...
 - b. Galatians 6:9-10. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - i. "Let us not lose heart in doing good." When you lose heart, you give up, you give in, you get tired of it all and quit.
 - c. It's compassion fatigue. It's well doer's burnout.
 - d. It happens sometimes when a very dedicated, committed disciple of Jesus suddenly wakes up and realized he's tired - tired of giving, tired of doing, tired of serving.
 - e. He finds that the joy of service is gone.
3. Burnout is a reaction to the stress of life. It occurs in all areas of life: work, sports, education and of course the church.
4. In our lesson we will:
 - a. Define burnout
 - b. Look at the causes of burnout
 - c. And then suggest some solutions to the problem of burnout

DISCUSSION

I. DEFINITION OF BURNOUT

A. Burnout in the Work Place

1. Burn-out occurs where highly committed people lose interest and motivation.
2. It will occur in hard working, hard driven people, who become emotionally, psychologically or physically exhausted.
3. Burn-out usually occurs slowly, over a long period of time. Here are some of the symptoms:
 - a. A feeling of lack of control over commitments
 - b. An incorrect belief that you are accomplishing less
 - c. Loss of a sense of purpose and energy

B. WHAT CAUSES BURN-OUT In the work place

1. You find it difficult to say 'no' to additional commitments or responsibilities
2. You have been under intense and sustained pressure for some time
3. Your high standards make it difficult to delegate to assistants
4. You have been trying to achieve too much for too long
5. You have been giving too much emotional support for too long

C. The Solution for Burn-Out

1. Re-evaluate your goals and prioritize them
2. Evaluate the demands placed on you and see how they fit in with your goals. Identify your ability to comfortably meet these demands.
3. If you are over-involved, reduce the commitments that are excessive
4. If people demand too much emotional energy, become more unapproachable and less sympathetic. Involve other people in a supportive role. You owe it to yourself to avoid being bled dry emotionally.

5. Learn stress management skills

- a. Examine other areas in your life that are generating stress, such as work or family, and try to solve problems and reduce the stress
- b. Get the support of your friends and family in reducing stress
- c. Ensure that you are following a healthy lifestyle:
 - (1) Get adequate sleep and rest to maintain your energy levels
 - (2) Ensure that you are eating a healthy, balanced diet - bad diet can make you ill or feel bad.
 - (3) Get adequate regular aerobic exercise
- d. Perhaps develop alternative activities such as a relaxing hobby to take your mind off problems
- e. Acknowledge your own humanity: remember that you have a right to pleasure and a right to relaxation

D. Now we will apply these principles to spiritual burn-out

II. SPIRITUAL BURN-OUT

A. Definition

1. No exact word in Bible
2. Gal. 6:9 "Be not Weary in Well doing"
 - a. Some people get tired of doing good
 - b. Attending service, living a godly life, helping others, studying the Bible, Working in the church.
 - c. When you lose heart, you give up and get tired of it all.
 - d. Therefore they quit - they fall away - become backsliders

B. Who Get's weary of well doing?

1. These are people who were earlier very committed and dedicated to the cause of Christ:
 - a. Some may have been preachers, elders, or deacons
 - b. They may have been Bible class teachers
 - c. They were heavily involved in the work of the church
2. Some of these members quit serving and working in the church. They will sometimes continue to attend, but are not involved.
3. Then some of these will sooner or later fall away and quit
4. It is a very serious problem !

C. What Causes Burn-Out ? Excuses we make that we feel causes burn-out

1. Bearing too much of the load - Lack of Rest
 - a. Some get discouraged because they think they are bearing more than their share of the load
 - b. Other members are not doing anything or very little in comparison
 - c. Involved in many activities of the church
2. We have done enough
 - a. Some carry the load a long time then get the idea that they have done their share.
 - b. They feel it is time to quit and let some younger people carry on the work for a while.

3. Not appreciated
 - a. Lack of appreciation on the part of those we serve may cause us to be burned out and quit
 - b. Some people do not appreciate what others do for them and the more we do the more they expect of us and they criticize us for not doing more.

4. Criticism
 - a. Criticism from others may cause us to get tired of doing good.
 - b. Critics can find something wrong with the way you do good, the amount of good you do, and the spirit in which you do it.
 - c. If we think their criticism is unjust, we are likely to become discouraged and quit.

5. Lack of nourishment
 - a. We get too busy to feed ourselves spiritually.
 - b. Spend too much time helping others.

6. Monotony and drudgery
 - a. Grow weary and tired
 - b. 2 Thes. 3:13 "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing."

7. Lack of results
 - a. We feel that sometimes it is doing no good.
 - b. It is hard to always see results from our work.

III. THE SOLUTION FOR SPIRITUAL BURN-OUT

A. The causes and suggested solutions

1. Bearing too much of the load
 - a. Remember that others may spend their time and money on things of this earth.
[Pleasures and luxuries of this life]
 - b. But this does not compare to the value of laying up treasures in heaven.

- c. Matt. 6:19-20 "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:"
- d. It is possible we are spending too much time on the work and we need to rest. Remember Christ told his disciples "Come ye apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there wee many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." Mk. 6:31
- e. Many times things look a whole lot different after a good night's rest - or a short vacation.
- f. "The best bridge between hope and despair is often a good night's sleep."
- g. When you get a good look at things you realize that you are only doing something small in comparison to the blessings you are receiving.
- h. Think about Paul and the great work He did !

2. We have done enough

- a. It is true that younger people need to be added to the work of the church.
- b. But it is not true that any of us can retire saying that we have done enough.
- c. Suppose God gave us this possibility:
 - (1) Work 10,000 hours
 - (2) Worship 30 years = 3 @ week = 4680 -- If you attend all services of Gospel meetings and VBS and special services then you are finished in 25 years
 - (3) Give 12% of income for 30 years
 - (4) Live a Christian life for 30 years
 - (5) Then you can retire and quit and never attend services again, never read Bible again, never give any more \$, do not worry about how you live!!!
- d. Eph. 2:8-9 --- We do not earn salvation
- e. Not possible - we never retire

3. Not appreciated - often true
 - a. Remember we are to express gratitude to others for what they are doing.
 - b. Thanks to elders, deacons, preacher, Bible class teachers, song leaders, secretary, bulletin workers, anyone else
 - c. Special times to give honor
 - d. Rom. 13:7 "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."
 - e. Rom. 2:10 "But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:"
 - f. 1 Pet. 2:17 "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."
 - g. What we are doing is for God and He never forgets or overlooks

4. Criticism
 - a. We are living for God - not our fellow man.
 - b. If we Please God -- then it does not matter what men may say. Gal. 1:10 "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."
 - c. Heb. 6:10 "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

5. Lack of nourishment
 - a. We grow weary if we work long without food.
 - b. There is a danger lest the active servant of Christ should neglect his own private prayer and meditation and the quiet inward spiritual sustenance that is so necessary to give vigor and freshness to the external service.
 - c. Muzzle the ox ? 1 Tim. 5:18-- "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward."

6. Monotony and drudgery
 - a. Remember Christ is watching
 - b. 1 Cor. 12:14-31 - all members and all work are important

7. Lack of results

- a. Gal. 6:9 "...in due season we shall reap if we faint not".
- b. At the proper time God will reward us. We may not get rewards which we can see and handle, and we may not receive them at the time we want them.
- c. Harvest comes after seed-time -- but not the next day
- d. Illustration : A Chaplain was ministering to a seriously wounded soldier as he lay dying. He asked the chaplain to write a letter to his former Sunday School teacher: 'Tell her that I died a Christian because of what she taught me in that class in church. The memory of her earnest pleas and the warmth of her love have stayed with me. Tell her I'll meet her in heaven.' The message was sent, and some time later the chaplain received this reply: "May God forgive me. Just last month I resigned my position and abandoned my Sunday school pupils because I felt my work had been fruitless. How I regret my impatience and lack of faith! I will ask if I can go back to teaching. I have learned that when one sows for God, the reaping is both sure and blessed!."
- e. Reaping comes after time for growth and maturity

B. Longsuffering is the over-all solution for burnout

1. Gal. 5:22-23 - one of the fruits of the spirit
2. "To be of a long spirit, not to lose heart, to persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles; to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others; to be mild and slow in avenging; to be longsuffering, slow to anger, slow to punish."
3. Patience is a synonym for the word long suffering
4. Longsuffering with joy
5. Col. 1:10-11 "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;"

CONCLUSION

1. If we Faint Not - Gal. 6:9
 - a. The word FAINT means to give up and quit making any further efforts to do good.
 - b. The word REAP in v. 8 means to gain eternal life.
 - c. We will gain eternal life if we faint not - if we are faithful till the end
 2. Matt. 10:22 "And ye shall be hated of all [men] for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 3. 1 Cor. 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 4. Heb. 12:3 "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."
 5. We must learn to manage stress in our lives
 - a. Get adequate rest and food
 - b. Have a hobby
 - c. Help others
 - d. Enjoy life
 6. Gal. 6:9 "Let us never tire of doing right, for at the proper season we shall reap our harvest, if we do not grow weary." [Twentieth Century New Testament]
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Sources.

1. Words for the Weary Well Doer: Part 1 by Dave Redick
 2. Thayers Greek/English Lexicon P. 387
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 Evans Church of Christ
 515 Gibbs Road
 Evans, Ga. 30809
 706-855-1249
 arthurpigman@cybrtyme.com
 www.evansgachurchofchrist.org