

Timely Counsel (Exodus 18) There is a term which is more and more frequently employed by God's people, which depicts a problem that has become widespread -even epidemic. The term is burnout. According to New York psychologist Herbert J. Freudenberger, PhD., who coined the term, burnout is a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by a devotion to a cause, a way of life, or a relationship that failed to produce the expected reward.

Burnout is a problem born of good intentions, because it happens when people try to reach unrealistic goals and end up depleting their energy and losing touch with themselves and others.

This type of person generally has a very high expectation of what can be accomplished. As time goes by all of the goals aren't able to be achieved, given the methodology employed. Instead of lowering objectives or accepting reality, or making the needed changes, frustration is bottled up and the individual tries even harder. The result is burnout.

Moses was dangerously close to burning himself out when **Thanks to the common sense of a wise father-in-law, Moses was delivered from his own destruction, the burnout which would have resulted** from his illusion he could do all things well...When he realized he cannot do everything well, there came a sense of liberation, Moses learned like you and I need too, that we can all somethings, and we can do those things very well. But we cannot do it all...

So Let us listen well to the sage words of this Midianite, who has much to teach us about managing our lives and our work loads well. Especially those of us who are predisposed to over-involvement, and over commitment may we learn today so as to be spared us from the deadly disease of burnout. we pick up the narrative in Exodus 18..the israelites have been in the wilderness for a few months at this time...and life free of Egypt was taking on a rhythm of its own...

*EX 18:1 Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, **the priest of Midian**, heard about everything God had done for Moses and his people, the Israelites. He heard especially about how the LORD had rescued them from Egypt. ² Earlier, Moses*

had sent his wife, Zipporah, and his two sons back to Jethro, who had taken them in. ³ (Moses' first son was named Gershom, for Moses had said when the boy was born, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land.") ⁴ His second son was named Eliezer, for Moses had said, "The God of my ancestors was my helper; he rescued me from the sword of Pharaoh.") ⁵ Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, now came to visit Moses in the wilderness. He brought Moses' wife and two sons with him, and they arrived while Moses and the people were camped near the mountain of God.

- **Jethro had been well-informed though quite a distance away...** He probably made a point to invite travelers, even caravans, to share a meal with him or to spend the night in his tent, enabling him to learn of events in Egypt.
- **Zipporah and Moses' two sons** also probably gleaned a considerable amount of this information, for they must have had great interest in the welfare of Moses, as husband and father.
- **Jethro had learned that God had protected Moses, and that He had delivered the Israelites out of Egypt.** He obviously learned (or would learn) the location of the Israelites, which would not have been nearly as far away as Egypt had been.
- **Jethro had learned enough to conclude that circumstances were such that Moses and his family should be reunited...it was safe**
- **Here, as later in the chapter, he acts out of wisdom, compassion, and concern for Moses' best interest.**

EX 18: 7 So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed low and kissed him. They asked about each other's welfare and then went into Moses' tent. ⁸ Moses told his father-in-law everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and Egypt on behalf of Israel. He also told about all the hardships they had experienced along the way and how the LORD had rescued his people from all their troubles. ⁹ Jethro was delighted when he heard about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel as he rescued them from the hand of the Egyptians.

¹⁰ “Praise the LORD,” Jethro said, “for he has rescued you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh. Yes, he has rescued Israel from the powerful hand of Egypt! ¹¹ I know now that the LORD is greater than all other gods, because he rescued his people from the oppression of the proud Egyptians.” ¹² Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God. Aaron and all the elders of Israel came out and joined him in a sacrificial meal in God’s presence.

- **The arrival of Jethro, Zipporah, Gershom and Eliezer, was apparently a pleasant surprise for Moses.**
- **Moses is reported to have gone to meet Jethro, kissed him, and then went into Jethro’s tent with him as he was a very prominent man, deserving of a formal reception.**
- **Moses brought Jethro up to date with a detailed report of how the hand of God had delivered the Israelites and devastated the Egyptians (v. 8).**
- **. Where in the world were Zipporah and the children? Probably, they were there as well, but given the culture of that day, this is simply how things were done.**
- **Jethro’s response, seems to professes a personal faith in the God of Israel, which he had not had previously.** First, Jethro rejoiced with Moses, praising God for His grace manifested toward Israel, **Second, Jethro seems to acknowledge, for the first time, the superiority of God over all other “gods,”** which one would suppose included his own previously worshipped pagan gods.
- **Jethro’s faith is demonstrated in his offering of sacrifices to God, and in the sacrificial meal, which Jethro, Moses, and all the elders of Israel shared (v. 12).**

The next morning, Moses and the people of Israel began their daily routines. and this was Moses'

EX 18: 13 The next day, Moses took his seat to hear the people's disputes against each other. They waited before him from morning till evening. 14 When Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, "What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?"

- **Jethro was baffled by the inefficiency of what had taken place during the day. Jethro was able to quickly identify the problem to which, it seems, Moses was oblivious.**
- **Most likely around the dinner table that evening, Jethro began to inquire about Moses' rationale for administering justice (judging) as he was doing.**
- **The people came to him with all those matters which needed a decision, instruction, or counsel. , sitting as Israel's sole judge began to line up at the designated place, perhaps just outside Moses' tent. With a nation composed of nearly 2,000,000 one can imagine that the line was long, and wait even longer... The people were weary from standing all day, and so was Moses ...many left without an audience daily**
- **Moses was completely caught off guard by Jethro's disapproval.**

EX 18: 15 Moses replied, "Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God. 16 When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God's decrees and give them his instructions."

- **Moses was so desperately trying to keep his head above water that he didn't have time to reflect on what he was doing.**

His response reveals several misconceptions regarding his role as a leader. Consider them with me for a moment.

1. **role conflict:** A person who has conflicting responsibilities will begin to feel pulled in many directions and will try to do everything equally well without setting priorities. The result will be the feelings of fatigue or exhaustion associated with burnout.

- **When Jethro asked why Moses handled matters as he did, Moses responded, in effect, “I am doing this because the people have asked me to. Moses assumed that when there was a need, it was his personal obligation to meet it. Moses believed that every request for his help made the matter his responsibility to fix.**
- **Moses seems to have assumed that no one else was able to do what he was doing. As Moses did this others stood around and watched.** Moses told Jethro that the people came to him “to seek God’s will” (v. 15). It seems as though this placed the needs of the people in a category for which only Moses was able to give an answer.

2) *role ambiguity*: The individual does not know what is expected of him. He has no role model or guidelines to follow. The result is that he never feels that he is accomplishing everything he should.

- **Moses poorly reasoned that because his task was to lead the entire nation, he must do so by dealing with people one at a time.** It did not seem to occur to Moses that he not only could but must handle his task on a larger scale, dealing with groups, rather than individuals. Rather than to teach a class of 100 Moses was teaching the same thing 100 times to 100 people.
- **Moses life included both public and private obligations, neither of which can be sacrificed entirely for the other. Moses had become so entangled in his public duties (judging the Israelites) that he had unwittingly been neglecting himself and his family. He was, according to Jethro, “wearing himself out” (v. 18).**
- **Furthermore, Moses had seemingly forgotten his family. Who knows how long they would have been left with Jethro, had this wise man not taken the initiative to reunite Moses’ family?**

3) *role overload*: The individual can't say no and keeps on taking on more responsibility than he can handle until he finally burns out.

- **Moses seems to have lost sight of his unique gifts and calling. God had not called Moses to do everything, but to do some things.** Moses was given responsibility to lead the nation Israel as a whole, and thus his task was very different from that of others, who could deal with people on a personal, intimate, one-on-one basis.

THE SOLUTION.....

*EX 18:17 “This is not good!” Moses’ father-in-law exclaimed. ¹⁸ “You’re going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself. ¹⁹ Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. **You should continue to be the people’s representative before God, bringing their disputes to him.** ²⁰ **Teach them God’s decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives.** ²¹ **But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. ²² They should always be available to solve the people’s common disputes, but have them bring the major cases to you. Let the leaders decide the smaller matters themselves. They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you. ²³ If you follow this advice, and if God commands you to do so, **then you will be able to endure the pressures, and all these people will go home in peace.**”***

- **Moses was to be a servant, but he was to serve by leading. As such, he must take charge, he must determine his calling, he must establish priorities, and he must stick to them, even when others would seek to modify his ministry.**
- As Israel’s leader, Moses should have had control of his time and energy, but it is obvious that he did not. From morning till night, Moses was captive to the crowds who wanted his guidance.
- **Moses was unable to manage his ministry because he failed to see that his ministry required management ..**Get those others involved...according to capability and character...and you handle only the big ones...it will be much more efficient and effective****

- **Moses was to serve the Israelites, but he must do so in the way which God had called him to serve. Lead and teach**

Ex 18:19 Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. You should continue to be the people's representative before God, bringing their disputes to him. ²⁰ Teach them God's decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives....

- that would be enough pressure...as he also had a family, his relationship with God and taking care of himself...!!

EX 18:24 Moses listened to his father-in-law's advice and followed his suggestions. ²⁵ He chose capable men from all over Israel and appointed them as leaders over the people. He put them in charge of groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. ²⁶ These men were always available to solve the people's common disputes. They brought the major cases to Moses, but they took care of the smaller matters themselves. ²⁷ Soon after this, Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law, who returned to his own land.

Jethro's advice was probably directly related to the writing of the Pentateuch by Moses. Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament—the Pentateuch. This is a great literary work, not to mention its status as divine revelation. The writing was Moses' implementation of Jethro's counsel: "Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform" (Exodus 18:20).

- **The way Moses was consumed by his duties as judge, he would never had the time to write the very chapter which we have studied, and from which we can learn so much. How directly we have benefited from Jethro's counsel to Moses. Millions have been blessed because of the change which Jethro's visit brought about in the life of Moses.**
- **Listen to wise counsel...especially if it offends your Pride**

number 12:3 ³ *(Now Moses was very humble—more humble than any other person on earth.) end*

end

Psalm 25:9

He leads the **humble** in doing right, teaching them his way.

James 4:10

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.

The onset is slow. The early symptoms include a feeling of emotional and physical exhaustion; a sense of alienation, cynicism, impatience, negativism and feelings of detachment to the point that the individual begins to resent work involved and the people who are a part of that work. In extreme cases, the individual who once cared very deeply about a project or a group will insulate himself to the point that he no longer cares at all.

The irony of burnout is that it happens to the same person who previously was enthusiastic and brimming over with energy and new ideas when first involved in a job or a new situation.

I believe that we can distill several important principles of leadership from the words of Jethro, which were addressed to Moses.

(1) To be a leader one must be in control. Here, I am referring to the fact that Moses should be in control of his ministry and his time, not so much that he should be in control of Israel. Moses was not in control of his ministry. As Israel's leader, Moses should have had control of his time, but it is obvious that he did not. From morning till night, Moses was captive to the crowds who wanted his guidance.

Jethro urged Moses to exercise leadership by getting in control of his time, and of the ways in which he would lead the people.

(2) To be an effective Christian leader, one must balance the principle of servanthood with that of stewardship. It appears Moses' primary motivation was to help the people... Jethro to marvel at its inefficiency.

- Every leader is to be a servant, but we are to be the Lord's servant, doing His will, not the servants of men, fulfilling their every expectation and desire.
- To put this matter in different words, Moses was to be a servant, but he was to serve by leading. As such, he must take charge, he must determine his calling, he must establish priorities, and he must stick to them, even when others would seek to modify his ministry.
- Moses was to serve the Israelites, but he must do so in the way which God had called him to serve. Servanthood is thus an essential attitude for the Christian leader, but that leader's actions must be determined by other factors.

(3) Leadership is shepherding and shepherding involves a flock.

- **Moses was dealing with the Israelites individually, but Jethro advocated dealing with them collectively** (cf. vss. 19-20).
- It is a good goal for a leader to desire to know all the people he leads personally, but it is quite honestly an impossible goal when the group gets very large.
- Surely we cannot fault Moses for failing to “know” each of the nearly 2 million Israelites intimately.
- Moses told the Israelites that their great number was the reason for his taking the action recommended by Jethro: “
- There are reasons why we have come to expect our leaders to know us intimately, even though this is impossible. One reason is that we have not carefully interpreted or applied the shepherd imagery of the Bible. When shepherding is described as a function of human leaders, they are spoken of as shepherds of a flock, not shepherds of an individual sheep (cf. Psalm 77:20; 78:52; 80:1; Isaiah 63:11-14).

Another reason is that we have failed to distinguish between the shepherding of the flock by men from the shepherding of our Lord. When our Lord is the shepherd, however, then we find the relationship described is much more personal and intimate (cf. Psalm 23; John 10), as well it can be, for our Lord does not have the human limitations of earthly shepherds.

Another error, in my opinion, is that we have tended to restrict the task of shepherding to elders alone.

- **As I understand the concept of the church as a body, I see that it is the work of the church to minister to itself.**
- We are all priests, not just a select few (1 Peter 2:5). Elders are instructed to shepherd the flock of God (1 Peter 5:1), but this does not mean that they do all the shepherding.
- It means, that they are responsible to see to it that the flock of God is shepherded.
- This explains why shepherds are spoken of in the plural, rather than in the singular (starting with Moses and Aaron—Psalm 77:20, and then on with the plurality of elders/shepherds in the New Testament (cf. Acts

20:17 Philippians 1:1; 1 Peter 5:1-2). The work of shepherding is beyond any one man's ability to accomplish.

When Moses attempted to settle disputes, he was dealing with the Israelites on an individual basis. When he taught the people the principles and precepts of God, he could do so to large groups, thus functioning more as a shepherd.

(4) Because leadership requires a plurality of leaders, it also requires leaders to be managers. Moses was unable to manage his ministry because he failed to see that his ministry required management. One of the essential functions of leadership is management. Moses was dealing with nearly 2 million people, but he was trying to do so all by himself. He failed to see the need for management—the ability to make use of others in meeting the needs of the Israelites. The New Testament speaks frequently of the management function of church leaders. Thus the terms “manage,” “be in charge of,” and “overseer” are frequently used with reference to church leadership. Moses had forgotten that leadership involves management.

(5) Moses life included both public and private obligations, neither of which can be sacrificed entirely for the other. Moses had become so entangled in his public duties (judging the Israelites) that he had unwittingly been neglecting himself and his family. He was, according to Jethro, “wearing himself out” (v. 18). Furthermore, Moses had seemingly forgotten his family. Who knows how long they would have been left with Jethro, had this wise man not taken the initiative to reunite Moses' family?

Attending to one's own “inner man” is vital, not only because we must maintain our own walk with the Lord, but also because we can quickly use up our spiritual reserves in ministering to others.

(6) Leadership must deal with problems, but must guard against becoming consumed with them. Moses had gravitated into the role as Israel's “problem-solver.” it seems that Moses was primarily consumed with arbitrating disputes.

He had become more of a referee than anything else. His role was almost entirely prescriptive (problem-solving), rather than preventative (problem prevention).

Jethro's advice was that Moses rearrange his time so that priority was given to teaching the people God's principles and precepts, thus preventing the problems, and prescribing guidelines for solving problems when they arose.

In my opinion, when we become absorbed in problem-solving, we often are so busy that we lose our sense of direction. Moses seems to have been taken totally by surprise by Jethro's response.

Moses appears to have been completely ignorant of his own failure, or of the fact that the Israelites' needs were not being properly met. I believe that this is because he was too involved in the details of ministry and not involved enough in directing ministry.

Important point...the needs of people will exhaust the best of us...but Jesus' resources will never be exhausted...it is important we turn people to seek Jesus...

end

Three things are associated with burnout:

- *role conflict*: A person who has conflicting responsibilities will begin to feel pulled in many directions and will try to do everything equally well without setting priorities. The result will be the feelings of fatigue or exhaustion associated with burnout.
- *role ambiguity*: The individual does not know what is expected of her. She knows she is expected to be a good career person but is not quite sure how to accomplish this because she has no role model or guidelines to follow. The result is that she never feels that she has accomplished anything worthwhile.
- *role overload*: The individual can't say no and keeps on taking on more responsibility than he can handle until he finally burns out.

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- **These are pride issues...** At the root of our frantic propensity to overwork is the sin of pride— Pride says I am solely responsible and able to help the people.... **Moses wrongly reasoned that because his task was to lead the entire nation, he must do so by dealing with people one at a time.** It did not seem to occur to Moses that he not only could but must handle his task on a larger scale, dealing with groups, rather than individuals. Rather than to teach a class of 100 (which would have been a small class in that setting), Moses was teaching the same thing 100 times to 100 people.
- **Moses seems to have assumed that no one else was able to do what he was doing. As Moses did this others stood around and watched.** Moses told Jethro that the people came to him “to seek God’s will” (v. 15). It seems as though this placed the needs of the people in a category for which only Moses was able to give an answer.
- **As Moses did this others stood around and watched.** There are many overworked Christians who need to learn the lesson which Jethro taught Moses, but the reason why some Christians are overtaxed is because others are lazy and inactive. If you are uncommitted, uninvolved and sluggardly in your Christian service, I exhort you not to try to use this text as a pretext for your inaction.

- (1) **Moses wrongly reasoned that because his task was to lead the entire nation, he must do so by dealing with people one at a time.** It did not seem to occur to Moses that he not only could but must handle his task on a larger scale, dealing with groups, rather than individuals. Rather than to teach a class of 100 (which would have been a small class in that setting), Moses was teaching the same thing 100 times to 100 people.
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- (3) **Moses seems to have lost sight of his unique gifts and calling.** God had not called Moses to do everything, but to do some things. Moses was given responsibility to lead the nation Israel as a whole, and thus his task was very different from that of others, who could deal with people on a personal, intimate, one-on-one basis.

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There is a term which is more and more frequently employed by God's people, which depicts a problem that has become widespread -even epidemic. The term is **burnout**.

Burnout happens frequently to Christian leaders, who strive to meet impossible expectations and demands, the achievement of which will show him to be both spiritual and successful (these two evaluations are too frequently found together these days). Failure to accomplish these expectations and demands is believed to prove one a sluggard, unspiritually minded, or a failure. **Burnout occurs when, in sheer exhaustion and frustration, one loses all hope of meeting the standard which is imposed on them (either by one's self, others, or both), and simply gives up. By my definition at least, burnout does not lead to reevaluating and restructuring one's ministry, but to cessation of ministry.**

.Burnout is probably a significant factor in what is now referred to as the "mid-life crisis." In spite of diligent effort and much sacrifice, individuals discover, to their dismay and depression, that their pursuit has been, in the words of the wise man of Ecclesiastes, vanity.

The burnout of which I am speaking is that which plagues Christians, whether leaders or laymen (I dislike both labels, but I use them here anyway). It is not the squeezing out of things spiritual by things secular (so called).

It is the smothering of the fundamental spiritual essentials by the sheer volume of the plethora of non-essential activities and "ministries" which we foolishly strive to maintain.

You will be continually stressed out if you believe that you are solely responsible for your family, income, and future....and if yourself worth is overly tied in to your success...

You will be driven and overly competitive and consumed with worry and fear.

Faith is a character issue...and nothing challenges faith more that fear of what the future holds....

- There is rarely something that we struggle with character wise that we haven't struggled with before....Pride...Anger...gossip...depression...Fear...bitterness...self control...faith
- Just as There is not a temptation that comes upon us that has not enticed us before.
Envy...selfishness...unforgiveness...lust....greed...lying...stealing...immorality

This is a great truth...The vast majority of things we struggle with we have struggled with before...moses single handely setting out to save the Israelites by killing the Egyptian guard...

It's not new...It repeats....It's old familiar stuff....It's a predictable pattern

- I can't think of any new flaws that I have...I can't think of any behavior that I want to change now that I didn't have ten years ago....

- I might not have wanted to change it ten years ago, or perhaps even knew I had this behavior ten years ago...but never the less...it needed changing then too!!

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- **There are some principles here....to deal with stress which leads to burnout...**
 - To succeed in the long haul you have to pace yourselves...anyone can go great guns for a while...and the highly caffeinated for a while longer
 - People will always be needy people.. ..Jesus said the poor will be with you always...
 - God created us body soul and Spirit ...he provides rest for all three
 - You need to make time to eat right and rest for your physical well being
 - You need to get physically away...that is quiet from the noise of your daily life
 - You need time alone with people close to you
 - You need time alone with the Lord
 - You need a boat!!! An activity to enjoy to take you back, a vacation, ...a change of scenery...refreshes and revives

The remedy for burn out

- get the right perspective...God is in control...he is bigger than any problem
- bring what you got to God
- give what you got to God
- make the appropriate changes...take care of your body, take a vacation from the problem ...if needed get away.
- ask for help

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Burnout Prevention and Recovery

1. STOP DENYING. Listen to the wisdom of your body. Begin to freely admit the stresses and pressures which have manifested physically, mentally, or emotionally.
 - MIT VIEW: Work until the physical pain forces you into unconsciousness.
2. AVOID ISOLATION. Don't do everything alone! Develop or renew intimacies with friends and loved ones. Closeness not only brings new insights, but also is anathema to agitation and depression.
 - MIT VIEW: Shut your office door and lock it from the inside so no one will distract you. They're just trying to hurt your productivity.
3. CHANGE YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES. If your job, your relationship, a situation, or a person is dragging you under, try to alter your circumstance, or if necessary, leave.
 - MIT VIEW: If you feel something is dragging you down, suppress these thoughts. This is a weakness. Drink more coffee.

4. DIMINISH INTENSITY IN YOUR LIFE. Pinpoint those areas or aspects which summon up the most concentrated intensity and work toward alleviating that pressure.
 - MIT VIEW: Increase intensity. Maximum intensity = maximum productivity. If you find yourself relaxed and with your mind wandering, you are probably having a detrimental effect on the recovery rate.
5. STOP OVERNURTURING. If you routinely take on other people's problems and responsibilities, learn to gracefully disengage. Try to get some nurturing for yourself.
 - MIT VIEW: Always attempt to do everything. You ARE responsible for it all. Perhaps you haven't thoroughly read your job description.
6. LEARN TO SAY "NO". You'll help diminish intensity by speaking up for yourself. This means refusing additional requests or demands on your time or emotions.
 - MIT VIEW: Never say no to anything. It shows weakness, and lowers the research volume. Never put off until tomorrow what you can do at midnight.
7. BEGIN TO BACK OFF AND DETACH. Learn to delegate, not only at work, but also at home and with friends. In this case, detachment means rescuing yourself for yourself.
 - MIT VIEW: Delegating is a sign of weakness. If you want it done right, do it yourself (see #5).
8. REASSESS YOUR VALUES. Try to sort out the meaningful values from the temporary and fleeting, the essential from the nonessential. You'll conserve energy and time, and begin to feel more centered.
 - MIT VIEW: Stop thinking about your own problems. This is selfish. If your values change, we will make an announcement at the Corporation meeting. Until then, if someone calls you and questions your priorities, tell them that you are unable to comment on this and give them the number for Community and Government Relations. It will be taken care of.
9. LEARN TO PACE YOURSELF. Try to take life in moderation. You only have so much energy available. Ascertain what is wanted and needed in your life, then begin to balance work with love, pleasure, and relaxation.
 - MIT VIEW: A balanced life is a myth perpetuated by liberal arts schools. Don't be a fool: the only thing that matters is work and productivity.
10. TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY. Don't skip meals, abuse yourself with rigid diets, disregard your need for sleep, or break the doctor appointments. Take care of yourself nutritionally.
 - MIT VIEW: Your body serves your mind, your mind serves the Institute. Push the mind and the body will follow. Drink Mountain Dew.
11. DIMINISH WORRY AND ANXIETY. Try to keep superstitious worrying to a minimum - it changes nothing. You'll have a better grip on your situation if you spend less time worrying and more time taking care of your real needs.
 - MIT VIEW: If you're not worrying about work, you must not be very committed to it. We'll find someone who is.
12. KEEP YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR. Begin to bring job and happy moments into your life. Very few people suffer burnout when they're having fun.
 - MIT VIEW: So, you think you work is funny? We'll discuss this with your director on Friday, at 7:00 P.M.!

Burnout

1. Prescription for Burnout
2. What to do if you're burned out
3. Other Solutions to the Problem of Burnout

1. Prescription for Burnout

Definition:

According to New York psychologist Herbert J. Freudenberger, PhD., who coined the term, burnout is a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by a devotion to a cause, a way of life, or a relationship that failed to produce the expected reward.

Etiology:

Burnout is a problem born of good intentions, because it happens when people try to reach unrealistic goals and end up depleting their energy and losing touch with themselves and others.

Symptoms:

The onset is slow. The early symptoms include a feeling of emotional and physical exhaustion; a sense of alienation, cynicism, impatience, negativism and feelings of detachment to the point that the individual begins to resent work involved and the people who are a part of that work. In extreme cases, the individual who once cared very deeply about a project or a group will insulate himself to the point that he no longer cares at all.

The irony of burnout is that it happens to the same person who previously was enthusiastic and brimming over with energy and new ideas when first involved in a job or a new situation.

This type of person generally has a very high expectation of what can be accomplished. As time goes by and all of the goals aren't achieved, the enthusiasm dies and a sort of listlessness sets in. Instead of lowering objectives or accepting reality, frustration is bottled up and the individual tries even harder. The result is burnout.

Three things are associated with burnout:

- *role conflict:* A person who has conflicting responsibilities will begin to feel pulled in many directions and will try to do everything equally well without setting priorities. The result will be the feelings of fatigue or exhaustion associated with burnout.
- *role ambiguity:* The individual does not know what is expected of her. She knows she is expected to be a good career person but is not quite sure how to accomplish this because she has no role model or guidelines to follow. The result is that she never feels that she has accomplished anything worthwhile.
- *role overload:* The individual can't say no and keeps on taking on more responsibility than he can handle until he finally burns out.

What to do if you're burned out

Most experts agree that when you recognize burnout, you have to ask yourself some questions. Try to remember when it was that you began feeling so tired and unable to relax. Were you always under such pressure to succeed? When did this one area of your life become disproportionately important? At what point did you lose your sense of humor and the personal side of your relationships with friends and co-workers? Are you identifying so closely with your responsibilities that you've come to believe that if this project falls apart you have failed? The answers to these questions will help you re-establish your values and priorities.

The next step is to make some changes in your life. When your work begins to lose its appeal, it's time for a change or to have your duties changed, or maybe it's time to take a break.

Other Solutions to the Problem of Burnout

- Establish some long and short term goals that are realistic. Write them down.
- If you have been neglecting your health, change your eating habits and begin to exercise more.
- Set aside some time each day for relaxation exercises and allow yourself time to "just let it happen".

- Renew your friendships with other people. Talk to them about your feelings. Don't keep your frustrations and anger bottled up.
- Analyze how you spend your time. Try to incorporate some time management techniques into your life.
- Learn to say no when you're asked to do more than you can handle.
- Learn to delegate responsibility to others. You are not indispensable.
- Find the sense of humor you've probably lost. Learn to laugh at yourself and at the situation.
- Most of all, get in touch with yourself, your values and what you want out of life. Learn to recognize when you are driving yourself too hard and when you are depleting your inner resources.

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Two important definitions of burnout are:

- “A state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in emotionally demanding situations.” - *Ayala Pines & Elliott Aronson*
- “A state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward.” – *Herbert J Freudenberger*

Between them, these definitions embrace the essence of burnout,

1. with the first stressing the part that **exhaustion plays in it**,
2. the second stressing the sense of **disillusionment that is at its core**.
3. **Anyone can become exhausted**. What is so poignant about burnout is that it mainly strikes people who are highly committed to their work: You can only "burn out" if you have been "alight" in the first place. Again, Only people highly committed and deeply devoted are candidates for burn out...

While exhaustion can be overcome with rest,

a core part of burnout is a deep sense of disillusionment, an illusion is a false impression of reality and disillusionment revealing of that false impression.....

and when that illusion is revealed as false we often become Resentful and bitter

As a fever indicates the presence of infection...Burnout indicates the presence of Bitterness...

- Causes of Bitterness:
 1. Motives...behind actions. that do not produce the desired result, jealousy, pride, performance for approval
 2. wrong response to irritations...conditional love
 3. wrong response to adversity
 4. selfish ambition
 5. He or she should know how I feel
 6. People should act a certain way...means they should act the way I think they should
 7. unforgiving spirit...
 8. my emergency is everyone's emergency
 9. God let me down...means I begged him to do it my way and he didn't...I'm bitter

Scripture does not use the term burnt out, but there are many examples of people whose symptoms attitudes and feelings parallel those who today we would describe as burned out...

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031217 The Pitfall of Busyness

In his classic article, “Tyranny of the Urgent”, Charles Hummel writes, “‘Have you ever wished for a thirty-hour day?’ Surely this extra time would relieve the tremendous pressure under which we live. Our lives leave a trail of unfinished tasks. Unanswered emails, unvisited friends, unread books and articles, etc., haunt quiet moments when we stop to evaluate. We desperately need relief.

But would a thirty-hour day really solve the problem? Wouldn't we soon be just as frustrated as we are now with our twenty-four allotment? Would an increase of time help us catch up? theoretically it would...the problem is that reality messe up theory...because the reality is we all get only and ever twenty four hours a day! A week is always seven day, and a year is 365 day. with an extra one day every four years! Period.

Well what is our problem with time management? it is often, unknowingly, allowing the urgent things in life to crowd out the truly important things. We all live in a constant tension between the urgent and the important. For some of us the most spiritual thing we could do after church and lunch today is to go to bed and sleep!

In Isaiah 30:15 This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.

Why Repentance? At the root of our frantic propensity to overwork is the sin of pride—Pride says I am solely responsible to provide for myself and family... now and in the future... When we depend on ourselves, we get what we can do; when we depend on God, we get what God can do. You will be continually stressed out if you believe that you are solely responsible for your family, income, and future....and if yourself worth is overly tied in to your success... **You will be driven and overly competitive and consumed with worry and fear.**

- God built a need for rest into the very fabric of our selves. If we ignore it, we get sick. Even our best work, if done to excess, becomes a heavy burden.

- All work and no rest makes us dull, listless, and restless. We become impatient, angry, neurotic, and distressed. We feel time-driven and obsessed with productivity.
- There's a word that describes this restless state. It's the word "disease," or "disease." Without a Sabbath rest, our bodies, minds, and spirits become ill at ease. They break down. Like engines running at sustained maximum RPM, they wear out quickly.

There is ample evidence that our relationship to work is out of whack. Ours is a society that pegs status to achievement; we can't help admiring workaholics. Let me argue, instead, on behalf of an institution that has kept workaholism in reasonable check for thousands of years. **Your physical, spiritual and emotional well-being—and maybe even your very survival—depends on your obedience to the natural rhythm what Scripture calls a Sabbath.**

Every seven days we need what the Hebrews called *sabat*. Translated **literally, *sabat* means "a change of pace."** in fact The Sabbath is One of the fundamental principles of the Bible when it comes to time management.

Exodus 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

What is the ideal amount of time off from work?

The Ten Commandments require one day (twenty-four hours) off each week. When God gave these commandments, the Hebrews had been working from sunup to sundown, but the gift of the Sabbath was to stop working at sundown on Friday and rest until sundown on Saturday.

If you look at the Scripture, there's nothing that says you have to confine yourself to a forty- or fifty-hour work week. I suggest that to be within the biblical boundaries, you need to have at least one full day off, and the equivalent of an additional half-day off during the week.

Every seven days our continuing good health requires that we withdraw from good labor and reconsecrate ourselves to God. We need to dance a bit, re-create ourselves, and call the Sabbath "a delight"

Isa 58:13 "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing

as you please or speaking idle words, ¹⁴ then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” For the mouth of the LORD has spoken

- **Most people mistakenly believe that all you have to do to stop working is not work. The inventors of the Sabbath understood that it was a much more complicated undertaking. You cannot downshift casually and easily.**
- **This is why the Puritan and Jewish Sabbaths were so exactingly intentional. The rules did not exist to torture the faithful.**
- **They were meant to communicate the insight that interrupting the ceaseless round of striving requires a surprisingly strenuous act of will, one that has to be bolstered by habit as well as by social sanction. We all have the need for rest, leisure, and restoration.**

Sabbath has to do with resting from your labors ...but it is more it is being satisfied by your labor that you can rest from it...example God after creating for six days rested on the seventh...

Genesis 2: ² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

- **If we are to be a light to the world...an “alternate city” the city on a Hill, we have to be different from our neighbors in how we spend our time outside of work; that is, how we rest also.**

Matt 5:14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

- **One of our good deed is rest!!! Rest is part of Trusting God!**
- **Even though we live in a society with enormous economic pressures so that everybody is pushed to their limits. Part of the issue is how connected we are through technology which have created longer and longer work weeks, Scripture teaches us “do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.” Discern God’s will.**
- **Long ago someone told me that God does not give you more to do in a day than you can actually do, and I’ve wrestled with that for many years.**
- **We may feel there’s way too much to do, but some of it is not his will. The pressure is coming from you, or your employer, or your friends, or your parents, or someone else besides God!**
- **Thus Sabbath is about more than external rest of the body; it is about inner rest of the soul. We need rest from the anxiety and strain of our overwork, which is really an**

attempt to justify ourselves—to gain the money or the status or the reputation we think we have to have.

- **Avoiding overwork requires deep rest in Jesus’s finished work for your salvation). Only then will you be able to “walk away” regularly from your vocational work and rest.**

Heb 4:9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.

- **Sabbath is the key to getting this balance, and Jesus identifies himself as the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27– 28)—the Lord of Rest!**

Mark 2:27 Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” ...Man needs Rest!!

What counts as time off? It never has been simple. if you develop the foundation and inner rest of Sabbath, it will not simply make you more disciplined about taking time off, but it will also lead you to be less frantic and driven in your work itself. This is perhaps the most important application of Sabbath, where we can truly act as a counterculture, and here’s how it works.

- Yes, two hours spent in prayer with God will produce far more spiritual benefits than watching an old Tom Hanks movie; yet, recreation is something you must have!
- Mental refreshment is part of a balanced diet for the body and soul, so prayer cannot replace all recreation, exercise, and so on.
- **Sabbath rest encompasses several different types of rest...lets look at a few!**

1. Take some time for sheer inactivity.

- Most people need some time every week that is unplanned and unstructured, in which you can do whatever you feel like doing.
- If your rest time is very busy and filled with scheduled activities of “recreation” even ministry, it will not suffice. **I am skeptical of recreations that required spending a great deal of money and time and exertion, because those types of recreations exhaust people. Be careful that recreation really refreshes.**
- There must be some cessation from activity or exertion. This pause in the work cycle is comparable to Israel’s practice of letting a field lie unplanted every seventh year to produce whatever happened to grow (Leviticus 25:1–7). The soil rested so over-farming would not deplete its nutrients and destroy its ability to keep producing.
- Whatever came up in the soil came up. You need some unscheduled time like that every week to let come up—out of the heart and mind—whatever will.

2. Take some time for hobby activity. An hobby is something that is sheer pleasure to you, but that does require some intentionality and gives some structure to your rest.

- You need to include artistic rest. Expose yourself to works of God’s creation that refresh and energize you, and that you find beautiful. This may mean outdoor things. It may mean art—music, drama, and visual art.
- **God looked around at the world he made and said it was good, so aesthetic rest is necessary for participating in God’s Sabbath fully.**

3. Consider whether you are an introvert or an extrovert.

- When planning your Sabbath rest, ask yourself what really “recharges” you. This self-assessment can help you determine how relational your Sabbath time should be.
- **Introverts tend to spend their energy when out with people and recharge their batteries by being alone.**
- Extroverts tend to spend energy in personal work and recharge their batteries by getting out with people.
- If you are a real introvert, be careful about trying to maintain all of your community-building relationships during your Sabbath time. That would be too draining. On the other hand, relationship-building could be one of the greatest things a true extrovert could possibly do.
- Don’t try to imitate an introvert’s Sabbath rhythms if you are an extrovert or vice versa! Recognize that some activities take you into solitude, while some take you out into society.

4. Don’t necessarily count family time as Sabbath time. Do a realistic self-assessment of “family time” and how it affects you.

- **Family time is important, but parents need to be very careful that they don’t let all of their regular Sabbath time be taken up with parental responsibilities. (Introverts especially will need time away from the kids!)**
- Keeping all of these things in good balance may be virtually impossible when your children are very young, but this too will pass.

5. Honor both micro- and macro- seasons of rest. Israel’s Sabbath cycles of rest-and-work included not only Sabbath days but also Sabbath years and even a Year of Jubilee every forty-nine years (Leviticus 25:8–11).

- This is a crucial insight for workers in today’s world. It is possible to voluntarily take on a season of work that requires high energy, long hours, and insufficient weekly- Sabbath time.

- A new physician has to work long hours in a residency program, for example, and many other careers (such as finance, government, and law) similarly demand some sort of initial period of heavy, intense work. Starting your own business or pursuing a major project like making a movie will require something similar. In these situations you have to watch that you don't justify too little Sabbath by saying you're "going through a season"—when in actual fact that season never ends.
- If you must enter a season like this, it should not last longer than two or three years at the most. Be accountable to someone for this, or you will get locked into an "under-Sabbathed" life-style, and you will burn out.
- **And during this "under-Sabbathed" time, do not let the rhythms of prayer, Bible study, and worship die. Be creative, but get it in.**
- Sabbath, then, is the deliberate limitation of productivity, as a way to trust God, be a good steward of your self, and declare freedom from slavery to our work.

In concrete terms this is the hardest thing to do, because it's a heart matter. Personally, this has meant deliberately setting fewer goals for myself in a given day and week.

- You have to actually inject this Sabbath rest into your thinking and into your work life. Some of our work worlds are institutionally structured toward overwork.
- Sometimes you have to "pay your dues" in the early stages of your career when you're in a season of hard work (as I mentioned previously) or are trying to gain some credibility in your field.
- When you're more established in your field, you may be able to moderate your workload. However, at some point, even if that doesn't happen, you will have to trust God and honor Jesus—who is Lord of the Sabbath—by practicing Sabbath and risk "falling behind" in your career.
- It may happen that you will fall behind, and yet retain your sanity. Or it may be that God will allow you to keep moving ahead in your career despite your practice of Sabbath and the "gleaning" principle. It is up to him.

6. God time... plan daily "rest stops"—times of withdrawal and consecration. Rather than turning on the television, spend time in prayerful meditation. Be still. Direct your mind to wait on God. Prayer and worship and word are a critical part of Sabbath rest, from any perspective. Regular time for devotion, reading the Scripture, and listening to God forms the basis for inner rest and provides time away from the more exhausting exertions of life. Through prayerful rest stops we can renew fellowship with God and get in tune with God's Word. We can unearth resources for compassion and receive wisdom on how to work in a Sabbath rest can also fill us with tranquility in the midst of oppressive situations.

If you wonder where all your stress (and perhaps your depression) is coming from, consider the balance of your life. Sabbath rest is the best anti-depressant and anti-anxiety prescription available.

MT 4:4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

For your health's sake, keep the Sabbath. As a person more in tune with God, you will live better and be better!

LK 10:38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. *39* She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. *40* But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" *LK 10:41* "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her."

THE SCENE... Jesus had three friends who lived in Bethany. He would occasionally stay in their home when He was in Judea. Lazarus, Mary and Martha were brother and sisters.

- Bethany was located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives on the road linking Jerusalem to Jericho.
- It was just over a mile and a half from Jerusalem, or about a half hour's walk. It would have been a very convenient place for Jesus and His fellow Galileans to stay when visiting Jerusalem for a feast day or on some other occasion.

The Players...**MARTHA**... **Martha opened her home to him...**

- Martha's invitation indicates her openness to spiritual things. She, too, longs to be a disciple, and wants to honor Jesus by inviting him to her home. Martha's name in Hebrew, incidentally, means "lady" or "mistress (of the house)."
- she welcomes Jesus and his party probably the 80 disciples who had made their way through Samaria..

MARY...Now we meet Mary, named after Moses' famous sister Miriam. While Martha is bustling about the house getting ready for dinner, **Mary had been in the kitchen with Martha until Jesus started teaching. Note Martha said that her sister had left her alone to do all the preparation.**

Jesus starts teaching and Mary sits at Jesus' feet listening. The rest of the sentence explains that she was actually sitting not directly beside him -- a place of honor -- but at his feet, a place of humility -- and probably attention

"At his feet" seems to have been the phrase connoting a disciple or learner.

- That Jesus would encourage her to listen to him as he taught in the house was, in itself, radical.
- But Jesus encourages Mary to sit listening. I imagine the scene with Jesus seated in a place of honor, perhaps in the house's courtyard, surrounded by eager listeners -- his disciples, prominent members of the community, probably Lazarus, and Mary.
- Jesus speaks, answers questions, tells parables, and teaches. All the time Mary sits and takes it in. She can't imagine anything better than this!

Like most sisters, these two women had conflicts which emerged because of their different personalities, roles, and simply the fact that they were siblings.

⁴⁰ *But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"*

Inside, Martha is fuming. All these guests, a great deal of cooking, setting the low table where her guest will be seated.

- The word translated "distracted" is Greek *perispao*, "1.'to be overburdened Too much to do! Dinner will be late unless she can get help.
- But where is her lazy sister Mary? Sitting outside with the men rather than inside doing the work that needs to get done.
- How irresponsible! I can't understand why she thinks she can be out there when there's so much to do to get ready for dinner.

"The implication is that Martha wished to hear Jesus but was prevented from doing so by the pressure of providing hospitality.

Tell Her to Help Me (10:40b)

"She came to him and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!' " LUKE 10:41). "But the Lord answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things."

Finally, Martha can stand it no longer this is not the time to rest.... She comes to where Jesus is, and seems to interrupt the conversation he is having.

- Her exasperation can be seen in the way she forms her question, "Lord, do You not care...?" I can well imagine her "stewing" for a time in the kitchen (where else would you stew?) before being emboldened to charge into the room in such a way.
- **The Lord does care, but not nearly as much about the problem as Martha sees it as He does about the real problem of which Martha is unaware.**

- **The Lord is more concerned about Martha's state of mind and priorities than He is about being served a feast later on.**
- (LUKE 10:42).

"...but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from her." (LUKE 10:42).

The good part which Mary had chosen was to rest and listen to the Lord's teaching.

- **In the scheme of life, the things Jesus said that day were of much more importance than what He ate.**
- **Sitting with Jesus builds faith...Faith is the answer...and it comes by hearing the word of Jesus**

Having the correct set of priorities (putting His kingdom first) will greatly reduce your chance of heart attack.

It Will Not Be Taken Away from Her (10:42b)

*"Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (10:42)
She will get it What ..Rest for her sould...May we be so wise!! End*

- **Even though it cuts across the grain of societal expectations, even though it means neglecting her regular duties, Mary has correctly discerned that listening to Jesus is more important than anything -- anything else she can choose.**
- **And she will not be deprived when doing that...she will not lose out on something else..And no one can rip this precious spiritual food away from her. The word translated "taken away" is Greek *aphaireo*, "passive 'be taken away, robbed ... deprived of something.'**

I don't want to be too hard on Martha, Jesus certainly wasn't. But he tried very gently to explain how Mary's choice was better, and that she shouldn't be deprived of it by having to be marched off to the kitchen by her sister. And Martha sit here with me...

The one thing that Jesus seeks above all else is time that you spend time listening to him, "sitting at his feet," as it were.

That needs to come first, before all these other things. That is where peace is found. That is the only place of spiritual rest.

"Martha, why don't you take off your apron and sit down for a few minutes. Dinner can wait.

PS 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God....

- **To really know God ..you have to learn to be still...quiet...listen..and you what that is the same with all relationships...**

This is the deal, I am a lot like Martha and I would say most of us are...you see Martha wanted to sit at Jesus feet...too...

- **But she was angry she could not...she had to much to do...I get like that**
- **She was frustrated... that if she got the right help her work would get done quicker so she could not sit at Jesus feet... I to know that frustration**
- **She was Jealous of Mary that Mary would set aside duty to be with Jesus ...man how could she do that...I wish I could...I can relate to that..**

But for some of us I think something else is going on...and perhaps with Martha...

- **Maybe Martha doesn't know how to do relationships well...so she continues to put to much on herself so she is always busy...a martyr...yeah Martha the Martyr...**
- **Maybe that is her way to get acknowledge...Jesus look what I am doing...notice me...**
- **Maybe she struggles with I am only worth while if I work...if I perform you will approve of me...I can relate to that...**
- **Maybe being with Jesus made her uncomfortable...so work makes a convenient distraction...**
- **That I always have to serve Jesus...that being with him alone...just him and me is way to personal... I get that...**
- **That is a huge way we love God sitting with him...and how we love eachother sitting with those we love be still and know God...be still and know eachother...**

Jesus just want us to rest in his presence...and we need to rest in the presence of eachother.....there is always something more to do...something else to do...rest with me...

- **If our walk of rest consists mainly of going to church and then on with life's busy day then we are not receiving of the goodness that the Lord has planned for us. And if we are so hassled by the routines of daily existence that we find ourselves lashing out at those we love as Martha did on that occasion, then isn't that a good indication that something needs fixed?**

Conclusion

The purpose of Sabbath is not simply to rejuvenate yourself in order to do more production, nor is it the pursuit of pleasure. The purpose of Sabbath is to enjoy your God, life in general, what you have accomplished in the world through his help, and the freedom you have in the gospel—the freedom from slavery to any material object or human expectation. The Sabbath is a sign of the hope that we have in the world to come.