

Doing Too Much? Part 2 When Your Output Exceeds Your Input

Mister Brown: Now that's not a direct quote from the Bible but Jesus knew that. Because Jesus regularly pulled away from ministry to spend time with the Father. In Luke 5:16 it says this, "But Jesus often withdrew to a lonely place and prayed." Jesus got away to pray. He needed to spend time with the Lord to fill himself up. So I want to give you four practical things you can do to make sure you're filling yourself up. Four practical things.

Number one, invest time in prayer. Invest time in prayer. Now, I think that's very important because when you invest time in prayer you're actually saying it's not my own strength. That it's not me that's doing this. It's God that's doing it through me and I need His energy to do it. And sometimes in ministry we can get really messed up in the head because we think we're doing it. We have all those successes and we do good at it and we start smelling ourselves like we're good at what we do. But it's not us. It is God working through us. Now I don't want you going to the other side where you go 'I'm just a horrible person.' No, no. If God is working through you be grateful to God. Number one thing I learned in ministry is to not trust people. Sometimes I speak people come up to me and say "It's great. It's great." But I knew it was bad but they still tell me that it was great, well maybe they got something out of it. I don't put a lot of weight onto it. People say great job, I appreciate it, I typically say "Praise the Lord." Yes, if you got something out of it, God did it. We recognize that and God used me to do that and I'm grateful for that. So I'm saying thank you, but I'm saying it's not me but I don't have to go through a whole thing of "It's not me, it's the Holy Spirit." Well, we know that. But be grateful for what God is doing. But on this side of it understand it is God. So we need to invest time in prayer. And not just praying for ourselves but praying for those people who minister to. And I think that's so important and we'll get into more into that in another training.

I remember I was doing an AWANA club every week at this church and the attendance went down. I had a very disciplined prayer life at that time of my life and I was praying for certain things on certain days of the week. Because, you know you pray for them or you just forget. So I would not tell people I'd pray for them but I had a certain list that I would pray for people. On Tuesday's I would pray for the kids that would come to the AWANA program. I had noticed that the attendance had been down and I had all the names on the attendance sheet and I was praying for them by name. And I asked God, "Please brings these kids out. Bring them out so they can come." I forgot all about it, I went through my whole, all kind of other stuff, and six o'clock at night I go to the AWANA club and it's packed. I mean, we had to make two AWANA lines for our prayer lines. And I thought, "Where did all these kids come from?" And I thought, "Oh, I asked God." I prayed. I'm not saying it was my prayer

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but I did God and He answered and He brought these kids. So it's important to invest time in prayer for yourself and for your ministry.

But let's look at what Jesus said in John 15:5. And this is to remind us that it's not us that does it. It's not our work but God. He said this, "I am the vine, you are the branches, whoever abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. From a part from me you can do nothing." So part of abiding with God is spending -- investing time in prayer. Number one, invest time in prayer. Number two, invest time in the Word. You gotta get your mind right. You gotta get your mind right. We can do so many things in our day to day life, and you can have good motives to be in ministry, but you gotta get your mind right. The Bible says in Roman 12:1-2, and this a great verse to memorize, "I appeal to you therefore brothers by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice. Holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual act of worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. That by testing you may discern what is the will of God. What is good and acceptable and perfect."

So it's so important to get our minds right so invest in the word of God. I like to put it this way, put your face in the book. If your face is in that book it becomes transformed, your mind gets right. You begin to think on the things that are right and just and it changes you. Because again, your ministry overflows to the lives of others and as you spend time with God it will overflow into the lives of others. What you're full of it will come out. So invest time in the word is so so important.

Number three, invest time in corporate worship. Invest time in corporate worship. Go to your church service or go to a church service. I think it's great to go to yours. I know some of you work on Sunday and sometimes that's hard but you gotta get in there. Because God does things in the corporate worship and our corporate singing to Him that sometimes it doesn't happen outside of that. And many times you get so busy but you can never be busy to learn from God corporately. And the pastor that God has given you as a shepherd is responsible for you soul, so to speak. Hebrews 13 talks about that, that they are there are to teach you and you need to be under their guidance. And I love this verse because it fits for all of us in ministry. In Ephesians 4:11 it says this, "And he gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be shepherds, and some to be teachers. Why did he give those to different people. Here's why. To equip the saints for the work of the ministry for building up the body of Christ." Just like God has given you to teach or you're doing your part, your pastors part is to equip you for ministry as well. It's important that you spend time in corporate worship with the rest of the body of Christ. So make sure you're not just

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always giving, giving, giving but you get into corporate worship with the people of God and worship God together.

Let's review real quick. Number one, make sure you spend time in prayer or invest. I keep saying spend because it's in my natural vernacular but I purposefully put in invest in here. Because it's something you're investing in and you're getting a return in. So Invest time in prayer. Invest time in the word. Invest time in corporate worship. And lastly, invest in time off. Time off. Yes, take a chill off, chillax, take a week off of ministry, take some time off because you need to be refreshed as well. And I'm talking to me too because I know it's hard to take some time off. And understand this, things will work without you there. Things won't fall apart. A matter of fact if we take some time off people might step up and do some things. For those of you who think that things will fall a part, no it won't. That's four words, no it won't. But really I have two words for you, trust God. Trust God to do what He's going to do. And I think investing in time off is so important because not only did Jesus do it when he took time away, but God the Father did it in the story of creation. In Genesis 2: 1-2 this is what it says, "Thus the Heavens and earth were finished and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished the work that He had done and he rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done." And I know our culture as a whole has gone away from the whole sabbath day thing but I think it's important that we revisit that personally. That we take some time off because God entered into the sabbath day to remind the people that they could trust Him. That they could have a day off of work or where they wouldn't go to the field to do anything so they could trust God to provide for them ultimately. In the same way we can take a personally time off and say God I'm not working today, I trust you to take care of me because you told me I can trust you. Now, I'm not saying to be lazy so don't take that the wrong way. But we need to invest in some time off to refreshed, recuperated. And I'll tell you I recently took some time off. MY kids were with nana and papa and it was her birthday week and we took almost three days off and that was impressive for me. We didn't go anywhere, we ate out a couple times, we stayed home, we slept in. Like actually slept in, like, 8 o'clock/ 9 o'clock, we slept in. And it felt great. It was really great for me because I spent time in the word, spent time reading. And actually I'm not a big reader. I'm becoming a bigger reader and so I'm reading more now and it's been really great. And because of that I got more refreshes. So invest in time off.

Because if your output exceeds your input your upkeep will be your downfall. So four simple ways that you should invest, make sure that you're filled. First, invest time in prayer. Second, invest time in the word. Third, invest time in corporate worship. And lastly invest in time off. Because if you don't, if your output exceeds your input your

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upkeep will be your downfall. And I don't want anybody to crash and burn. Because what happens is this, some people crash and burn and they get frustrated and they never come back to ministry. They'll burn out and they'll have a negative view of serving the Lord or serving the church. Not just you the person but the family could too. So please don't burn out, make sure you're filled up because when your output exceeds your input your upkeep will be your downfall.