

Protecting your leaders from burnout and discouragement

I. Learn how to identify burnout

A. The symptoms

Table 1--Warning signs that you might be burned out, or on the path towards burning out¹

• Feeling overwhelmed	• Apathy
• Insomnia	• Forgetfulness
• Exhaustion	• Difficulty concentrating
• Focus on the negative	• Critical or cynical spirit
• Sadness, you hardly laugh	• Pessimistic or hopeless spirit
• You are overscheduled	• You feel worthless.
• Worry. You wake up anxious as you think about the day	• Continually finding ways to distract your mind (Facebook, games, etc.)
• Marriage and intimacy problems	• Avoiding social interaction
• Irritability	• Your work is very inefficient
• You no longer enjoy work/ministry	• You no longer work diligently
• Easily giving into temptation	• Overspending, lacking self-control
• Physical health issues (headaches, back pain, ulcers, etc.)	• Bad eating habits (drinking, uncontrolled eating, etc.)
• Turning to substances or entertainment for relief	• Prayer and reading the word are no longer a priority
• No longer enjoying fellowship	• Finding it hard to rejoice with others

B. The contributing circumstances

¹ Credit for this list belongs to David Murray, *Reset: Living a Grace-Paced Life in a Burnout Culture*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2017, pages 25-31.

II. Let your attention be fixed on the real enemy

A. Busyness is not your enemy

B. Inefficiency is not your enemy

C. Most of the time, pride is your enemy

Spiritual needs and limitations

- You can't live on bread alone
- You're not the Savior
- You can't change people
- You need fellowship
- You need the body of Christ
- You don't know everything
- You need the full armor of God
- You need to pray if you want peace
- You can't please everyone
- You're not the Lord, and therefore you don't get to set your priorities
- You can't expect to enjoy sin and the Savior simultaneously

Physical needs and limitations

- You need sleep
- You need drink
- You need to eat
- You have time limitations
- You can only be in one location at a time
- You need medical attention when you're sick
- You don't have the same physical strength that you once did

III. Love your leaders by shepherding them

A. Take the time to talk to your leaders, to ensure that they're doing ok

B. Help them to make wise decisions about their ministry involvement

C. Understand how to encourage those who are growing spiritually weary

1. Remind your leaders about who they serve

2. Remind your leaders about what Christ is doing right now

3. Remind your ministry leaders about their future hope

4. Remind your ministry leaders about why they're serving in the first place

5. Remind your ministry leaders about what constitutes ministry success