



Fatigue

Burnout Exposed: 2 Thessalonians 3:11
Pastor Jerome Gay Jr.

Announcements

- First-time guest (Tour 4)!
- Suggested Reads: [The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry](#)
- Remember that this is a series, so, don't miss a week

A pastor shared a story with his church about his need for rest. Prior to going into detail about his personal need of a sabbatical, he shared an encounter he had with one of the church mothers. **The church mother asked him why he was doing so much and how come he worked so much and why he didn't take breaks?** His response to her was the devil doesn't sleep, the devil never takes a day off, so, why should I? **We wrestle not against flesh and blood and so on.** In true church mother fashion, the older woman said, **son, why would you make the devil your role model?** Too many of you today are living as if the devil is your role model and while you may sleep at times, you're **going and going and going** and if you're honest, you don't see any end in sight, some of you are assuming that the more you do, the **more valuable** you are and others think that constant busyness is a **badge of honor**.

Today we're starting a series called **Fatigue** and I think this series is pivotal for us because this gets to the heart of a lot of our **anxiety, frustration, tiredness and conflict**. My heart for this series is I want us all to **(1) take our schedules back, (2) offer them to God and (3) live within our limitations (4) establish healthy rhythms and (5) enjoy your life.**

Why?

Thought Tattoo

What I don't **measure**, I **mismanage**, and my **mismanagements** end up **managing** me.

Before we dive too deep into an extremely important topic, I want to ask a few questions:

- Are you constantly rushing from one appointment to another?
- Do you feel like there aren't enough hours in the day?
- Are you feeling burdened by something that once brought you joy?
- Do you feel guilty when you can't do something?
- Do you find yourself becoming more irritable, even with people that care about you?
- Do you want to get away from everyone?
- Are you becoming more and more cynical about your life?
- When people ask you **how** you're doing, do you tell them **what** you're doing?
- Do you feel that no one understands you?

These are all symptoms of **spiritual fatigue!**

Fatigue is extreme tiredness resulting from mental or physical exertion or illness.

What you could be dealing with is spiritual fatigue or what many people call **burnout**. Burnout is more than physical fatigue, its more than stress, it's a heart and identity issue.

Stress vs. Burnout

Stress	Burnout
Doing too much	Refusing to say "no"
Emotions are raw	Raw emotions are hidden
Urgent and Hyper	Hopeless and helpless
Energy low (energy)	Motivation is low (attitude)
Can kill you prematurely	Makes life feel useless
Fear of external failure	Internalizes failure
Seeks God for strength	Focuses ability inability

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, social, mental and spiritual exhaustion primarily caused by **mismanagement** and **overcommitment**. Burnout is not caused by a single area of life; burnout is a result of total life management or should I say mismanagement. Burnout is a result of how we manage our life as a whole. Burnout is never anyone else's fault, it's not the churches fault or your friends' fault. **Burnout is the result of a**

series of decisions made that have a cumulative effect on your total person. Burnout is the result of working hard, it's the result of ONLY working hard.

Burnout is a state of **emptiness**, to be sure, but it does not result from giving all I have; it merely reveals the nothingness from which I was trying to give in the first place. – **Parker Palmer**

Take Note...

Burnout is not the result of a **decision**, it's the result of **several decisions!**

Here's why this is so important; **God cares about your soul:**

3 John 1:2

2 Dear friend, I pray that you are prospering in every way and are in good health, just as your **whole life** [soul] is going well.

When you're experiencing **burnout** an extra day of sleep doesn't do it, milestones that should be celebrated get replaced by one word, **next** (transactional instead of relational) and relationships become tasks and projects and it becomes easier to keep your distance and put up a wall. Burnout succeeds by taking the things that once brought life and energy and replaces it with **drain** and **discouragement**. **How does a person get here?** We don't understand limitations and we refuse to remove **distractions** (iPhone users touch their phones 2617 per day) and we don't steward properly (life bag):

- ❑ **Time** – we’re taught time management, **not time health**. Time is not an unlimited resource, you and I have **24-hour day, 168-hour week, 672-hour month and 8760-hour year**. Time by nature is limited, which is why Paul says, **making the most of the time, because the days are evil. -- Ephesians 5:16**
- ❑ **Money** – we’re told to steward our money, but not to give our money a plan.
- ❑ **Body** – we’re told to take care of our bodies and these are the three primary areas we’re told to address, but there’s another category that we shouldn’t neglect.
- ❑ **Energy** – has anyone ever talked to you about stewarding your energy? No one told me about it, in fact, **I was functionally taught that being tired all the time meant that you were serving the Lord well.**

We all have four energy buckets and they’re all connected:

- ❑ **Physical Energy** – this is often easily to detect because we feel it, but **too often we ignore our physical bucket until we’re forced to pay attention to it.**
- ❑ **Mental Energy** – we don’t realize that how we think and what we allow our minds to focus on or embrace will either give life or drain us. This is why **Paul writes that we’re to think about things that are worthy of praise (Phil. 4:8) and that we must fight thoughts that oppose God and our identity (2 Cor. 10:5).**
- ❑ **Emotional Energy** – this has to do with our **relationships and how we handle them and how we process difficulty and joy.** Are we in draining

relationships? Do we have the courage to leave? What is draining me?

- ❑ **Spiritual Energy** – this comes from understanding how God sees and values us. This comes from resting in Him and working from rest and acceptance, not to gain anything.

All four buckets are connected, and we need to pay attention to all of them because if one is really low it can affect the others, but the most important is **spiritual energy and seeing life through the lens of scripture.**

Genesis 2:1-3

So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were **completed**. 2 On the seventh day **God had completed his work that he had done**, and **he rested** on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it **he rested** from all his work of creation.

I have a few questions reading this:

- ❑ **Who rested?** – God, who’s power is limitless (**omnipotence**). The story starts with God creating the earth **from nothing** or *ex nihilo* and the earth was *tohu va’vohu* in the **Hebrew**, meaning it was **formless and empty**, the story starts and ends with nothing, because God is teaching us something here, **He’s teaching us the importance of being intentional about rest, sabbath and limits.** In fact, the point is to show us the necessity of **rest and sabbath.**

- ❑ **Why did He rest?** – did God need a break? Was He tired? **His work was complete and it's what he calls us to.** God is resting because He has done everything He needs to do for creation.
- ❑ **How did He rest?** – **by doing nothing and simply enjoying what he created. Does nothingness equal laziness to you?** The reason we don't have joy is because we make time for everything, except rest and celebration. **I want you to get your joy back!**

Keep in mind this (Genesis 1-2) is the first lesson for Israelites who were used to working, working and working. **What did they do while they were in Egypt?** They were slaves and did manual labor by making bricks. God takes them out of Egypt, liberates them by allowing them to walk through the **Red Sea**. Imagine being an Israelite back then and **for the last 430 years you were making bricks and Egypt has told you for centuries that your value and your worth is tied up in the idea of how many bricks you can produce, you are a slave and the only reason you have any value to the Egyptian empire is by how many bricks you can make and how fast.** If you can't make many bricks, you aren't valuable to the Egyptian's. If you can't produce bricks, they're going to remove you from the equation because you are of no use to them as a slave and if they remove you from the equation how will you ever provide for your family. **A practical reality to this idea that you're only as valuable as how many bricks you can make is how many of us live today** (I'm only valuable as how man sales, how many programs you take your child to, how many hours you work, how many ministries you serve in, I'm only valuable if I work in my field, etc.) So, the very first lesson that God has to teach

his people in the scriptural narrative the very first lesson before we talk about anything else **God says I need you to know how to take a break,** a break that reminds you that your value and worth are not in what you do, but because of who you are.

The first lesson in the scriptural narrative is God saying, I need you to understand the importance of taking a break because as slaves they were used to working and connecting their value to what they produced. **So, in essence a slave mentality is one that refuses to rest and attaches their personal value to production and/or achievement. God had to address their slave mentality about work and give them a new narrative. Does your schedule reveal that you have a slave mentality? How can I tell?**

- ❑ **Rest**
- ❑ **Stillness and Quiet**
- ❑ **Celebration**

Michael Zigarelli from the Charleston Southern University School of Business conducted the **Obstacles to Growth Survey** of over twenty thousand Christians across the globe and identified **busyness** as a major distraction from spiritual life. Listen carefully to his hypothesis: It may be the case that: **(1) Christians are assimilating to a culture of busyness, hurry and overload, which leads to (2) God becoming more marginalized in Christians' lives, which leads to (3) a deteriorating relationship with God, which leads to (4) Christians becoming even more vulnerable to adopting secular assumptions about how to live, which leads to (5) more conformity to a culture of busyness, hurry and overload. And then the cycle begins again.**

You and I put the fun in dysFUNCTION!

This letter from the apostle Paul was probably written shortly after his first letter to the church in Thessalonica. He had been boasting of them to other churches, telling of their faith and their love for each other in the face of persecution. Paul reminded them that God will repay their persecutors. He also addressed two recurring problems in this church. First, they were concerned that the Lord had already returned. Paul urged them not to become “shaken in mind or alarmed,” fearing that “the day of the Lord” (2:2) had already come. Second, he admonished them not to be idle, commanding them that, “If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat” (3:10).¹

2 Thessalonians 3:11

11 For we hear that there are some among you who are **idle**. They are not **busy** but **busybodies**.

Take Note...

Your work was never meant to define you!

If the devil can't make you sin, he'll **make you busy**. I would say, that he wants you to be a busybody, because sin and busyness both cut off your connection to God, to other people and your own soul.

It's important to recognize that Paul is addressing several types of people amongst the same church:

- ❑ **The Productive Person** – this person works from victory and acceptance and embraces their limitations. They get tired like anyone else, but they have the self-awareness to know when they need to pull back by paying attention to **their four buckets of energy**. Paul encouraged the people to imitate him in this way by saying we did not eat anyone's food free of charge; instead, we labored and toiled, working night and day, so that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 It is not that we don't have the right to support, but we did it to make ourselves an example to you so that you would imitate us. - **2 Thessalonians 3:8-9**
- ❑ **The Lazy Person** – this person doesn't work, and Paul says that they shouldn't eat (2 Thess. 3:10). **Their problem is that they're not productive people and essentially live off others**. This person is a drainer and the productive person must stay away from this person, unless they're discipling them and calling out their laziness.
- ❑ **The Busybody** – Busybodies are the most susceptible to burnout because they live without limits and meddle in the business of others (**social media**). God doesn't want us meddling, but rather He wants us to live within our limits and to be committed to our calling.

What about working for His glory?

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 2 Th.

Work is part of the human calling and one of the ways we honor God (Gen. 1:28; Col. 3:23 and 2 Thess. 3:10). **Productivity** is a portion of what gives our lives a sense of meaning and purpose but should never be the source of meaning and purpose. Paul uses the word **busy** in the positive sense to describe this person, he uses the word *ergazomai*, which means, work labor and accomplishment.

John 15:2-4

2 Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will **produce more fruit**. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me.

Christians are also expected to be self-sacrificial, at times giving beyond themselves. This is why Paul says in **2 Corinthian 12:15** I will most gladly spend **and be spent** for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? However, **nowhere in the Bible does God equate our acceptability or our identity with our work**. And nowhere does God command or condone working so hard that we become burned out. Rather, our work is to be motivated by Him. Remember, Yahweh demonstrated the importance of rest on the seventh day of creation and with the Sabbath command (Gen. 2:2-3; Exo. 20:8-11; Mark 2:27). After one particularly busy time, Yeshua invited His disciples away from the crowds for a time of rest (Mark 6:31). Jesus said to come to Him with our burdens and take His yoke instead. He also gave us the Holy

Spirit who can give us discernment in what tasks to say "yes" to.

Take Note...

Identify idleness in you and around you.

The word idle means irresponsible in the Greek, which is why Paul admonished the people to stay away from idle people in verse 7. We identify idleness by looking within first and then discerning who's around us.

What is causing your burnout at the heart level?

- Acceptance** – to feel better about yourself
- Pride** – a refusal to embrace limits
- Fear** – of not being enough
- Escapism** – avoiding people or issues
- Guilt** – you feel bad about saying no
- Need to feel Needed** – need to hear good job
- Addiction** – you're a workaholic
- Perfectionism** – you have to do for it to be right
- Love** – Satan wants to use your love for God's church against you!
- False sense of godliness** – busyness = godliness

How do we break the cycle?

- Daily Dependence** – start your day declaring your dependence and practicing it by spending time with God in prayer, reading and reflection. This may mean getting up earlier, but **dependence helps prevent burnout because it opposes self-reliance**.

- ❑ **Stay Still** – take moments in the day, to do nothing. Remember, God created the world from nothing and after finishing, He did nothing, stillness is good for your soul.
- ❑ **Love Your Limitations** – you have 168-hours per week, you're not omni-gifted, you do get tired and ALL of that is okay.
- ❑ **Steward your Energy** – take care of your body and soul by paying attention to your four buckets.
- ❑ **Have 'Just Because' Friends** – you need relationships that aren't connected to **tasks or titles**. You also need the ability to hang out without there being a tasks, hang out just to hang out.
- ❑ **Don't use substances or sex to escape** – it'll quench your thirst for a moment, but it won't fill the void. (bag)
- ❑ **Listen to your body** – a twitching eye is not normal, constant stomach pain is not normal, frequent headaches aren't normal, etc.
- ❑ **Listen to your family/friends** – people close to you see what you don't see and rather than being mad and pushing them away, **see and hear God's love for you that He sent someone close to you to listen to.**
- ❑ **Listen to your emotions** – losing motivation, cynicism and passive aggressive comments are all signs that you're burned out and beginning to or are in the process of blaming others. Your burnout is YOUR burnout!

Take Note...

Living within boundaries automatically sets boundaries (tape).

Don't be mad when people cross lines that you haven't set. You must change your current view of life and go from surviving to thriving.

- ❑ Evening, and there was morning: **day one** (Gen. 1:4)
- ❑ Evening, and there was morning: **day two** (Gen. 1:8)
- ❑ Evening, and there was morning: **day three** (Gen. 1:13)
- ❑ Evening, and there was morning: **day four** (Gen. 1:19)
- ❑ Evening, and there was morning: **day five** (Gen. 1:23)
- ❑ Evening, and there was morning: **day six** (Gen. 1:31)

The Jewish day begins when the sun goes down, it begins at sunset. Sabbath begins at Friday night at sundown, **this evening beginning of the day is a reminder that your day doesn't begin with production, but it begins with rest.** The day begins with rest, so, you start with rest and **work from rest instead of starting with work and resting from work.** This is why scripture has the flow of evening then morning and not the other way around:

Genesis 2:1-3

So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. 2 On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and **he rested on the seventh** day from all his work that he had done. 3 God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.

The evening and morning refrain is absent after the seventh day, why? God's invitation is to trust Him and reject the idea that production is the defining factor of your life and value.

In the Jewish mind the day starts with rest and you work from rest instead of working for rest!

Matthew 11:28

28 “Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Take Note...

Jesus wants my **burnout**, because He wants me!

Jonathan McReynolds – Make Room