Avoiding BURNOUT Part I.
Text: 1 Kings 19:1-16

Intro: Good morning and welcome to restoration life church. We are excited that you have joined us today. For the next 2 weeks I want to look at avoiding Burnout.

As I minister this word I am well aware that I have to deal with this consistently in my life.

I fully understand what I am called to do and sometimes the passion that burns within me to accomplish my purpose in life drives me to a place called exhaustion or Burnout.

**Now exhaustion comes in many forms.**

- I find it somewhat to go hard 10 to sometimes 14 hours a day. And I do come tired; I come home exhausted and I just want to crash. I don’t want to talk to anyone or even check my social status on line.

- But then there are days that I spend a couple of hours really emotionally involved in sharing peoples burdens by trying to help with counsel or problems in their life and I’m drained after only 6 or 7 hours.

- Then there are other days that I have so much going on mentally that I can’t sleep no matter how tired I am and everything I try to do the next day just becomes this overwhelming monster of a task.

- And here’s where it can get really dangerous. I know what I am called to do and what I have committed to do, and because of the business of Life, Family, work and ministry, I am in danger of being a burnout where I am no good to anyone.

- The crazy thing is that God has made all of us so unique and different and has given all of us different levels of capacity for different areas of life.

*For example,*
• Some of you are really great listeners, you can sit there and listen to someone cry for hours and hold them, pet them and encourage them....
• That’s not me, I really don’t want to spend that much time getting to the nitty gritty of things. I want it on the table right aways so we can deal with the problem and move on.
• Ask Roxanne, when she wants to make a point, get right to it, I don’t want to hear the long version of the explanation, give me the twitter version of it where your only allowed 140 characters before you post.

Today we’re going to look at what God has to say about avoiding burnout.

1. We hear a lot today about burnout.

   a. Emotional burnout, relational burnout -- but it’s not a new issue.

   • In fact, there are many examples in the Bible, one of them being in 1 Kings 19. It’s about Elijah.
   
   • Remember the story in 1 Kings 18 where he had this great miracle from God.
   
   • They had a God contest on Mt. Carmel. God sent fire down and the whole nation turned back to God.
   
   • They killed all the false prophets. It was a huge miracle. There was a big emotional, spiritual and physical high there.

2. Then in (1 Kings 19) the Queen Jezebel, the wicked queen, gets very mad.

   a. So she puts a death threat out on Elijah and sends a messenger to him telling him she was planning on killing him.

   • Just a few days after this enormous miracle where the whole nation turns back to God, Elijah runs for his life across the desert, hides in a cave. He’s in fear saying, "God, please kill me!"

What’s going on?

b. This is a classic example of burnout. After every mountaintop there is a valley. After every high there is a low.

With success comes stress.

• The good news is that the Bible tells us Elijah was just like us.
• He was a human being. God used him in some miraculous ways but he was just a normal human being.

• So we can look at his life and we can see the causes or the signs of burnout and the cure for burnout.

**What are the signs of burnout?**

a. We see them in Elijah’s life. When you see them in your life you know you’re headed in the wrong direction.

  1. **We depreciate our worth.**

     a. We put ourselves down mentally.

     • There’s a little mp3 player going on in your head that says it over and over, "I’m a nobody. My life doesn’t matter. I’m insignificant. I don’t count. I have no value."

     • It plays over and over in your mind. When you start doing that, you know you’re headed for burnout.

    **1 Kings 19:4**, "Elijah came to a broom tree, sat down under it, and prayed, ‘Take my life. I’m no better than my ancestors.’"

     b. Circle "I’m no better."

     • He’s comparing himself to his ancestors and saying, "I’m no better than those guys!"

  **1. Life Lesson:** That tells us one of the first causes of burnout -- comparing.

  a. **When you start comparing yourself to somebody else, you’re setting yourself up for emotional burnout.**

     • What you tend to do is compare your life with the accomplishments of other people: "I’m not doing enough."

     • You compare your problems and your trials with the relatively easy lifestyle you think somebody else is having. They’re just hiding their problems.

     • You compare your talents and your gifts and think how meager they are compared to the super star quality of another person you know or admire, or maybe the other guy or woman in the office.

  b. **But the worst thing you can do** is when you start comparing your
expectations with the way life has really turned out. This is dangerous.

- Once you start comparing, the 2nd thing you start doing is criticizing yourself.
- You are your own worst critic. Your worst critic lives between your ears. That’s right its all in your head.

c. Then when it doesn’t happen, you move to phase 3.
- You start feeling guilty about all the work you haven’t gotten done.

- Do you ever have so much to do on your To Do list that there’s no way possible you’re going to get it all done?
- But then when you don’t get it all done, you feel guilty because you don’t get it all done. You’re setting yourself up for failure and your setting yourself up for burnout.

So the 1st thing we do is we compare. The second thing we do is...

II. We undervalue our work.

1 Kings 19:14 (Mess)
Elijah said it again, "I've been working my heart out for God, the God-of-the-Angel-Armies, because the people of Israel have abandoned your covenant, destroyed your places of worship, and murdered your prophets. I'm the only one left, and now they're trying to kill me."

1. Elijah was a man of God, a teacher of the truth. It’s as if he blamed himself for things that weren’t his fault.

a. He was to tell the people what God wanted them to do but they weren’t listening and the nation was falling apart morally because they had some bad leaders.

- They had brought in all kinds of paganism. He’s teaching and preaching and they weren’t changing and he blames himself.
- I know this feeling. I know there have been times I’ve got up to speak and I know God had told me to say a certain thing and I’ve studied and prayed about it to share something I knew could be life changing
- But I also knew that 80-90% of the people who would hear it weren’t going to do anything about it.
- I learned a long time ago that I’m not responsible for your response.
- I’m responsible to simply teach the truth. Once you walk out of here
that’s your business.

• In fact, I don’t want to know what you do during the week. It might really depress me. I’m not responsible for your response.

b. This is the second major cause of burnout -- trying to control everything.

• Comparing is number one. Trying to control everything is number two.
• You’re living as if the whole world rests on your shoulders.
• I have to make sure everything’s going to turn out all right.
• I have to hold everything together.
• I have to work everything out.
• If it is to be, it’s up to me.
• I have to make it all work out.

2. Life Lesson: You’re setting yourself up for burnout. When you try to be general manager of the universe.

a. This is a burden God never intended for you to carry.

1 Peter 5:6-7

6 So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. 7 Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

• There are a lot of things in your life that are out of your control.

• You will never be able to control them. Stop trying to.

For example:

1. You’re not responsible for other people’s responses.

• I cannot always control how everyone intrepid what I say.

• I will do my best to be as clear as possible. But sometime people will believe what they want to believe and there is absolutely nothing you can do about that. Stop trying to.

• You cannot make everyone happy.

• I will not spend my time chasing around peoples misconceptions and bad interpretations of what I do and how I live my life,
• If they want to know just come and ask me.

• As parents, we’re responsible to our families, but we’re not responsible for every choice our family members make.

• You can’t be responsible. As a parent I’m responsible to raise my kid to teach him the right thing, but when they start making their own decisions, that’s their decision and it’s not mine and I’m not going to feel responsible for it.

• Parents we burn out because we have unrealistic expectations and unrealistic guilt.

• We think, "I should be doing better and if my kids turn out wrong, it’s all my fault." Not necessarily. We underrate our work.

**III. When we exaggerate our problems we’re heading for a burnout.**

1. We overemphasize what’s wrong in our lives and we ignore God’s blessing in our lives.

   a. We always focus on the negative rather than the positive.

      • We see the cup as half empty not as half full.

      • If you are always focusing on the negative in your life, if that’s all you ever look at, if you’re always putting yourself down (you’ve got that mp3 going on), and you’re always seeing everything negative, you’re setting yourself up for burnout.

   b. This is what happened with Elijah. v. 10b "I’m the only one left and they’re trying to kill me."

      • Can you hear the pity party he’s having here? "God, I’m the only person in the whole world who lives for You and loves You and they’re trying to kill me, too."

      • Just a few days earlier they’d had this great miracle where Elijah prayed, the fire came from heaven.

      • It was a big miracle. The whole nation saw it and the whole nation came to God in one day.

      • He can’t get the picture right.

**Question:** Have you ever been that tired? Have you ever been so worn out that you can’t think straight? You can’t see what really is happening and you
think the whole world is caving in on you

I call This Chicken Little Christianity. "The sky is always falling on you!"

This is what Elijah’s doing. "I’m the only one, God, that’s trying to do the right thing."

2. He’s just forgotten that a few days earlier the whole nation has turned back to God.

a. In fact, God tells him a little later in the chapter, "All along, Elijah, there were 7000 true believers, even when the nation went the wrong way these people never bowed down to an idol."

• He wasn’t the only one. There were 7000 other ones even before the big revival.

• Then he says on top of that, "... they are trying to kill me."

• It sounds like the whole world is after him. It wasn’t the whole world -- just one woman.

b. My Point: When your burning out, you exaggerate.

• I realize men, that sometimes one woman seems like the whole world!

• Jezebel was after him. On top of that, she wasn’t really intending to kill him.

• If you’re intending to kill a person, you don’t send a messenger to tell him you’re going to kill him, you send a hit man.

• I don’t know from personal experience, but I figure that’s what you do. If you’re going to kill somebody you just go kill them.

c. So he’s over exaggerating his problem.

Life Lesson #3 This is the third cause of burnout: emotional reasoning. Emotional reasoning is when you listen to your feelings rather than the facts.

You focus on how you feel rather than on what’s reality, what’s the truth.

Emotion reasoning goes like this: "I feel it, therefore it must be true."

Have you learned yet that emotions lie?

• Feelings lie. Just because you feel something doesn’t mean it’s the truth. Ask any professional athlete or performer or musician, he can
tell you they feel very discouraged after a great performance.

- They are so drained emotionally, the adrenalin is gone, the fatigue set in and they’re thinking, "I didn’t do too good" but that’s not a reality.

- In fact, they probably did a pretty good job. They may have done a great job. But in that state you start listening to your feelings.

3. You have to learn as a mature person to ignore your feelings sometimes. Feelings can be wrong. Feelings are highly unreliable.

**Illustration:** There’s a story of a couple that was a couple of weeks into their marriage, the husband said to His wife "**I don’t feel married.**" She said, "It doesn’t matter if you feel it or not. You’re married!" There’s no backing out. You can’t just go out and do whatever you please just because you don’t feel married.

**a. Apply to Life:**

- The truth is some of you came to church today saying, "I don’t feel God’s very close to me.

- I don’t feel close to God, I don’t feel God’s close to me." You’re wrong. God is just as close to you as on those spiritual highs you felt in the past.

**Listen...God doesn’t move.** The Bible says, if you’re a Christian, Christ is in your heart, He’s inside of you, He lives within you, He puts His Spirit inside of you. **He never leaves you, never abandons you, never gives up on you**

- The only thing that changes is your feelings. We sing a song and you feel close to God.

- Then on Monday morning, you wonder, "Where’s God?" He’s the same place He was when you sang that song. He’s with you. He hasn’t backed off. He hasn’t moved.

**b. You can’t listen to your feelings.**

**Jesus did not say,** "When you know your feelings, your feelings will set you free." He said, "**When you know the truth, the truth will set you free.**"

**The truth will set you free.** So why do we exaggerate our problems?

**Because we don’t really like to face the truth.**

- We don’t like to face the truth about ourselves so we hide.
• We don’t like to face the truth about our relationships so we hurl, throw bombs at each other.

• We don’t like to face the truth about life, about death, about reality, about the future, about the past.

• So we make up all kinds of stories. The truth sets us free but it does make us miserable before we get to freedom because we don’t like to deal with it.

1. We underrate our work
2. We exaggerate our problems
3. We exaggerate our problems

The most damaging consequence of burnout is the fourth one.

IV. We abandon our dreams.

1. You lose your vision.

1 Kings 19:4

4 Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died."

a. When you start to burn out, you forfeit your future.

• You basically want to give up. You’re so emotionally, physically, spiritually drained you just want to give up.

• What happens is you just stop caring.

Notice what Elijah said, "He prayed that he might die. `I’ve had enough, Lord,’ he said." You stop caring.

b. This happens in relationships all the time. If you’re in a relationship where you constantly have conflict, pretty soon you start draining dry of love and energy.

• I can’t tell you how many times over the years in ministry, people come to me and say, "I just don’t love my wife/husband any more."

• What I really want to say is, "So what? You can fall in and out of love a hundred times in a marriage."

c. There’s some days you love your spouse and some days you want to strangle your spouse.
• That’s why it takes more than love to make a marriage work. Love is not all you need. It takes more than love.

• It takes commitment. It takes character. It takes integrity. It takes maturity. It takes unselfishness to make a marriage work.

• You can’t build a marriage on the emotional side of love. Love is an important ingredient, but that’s not all you need.

• You need character. You need maturity. And you need commitment.

• Those are the things you do have control over. You can’t always control your feelings.

• But you can control your commitment.

• And the commitments are what take you through those times you don’t have any feelings.

• If I said, "I’m only going to speak to you when I feel like it, I wouldn’t be here today!" But I had a commitment.

So we abandon our dreams.

Elijah said he prayed that he might die, "I’ve had enough! It’s just not worth it. I’m ready to throw in the towel. I want to die."

Illustration Of people who checked out in Life...

• Some of you may be at that point today. You may be saying, "I’m ready to check out.

• I’m ready to check out of my marriage.

• I’m ready to check out of my career." Some of you may be thinking, "I’m ready to check out of life."

• What do you do when you hit that point in burnout? What do you do when it doesn’t look like there are any answers, any place to turn, and you say, "I don’t think I can handle one more day of pain!"

What do you do?

Come back next week and I’ll tell you. 😊