

## The Antidote to Pastoral Burnout

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What is burnout? Symptoms? And Causes?

Antidote to burnout - 30,000 ft view

Vision Explore - Communication Tool to help develop your Soul Care Plan

### **What is burnout?**

“Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest and motivation that led you to take on a certain role in the first place. Burnout reduces productivity and saps your energy, leaving you feeling increasingly helpless, hopeless, cynical, and resentful. Eventually, you may feel like you have nothing more to give.”

Burnout Prevention and Treatment: [www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org)

“Burnout is not usually found in lazy people. Men and women who suffer burnout are usually purposeful, committed, unselfish and somewhat idealistic servants of God. Burnout often hits people who believe, commit and serve with all their heart, in the area toward which they believe God has directed their commitment and involvement.

Burnout can lead to depression, discouragement, isolation, chronic fatigue, paranoia, becoming critical and judgmental of others, martyr complex, rejection, messiah complex and a lack of inspiration in your teaching or preaching.”

Stress and Burnout: [www.pastoralcareinc.com](http://www.pastoralcareinc.com)

### **Job burnout symptoms** (www.Mayo Clinic.com)

Ask yourself:

- Have you become cynical or critical at work?
- Do you drag yourself to work and have trouble getting started?
- Have you become irritable or impatient with co-workers, customers or clients?
- Do you lack the energy to be consistently productive?
- Do you find it hard to concentrate?
- Do you lack satisfaction from your achievements?
- Do you feel disillusioned about your job?
- Are you using food, drugs or alcohol to feel better or to simply not feel?
- Have your sleep habits changed?
- Are you troubled by unexplained headaches, stomach or bowel problems, or other physical complaints?

### **Possible causes of job burnout** (www.Mayo Clinic.com)

Job burnout can result from various factors, including:

- Lack of control. An inability to influence decisions that affect your job — such as your schedule, assignments or workload — could lead to job burnout. So could a lack of the resources you need to do your work.

- Unclear job expectations. If you're unclear about the degree of authority you have or what your supervisor or others expect from you, you're not likely to feel comfortable at work.
- Dysfunctional workplace dynamics. Perhaps you work with an office bully, or you feel undermined by colleagues or your boss micromanages your work. This can contribute to job stress.
- Extremes of activity. When a job is monotonous or chaotic, you need constant energy to remain focused — which can lead to fatigue and job burnout.
- Lack of social support. If you feel isolated at work and in your personal life, you might feel more stressed.
- Work-life imbalance. If your work takes up so much of your time and effort that you don't have the energy to spend time with your family and friends, you might burn out quickly.

“Without balance and margin in our lives, those expectations can, and eventually will, crush us. How do we keep ourselves emotionally, relationally, spiritually, and physically healthy in a highly demanding vocation?” -- Doug Talley

### **Antidote to Burnout is a Healthy Soul**

#### **Soul Care:**

Boundaries (Townsend & Cloud)

To protect your heart (Proverbs 4:23)

- FAB -- feeling, attitudes, behaviors
- Let the good in and keep the bad out

“A strong vibrant inner life with God is necessary or you will burnout and can suffer a moral failure.” James Bryan Smith, PhD, CHOG Convention lecture, 2017

Soul Care is our inner world: thoughts, feelings, imagination and choices. It also includes what our body experiences and the people we spend time with.

Pastors are not to be defined by or focused on “Attendance, Building, Cash” = ABC - instead seek identity in Christ and acceptance of His definition of who we are. - Doug’s paraphrase -of Dr Smith

Identity in Christ is “The Beloved of Christ”

“The key to Soul Care is to cultivate deep satisfaction in God.” Dr Smith

“You must arrange your day so that you are experiencing deep contentment, joy and confidence in your everyday life with God.” ..... “The main thing you will give your congregation is the person you become.” Dr Smith (Dallas Willard to John Orberg)

Central practices that leads to soul health in God:

- Ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life. Hurry leads to getting caught up in the flesh..... Create margin; when hurry dominates your life three things go out of your life: time with God, self-care and investment in significant relationships” Dr. Smith
- Learn to Say No - boundaries
- Delegate - invest in volunteers and build them up to be leaders

“Your soul will not be neglected, if you neglect it you will burnout”

Identity Narrative: “I am one in whom God dwells and delights”

Place Narrative: “I live in the strong unshakable kingdom of God.”

How to create Margin?

Start doing these things:

Keep the Lord before us: Psalm 16:8-9

Longing for God must supersede our love for ministry

Ask Lord Jesus to develop in me an incredible urge toward Him. (Richard Rolle)

Slow down and live life at God’s Speed: speed of love and relationship

Look for divine interruptions in our daily schedule

Memorize long passages of scripture: Col 3, 1 Cor 13, Romans 8

Study scripture to know God not just for sermon prep

Read Devotional classics

Practice abandoning outcomes to God

Trust God to act

Holy Leisure -- do nothing for 30 minutes

Journal: blessings, God moments, inner heart struggles, insights, ect

Read prayer books.

### **Resources:**

- Burnout Prevention and Treatment: [www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org)
- The Good and Beautiful Life by James Bryan Smith
- Blog on Burnout by Carey Nieuwhof at <https://careynieuwhof.com/tag/burn-out/>
- Stress and Burnout: [www.pastoralcareinc.com](http://www.pastoralcareinc.com)
- Burnout: How to spot it and take action: [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)
- Boundaries by John Townsend, Phd and Henry Cloud, Phd
- Devotional Classics; Selected Reading For Individuals & Groups; Edited by Richard J Foster & James Bryan Smith
- The Emotionally Healthy Church by Peter Scazzero
- The Fire of Love by Richard Rolle

## Visual Explorer

Center for Creative Leadership

### Instructions

1. Browse:
  - a. Pray that God will lead you to your specific image.
  - b. In silence look over all the images to see which one you are drawn to:
    - i. At first, you may not know why you selected this image.
    - ii. Your connection may be literal, rational, emotional, intuitive, symbolic or otherwise.
  - c. Take the card with you back to your table.
2. Reflect:
  - a. Take your time, don't gloss over the details - really look at the image and ask yourself these questions:
    - What is the image?
    - What is happening in it?
    - What is the context of the picture?
    - Is there anything surprising in the image?
3. Share:
  - a. Describe the image to the group
  - b. Describe how the image is connected to the framing question:
    - i. What does healthy Soul Care look like in my context (ministry, church, co-workers, culture, family)?
  - c. Hand your card to the person on their right.
  - d. That person repeats the process using the card they were handed. (2a, 3a, 3b)
  - e. Then they hand the card to the person on their right. This process is followed until all the group members have commented on the image.
  - f. As the group members process your image write down key phrases, words, thoughts that help you identify your specific path to healthy Soul Care.
  - g. When the image is handed back to you:
    - i. Thank the group for their input into and feedback.
    - ii. Provides a summary of new or confirmed connection of your card to the framing question.
  - h. The process starts over with the person on the right using the image they have selected.
4. Summary - the whole group
  - a. How would you describe your conversation?
  - b. What happen during your conversation?
  - c. What was valuable about the process: browsing, reflecting, sharing?
  - d. What did you discover about Healthy Soul Care?

Notes: