

Rick Warren Reveals 4 Huge Reasons Pastors Burn Out

One of the issues that we sometimes address at is the issue of ministry burnout. And when we do address it, the responses are overwhelming. It's a big issue.

Why do so many pastors burn out in ministry? It's because of faulty thinking. Our thinking controls our emotions and our emotions control the way we act.

The problem is, when we're at an emotional low, we typically make four common mistakes. Next week I want to talk about how to overcome these emotions and prevent burnout, but today I want you to become aware of four of the most threatening internal causes of burnout in ministry:

1. We focus on our feelings rather than the facts. Emotional reasoning is dangerous. Emotional reasoning says, "If I feel it, it must be so." If I feel like a failure, I am a failure. If I don't feel close to God, I must not be close to God. If I feel like a lousy pastor, I must be a lousy pastor. The fact is, feelings are not always facts. Your feelings will tell you that you're helpless and hopeless, but those feelings aren't rooted in truth.

2. We compare ourselves to others. When we are emotionally drained, we start comparing ourselves. The Bible warns against this over and over again. When you start comparing yourself to other people you are setting yourself up for depression. Everybody's different. Everybody's unique. Only you can be you. When you get to heaven, God is not going to say, "How come you weren't more like Billy Graham?" or "How come you weren't more like Moses?" or "How come you weren't more like...?"

He's really going to say, "How come you weren't more like

you?"

We get emotionally burnt out because we start comparing ourselves. When we compare ourselves we compare our weaknesses with other people's strengths. We ignore the fact that they have weaknesses that we may be strong in. We make comparisons that get us into all kinds of trouble.

3. We blame ourselves for things that aren't our fault. We tend to blame ourselves and when we're feeling emotionally low we tend to blame all of the world's problems on ourselves. If you get in a helping profession like counseling or pastoring or social work, you're going to discover that the people don't always respond the way you'd like them to respond. You can influence people but you cannot control them. Yet we tend to blame ourselves when others make choices we don't approve of or don't understand.

4. We exaggerate the negative. Have you noticed the fact that when you're discouraged, everything seems to be wrong? When your life becomes filled with fear and resentment and low self-esteem and anger and loneliness and worry, you're headed for burnout. Then, if you focus on your feelings, and you compare yourself to others, and you accept responsibility for everybody else, and you exaggerate the negative, you're only going to make matters worse.

Catch next week's article for steps to reverse and heal from burnout in your life and ministry!

Rick Warren is the founding pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., one of America's largest and most influential churches. Rick is author of the New York Times bestseller *The Purpose Driven Life*. His book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, was named one of the 100 Christian books that changed the 20th century. He is also founder of , a global Internet community for pastors.

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