

When Good Works Wear You Out

Many years ago, I went through a **burnout** stage that was so bad, it actually scared me. I had been committed to so many good things, I—like many others—had lost sight of the best thing God had for me, which was to live and breathe in sync with His heartbeat for me.

The Lord was gentle and wonderful during my recovery season. Step by step, He led me through a time of soul-searching, rest, reflection and repentance. I understood, on a deeper level, how much He loves me, how important my time is to Him and how I only have this one life to offer Him. And I can't give to Him something I've already given away to somebody else.

Out of that season, I learned to “put the big rocks in first,” as some are known to say. Certain things in my life had to be immovable **commitments** if I ever hoped to bear the kind of **fruit** God had in mind for me from the beginning of time.

And the same is true for you.

In the Gospel of John, chapter 15, Jesus tells us that we have a **divine appointment** to bear much fruit and that it's to His Father's great glory when we do. It blesses His heart so much when we live by faith, abide in the Vine and live in response to His love.

As Christians, we don't **produce** more by doing more; we produce more by being more with **Christ**.

But here's something very important about the **fruit-bearing** life: We are going to get downright exhausted sometimes, and that's normal.

In those early years after my burnout, when I would only take careful steps into commitment and still have the occasional

day of absolute exhaustion, that wretched **enemy** would come in like the bully he is and accuse me for being back in that place of burnout, of never learning to say no, blah blah blah.

And I just took it because I agreed with him. But then one day, the Lord whispered to my heart and said, "You are most definitely *not* back in that place! You have a little **fatigue** today, and you need some **rest**. Tomorrow is a new day. When you were burned out, you were tired every day. You had lost your margin and your joy. That's not you now. You are in a new place and learning to work within the ebb and flow of life."

That insight was a healing revelation to me.

I also read the work of **pastors** and **ministers** who do large-scale **ministry**, and every one of them admitted that although they knew they were walking in God's will for them, they still had days when they dropped in bed in exhaustion. It's simply true: Walking out the things God has for us—though wonderful and exhilarating—can still make us tired from time to time.

Maybe this is obvious to everyone but me. But when I figured this out and refused the enemy's accusations, the accuser slithered away. Now, instead of being tired for a month (something I'd never allow in my life again), I might be tired for a day or two. And as soon as I notice twinges of fatigue that carry over, I make some immediate changes.

What about you? Are you flirting with burnout? Have you been joyless and tired for a long time? Maybe you need a time of recovery and rest.

Or maybe you're just a little tired and just need a little break. Give yourself one.

More than anything, I pray that if you're tired, it's from working through and walking out God's highest and best will for you. And that you'll make time for much-needed rest, which is an act of faith in itself. But if you're heading toward

burnout, do not come under shame or condemnation. Just put the brakes on now and make some immediate life changes. Life is too short and precious to run a rat race God never assigned to you!

May the Lord fill you up and make you strong. May you hear His voice and follow His lead.

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