

# Burnout

*“When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, Thou didst know my path. In the way where I walk, they have hidden a trap for me. Look to the right and see; for there is on one who regards me; there is no escape for me; no one cares for my soul.”*  
Psalm 142:3-4

In Psalm 142 David penned the words “no one cares for my soul.” Can you feel David’s heaviness of heart? His hope of help seems dashed and depression has overshadowed his spirit. He sounds spiritually and emotionally wiped out. Have you ever felt that way? Most likely you have at some point in your life.

**David was spiritually overwhelmed and emotionally burned out.**

Overwhelmed and overcome, the psalmist couldn’t find a way of escape from natural enemies and an enemy called burnout. So what is this thing called burnout anyway?

## What Burnout Is All About

### What Burnout IS

“Burnout is a state of mental, emotional and physical exhaustion that leaves its victims with no energy, no hope, and no end in sight. It is the plague of our times”

Gary Smalley

“Burnout is a loss of enthusiasm, energy, idealism, perspective and purpose.”

Frank Minirth

“Burnout is the end result of prolonged job-related or personal stress.”

Paul Meier

“Burnout is an emotional response. In burnout, things are not going right. The resources are not there. People are not affirming you and a state of demoralization sets in. For me, the key concept in burnout is the word demoralization. YOU NO LONGER CARE.”

Archibald Hart

“Burnout is looking at life and saying YUK!!!

Steve Roll

*Burnout is a crisis of physical, emotional, spiritual and relational exhaustion. Life is unsatisfying and unfulfilling. And it isn’t fun anymore. Burnout is a predecessor to*

*depression that can lead to apathy which can lead us to believe that people and even God don't care about me.*

### **What Burnout DOES**

- **Burnout CLOUDS OUR VISION.** The smoke from burnout obscures and blinds our way. We don't see life clearly. Dreams start looking like nightmares. Purpose and destiny take a hike over the hill deserting us while we stare numbly at a hopeless horizon of a life that has crashed and burned.
- **Burnout DEPRESSES OUR SPIRITS.** Burnout drains our passion and zeal for living, leaving us sitting emotionally depleted on the ash heap of depression. Burnout discourages our soul. The spirit of despair finds a dwelling place in the hearts of burned out people.
- **Burnout SAPS OUR ENERGY.** Burnout pulls the plug on our energy level. Even Energize Bunnies come to a screeching halt when burnout unplugs their batteries. Spiritual, emotional and physical fatigue sets in. Our get up and go got up and went when we experience burnout.
- **Burnout STEALS OUR JOY.** Burnout turns happy campers into unhappy ones. Sadness instead of gladness covers our countenances. Burnout's flames will scorch joy and burn happiness out of our hearts if we are not careful.

### **Basics of Burnout**

**1. Burnout is the result of a pro-longed period of stress and pressure.** Burnout is a wearing down process. Burnout doesn't happen overnight. Long seasons of positive or negative stress and pressure wear us down. It is the constant drip, drip, drip of the emotional faucet that burns us out.

**2. Burnout is a result of unresolved conflicts.** Unresolved issues and relationships will burn us over time. Conflicts with God, others and ourselves must be resolved if we are to remain healthy and productive. People who burn out always leave a trail of unresolved conflicts in their wake.

**3. Burnout is a result of unfulfilled expectations with God, people, and ourselves.** Life becomes a bummer when what we hope will happen doesn't. Unfulfilled expectations invite discouragement. Burnout preys on discouraged people. Discouragement drops our guard and leaves us defenseless against burnout's flames. Everyone needs to experience fulfilled expectations occasionally in order to remain burnout resistant.

*\* Burnout victims suffer from disappointment, discouragement, disillusionment, despair and depression. These five D's add up to DISASTER!*

**Back to David. Burnout lied to David and led him to believe that nobody cared.** David knew that God cared, but his vision of God's love and care for Him was obscured. David cared about his own life but he was having trouble thinking positively and acting courageously on God's promises for him. And deep down inside, David knew there were some people who cared for him, but burnout left him feeling that they were nowhere to be found.

## **Common Causes Of Burnout**

The following list is suggestive but not all inclusive of events and life experiences that can contribute to burnout.

**Burnout can be caused by POSITIVE things as well as NEGATIVE ones.**

For instance, a prolonged, very demanding work project that is positive and exhilarating can drain energy. When the adrenalin of the project wanes at the completion of the work, burnout can set in. Even a positive project can create great stress and pressure that burnout feeds on. We can burnout doing what we love to do if we are not careful.

On the other side of the coin, a work project that is demanding but not exhilarating or fulfilling invites burnout in a hurry. We can burnout quickly when we do what we hate to do, but we have to do it anyway.

- \* Prolonged Overwork
- \* Extended Unemployment
- \* Chronic Low Self-esteem
- \* Spiritual Dryness
- \* Marriage and Family Problems
- \* Significant Loss
- \* Caregiver Role
- \* Loneliness
- \* A Negative Attitude Or Critical Spirit
- \* Being Fired From Job
- \* Financial Pressure
- \* Unresolved Emotional Healing
- \* Unfair And Unjust Treatment
- \* Divorce
- \* Death Of A loved One
- \* Chronic Illness
- \* Extended Depression
- \* Self-Absorption

## **MIDLIFE BURNOUT**

For both men and women in the age range 35-55, midlife burnout or commonly called midlife crisis, is not uncommon. Men and women arrive at midlife worn out, wondering what they have accomplished, and wondering where the next half of life will end up. Midlife can be a very unsettling and frightening time for some people.

**Midlife burnout boils down to this: I have labored and loved all my life and is this all there is? I have served others, but what about me and my needs? What about my dreams, desires and goals for my life? Where is life going?**

If midlife goals have not been met and success has been elusive, people can interpret their lives as failures. Burnout and depression is a very real threat to those who struggle with how they got where they are instead of where they had hoped to be.

- Wives and mothers who have given some of their best years to their marriage and family, can find themselves weary with the routine, feeling they have gotten the short end of the stick when it comes to being served. They begin questioning who they are as a woman who has needs to be met too.
- Husbands and fathers who have given some of their best years protecting and providing for their wife and children look at midlife and wonder if they have succeeded. Any perceived failure by midlife men to think that they have failed to succeed as men, husbands or fathers places immense pressure on them, causing them to question their abilities, self-worth, dignity, value and significance.
- Midlife burnout can also occur when men or women have not dealt with significant emotional issues for the first few decades of their lives. The heartache and pain of unresolved, unhealed emotional problems “catches up” at midlife and hit people extremely hard. *Midlife burnout leaves people feeling broken because personal issues have not been fixed and made whole previously in their lives.*

**\*\*\* Midlife burnout is a significant sign that something or some things need to be dealt with in a person’s life. How midlife burnout is faced and overcome determines how the next half of life will be lived.**

## **Common Symptoms Of Burnout**

Burnout affects four key areas of our lives. Sometimes one or two areas are affected at the same time. But if all four are on fire at the same time, burnout will be significant and needs attended to immediately.

### **➤ PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS**

Fatigue, energy loss, exhaustion, inability to focus, inability to complete tasks.

**\* Burnout drains the energy we need to be healthy and productive people.**

➤ **EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS**

poor- Irritability, mood swings, misdirected anger, inappropriate emotions, pity-me parties, stressed out, hyper active, panicky, controlling, overbearing, depressed appearance, negative attitude and negative self-talk.

**\* Burnout turns people into emotional basket cases!**

➤ **RELATIONAL SYMPTOMS**

Conflicts, withdrawal, isolation, stop listening to others, judgmental, critical and envious spirit, distancing verses reconciling.

**\* Healthy relationships head south when burnout rides in to town!**

➤ **SPIRITUAL SYMPTOMS**

Soul weary, undisciplined, become doubtful, questioning what you believe, distance self from God, stay away from church, avoid fellow Christians, irregular and inconsistent prayer and Bible reading, spiritual depression.

**\* Burnout tempts us to question what we believe and why we believe it.**

## **Burnout Questionnaire**

If you are wondering whether or not you are burned out please review the questions below. There are from the Mayo Clinic's website. I have added in parenthesis additional thoughts. If you answer yes to any of them you may be burned out.

- Do you find yourself being more cynical, critical and sarcastic at work? (At home, at church or in social settings?)
- Have you lost the ability to experience joy? (In any area of your life?)
- Do you drag yourself into work and have trouble getting started once you arrive?
- Have you become more irritable and less patient with co-workers, customers or clients? (How about family, friends, colleagues or church members?)
- Do you feel you feel insurmountable barriers at work? (Do you feel overwhelmed at home with marriage and family responsibilities?)

- Do you feel that you lack the energy to be consistently productive? (At work, at home, in your personal life?)
- Do you no longer feel satisfaction from your achievements?
- Do you have a hard time laughing at yourself? (When is the last time you laughed at you?)
- Are you tired of your co-workers (family and friends) asking you if you are OK?
- Do you feel disillusioned about your job? (Your overall life, marriage, family, contribution and significance to society?)
- Are you self-medicating, using food, drugs, alcohol or sexual activity to feel better or to simply not feel?
- Have your sleep patterns or appetite changed?
- Are you troubled by headaches, neck pain or lower back pain?

## **Bouncing Back From Burnout**

*“Thou hast turned my mourning into dancing; Thou has loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness; that my soul may sing praise to Thee and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to Thee forever.” Psalm 30:11-12*

It is obvious from Psalm 30 that David bounced back from burnout. The Lord doused the fires of burnout in David’s life. David submitted himself to God’s restoring process. In doing so, David was delivered from burnout and depression.

If you believe you are experiencing a bout of burnout, it is important for your health and well-being that you deal with it and defeat it.

If David could beat burnout, so can you!

## **Five Steps To Bouncing Back From Burnout**

### **1. ADMIT**

**Psalm 71:12**

Admit you need help. Deny the denial you have been hiding behind. Stop stuffing your harmful emotions. Face reality. Confess that you are burned out and need God’s help. Admission of need is the first step to bouncing back from burnout.

\* *Lord, I admit that I am burned out and I need Your help.*

## 2. SUBMIT

**Romans 12:1-2**

Surrender your burnout to the Lord. Humble yourself to the fact that you can't fix or heal this. Only Jesus can. Humble yourself to His restorative power. Let go of your lack of understanding of here. You are burned out. So take it to the Lord. Put your healing and how you got burned out life in His loving, merciful hands.

*\* Lord, I submit to You and your healing process for my life.*

## 3. COMMIT

**John 2:5**

Resolve with all your heart to do whatever it takes to get better and be restored to wholeness. Decide to do what God directs you to do. Commit your energy and effort to work through your pain. Remove all obstacles to restoration. Let nothing stand in your way of getting better. Determine that beating burnout, not being beaten by burnout, is your one and only option.

*\* Lord, I wholeheartedly commit myself to You and your restoration process for my life.*

## 4. REFIT

**I Corinthians 15:10**

Crawl up on God's operating table. Trust Him to remove your hurt and relieve you from what burned you out. Don't resist any steps of the process. Be teachable. Be willing to learn new ways to manage life better.

Expect the Lord to rebuild your life. Cooperate with Him. Raise up a new, improved version of you on the foundation of the Word of God.

*\* Lord, here I am. Do Your thing in me. I am ready to be refitted for life.*

## 5. TRANSMIT

**Psalms 40:1-3**

Bounce back from burnout by sharing with others how God doused burnout's fires in your life. Share your gift of restoration and

renewal.  
through the

Don't hoard it. Tell others how you made it successfully  
restoration process. The results were worth the process.

*\* Lord, I will faithfully share with others what you have done for me.*

## **Benefits and Blessings Of Bouncing Back From Burnout**

- ✓ A new beginning to live and enjoy life. Burnout is not a dead end!
- ✓ Revived vision, renewed strength and restored joy! Dreaming again!
- ✓ Wisdom and insight into how to manage our lives in a healthier and more productive manner.
- ✓ Battling and beating burnout has a way of deepening our compassion for others.
- ✓ We have a testimony of how God delivered us from burnout and depression.
- ✓ Satisfaction of defeating the devil who tried to bury us with burnout.
- ✓ We have a deeper appreciation for God's faithfulness to us.

***✓ PRAISE AND THANKS TO GOD FOR HIS GOODNESS TO HEAL, RESTORE AND RENEW OUR ONCE BURNED OUT LIVES!!!!***

## **Beating Burnout Before It Beats You**

**Beating burnout beats being burned out!** An ounce of prevention is indeed more valuable than a pound of cure. Because preventing burnout is preferable to suffering burnout, there are some things we can do to head burnout off at the pass.

### **A Baker's Dozen Of Burnout Beaters**

#### **1. Maintain A Consistent Devotional Life**

Psalm 63:1-5

- **Daily renewal through daily devotions.**

#### **2. Stay Emotionally Healthy**

Ephesians 4:29-32

- **Keep your emotional baggage unpacked.**

#### **3. Laugh A Lot!**

Proverbs 17:22



- **Learn to laugh at life and YOURSELF!**

#### **4. Enjoy The Little Things Of Life**

- **Little things are the BIG THINGS!**

#### **5. Get A Life Outside Of Your Work/Career**

- **Rest and recreation are not sinful!**

#### **6. Stay In Good Physical Shape**

- **Exercise stimulates endorphins...HAPPY HORMONES!**

#### **7. Keep Your Heart Pure**

I Timothy 5:22

- **Spiritual and moral purity produces peace and power.**

#### **8. Keep The Home Fires Burning**

Ecclesiastes 9:9, Proverbs 31:27

- **Healthy homes make for happy hearts!**

#### **9. Listen To Your Mate**

- **Your spouse has burnout radar.**

#### **10. Know Your Limits And Respect Them**

John 15:5, Philippians 4:13

- **Exceeding boundaries and living unbalanced lives breeds burnout.**

#### **11. Excel At What You Do Well**

I Corinthians 10:31

- **Focus and be the best at what you do best. Do what you love and love what you do. Loving who we are in Christ and what we do in His name keeps burnout at arm's length.**

## **12. Allow Others To Minister To You**

Proverbs 27:17

- **God uses people to refresh and encourage people.**

## **13. RELAX! RELAX! RELAX!**

Psalm 46:10, Isaiah 40 25-31

- **Be at peace with God's pace in life!**

*"For I satisfy the weary ones and refresh everyone who languishes (feels feeble, weak or dispirited)."*

*Jeremiah 31:25*

*"Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary."*

*Isaiah 40:31*

*"Come to Me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My load is light."*

*Matthew 11:28-30*

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