

Taking Care Of You

*“The second is like it, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
Matthew 22:39*

Are you taking care of you?

Multitudes of people in our culture, including professing Christians, take care of everyone and everything else but themselves. That is why we face an alarming, ever-increasing epidemic of mid-life crisis, physical and emotional burnout, depression, spiritual dryness, relational emptiness and dysfunctional lifestyles in America.

Personally unhealthy, dysfunctional living is the result of neglecting to take care of our spiritual, physical, emotional and relational needs.

In counseling sessions, people who are burned out on life seem amazed and almost blown away when I give them permission to take care of themselves. Many are greatly relieved when I suggest to them you need to take care of you and it is okay!

Our Creator knows about our tendency to neglect to take care of ourselves. So His Son Jesus Christ addressed this issue when He gave us the two greatest commandments in the Kingdom of God.

First and foremost, we are to love God with all of our being (Matthew 22:37-38) God alone is to be the supreme object of our devotion and affection. When we love God and put Him first in our lives, He meets our needs as only He can. When we love the Lord, He takes care of us.

Secondly, Jesus says YOU (that means you and me!) shall love your neighbor as you love YOURSELF. Note we are to love ourselves and we are to love our neighbors in the way we love ourselves. To have healthy relationships with neighbors, we have to have a healthy relationship, you guessed it, with ourselves. Some people have trouble loving others because they don't love or like themselves.

Loving ourselves means knowing and taking care of ourselves.

Many people don't love themselves because they don't take care of themselves. They don't look after their personal wholeness, wellness and health. As Christians, we are deeply committed to love and serve others. But what about loving and taking care of our needs once in a while too? Co-dependency is on the rise in our culture. It is also present in the church. People who “need to be needed” no matter how unhealthy the

relationship or situation is, find out that one day their “need to be needed” leaves them needy in their own life.

I am very concerned about the burn out that is blazing through the Christian community. While many of us run and gun for Jesus, we become unhealthy when we neglect our spiritual, emotional, relational and physical health. We talk a great talk, but walk a horrible walk when it comes to looking after our personal needs. Too many godly people “doing the work of the Lord” are burning out and limping along because they make excuses for not caring for themselves.

If you are reading this and what I have shared describes you, lay down your denial and defenses, and admit that you need to take care of you. I give you permission to take care of yourself. It is okay for you to look after you once in a while. I give you permission to be whole, healthy and happy in Christ.

Someone said that when you get at the end of the rat race, you are still a rat! That may be true. If it is, as a servant of Jesus Christ, I want to cross the finish line as a healthy, well-balanced, happy, fulfilled rat!

Pause for a moment from the rat race you are running and honestly answer the following questions.

- ✓ Do you rest as you need to? Do you sleep well at night and wake up refreshed?
- ✓ Do you play and have fun on regular basis?
- ✓ Do you feed your spirit each day with the living water of God’s Word?
- ✓ Can you drop everything and do something frivolous once in a while?
- ✓ Do you have a trusted confidant you can share your feelings and emotional needs with?
- ✓ Are you getting regular exercise and watching your nutrition?
- ✓ Can you laugh at life and laugh at yourself once in a while?
- ✓ Would those closest to you say you are whole, healthy and well-balanced?

How did you come out? Maybe you realized you are running on the ragged edge of life and wondering what is in it for you. Maybe you feel burnout nipping at your heels and depression knocking on your door. Are you losing your personal passion, enthusiasm and joy for your life? Do you know who you are and what God has created you to be and do?

Maybe you need to adjust your lifestyle and start taking better care of you. Again I want to say to you: You have my permission to give yourself permission to take care of yourself.

You do deserve a break today...so take it and take care of yourself. Do something for you today.

“They that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings as eagles; they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.”

Isaiah 40:31

A Word For Your Week: Love yourself enough to take care of yourself.

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