



JUST TIRED OR **BURNED OUT?**

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Take our short survey to determine whether you're just tired or jeopardizing your health.

Statistics support what many in ministry feel “tired, edgy and emotionally and physically weary.” A 1998 Focus on the Family report found that 80 percent of pastors and 84 percent of pastors’ wives are discouraged or dealing with depression. Though years have passed, the possibility of *burnout* remains as prominent as ever. Ministering to others while operating an organization is difficult and challenging, yet highly rewarding. It easily leads to seasons of weariness.

But when is it just being tired versus suffering from the more serious life-affecting result of too much busyness called *burnout*? When external pressures, responsibilities and activities exceed one’s internal resources for a sustained period of time, *burnout* happens. This condition can seriously affect our health, emotional stability and spiritual vitality. *Burnout* is damaging to us and to God’s purposes through us.

How do we know if our doldrums are just a temporary season of tiredness needing a short period of rest and renewal or something much more grave requiring an extended Sabbatical and professional help? One way to gauge our status is by completing the following checklist. Put a checkmark in front of each symptom that fits you. When complete, add up the checkmarks and compare your results with the key provided.

THE BURNOUT SURVEY

Instructions: Put a checkmark (✓) in front of the symptoms that fit you.

Physical Symptoms:

- ___ Frequent tightness or pain in the neck/shoulders/back
- ___ Frequent indigestion
- ___ Frequent diarrhea, loose stool or constipation
- ___ Pre-ulcer symptoms
- ___ Frequent or severe headaches
- ___ Rapid weight loss or gain
- ___ Trouble falling asleep and/or staying asleep 8 hours
- ___ Teeth grinding at night
- ___ Tired or listless much of the time
- ___ Difficulty waking up and getting going, wake up in a “cloud”
- ___ Shortness of breath and/or rapid pulse beat

Spiritual & Emotional Symptoms

- ___ Loss of interest in most things but work
- ___ Friends/colleagues/spouse say you need to slow down or rest more
- ___ Have difficulty relaxing or feel guilty when trying to relax
- ___ Generally feel nervous and unsettled
- ___ Readily irritable and/or impatient
- ___ Lost your passion and sense of excitement
- ___ Difficulty coming up with creative vision
- ___ Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- ___ Difficulty experiencing God’s presence
- ___ Previously conquered temptations are returning
- ___ Tendency to seek more comfort in food/activities/spending, etc.

KEY

0-8 items checked = Low

No current risk of *burnout*.

Your daily, weekly and monthly routines are offering you enough rest and renewal to prevent serious problems.

8-15 items checked = Moderate

Experiencing moderate signs of *burnout*.

Much of what you are doing is not providing enough relief from stress to truly renew or refresh you. Change is needed or serious health issues may ensue. This is not sustainable.

15-23 items checked = High

High probability of *burnout*.

Your daily, weekly and monthly schedule is depleting you.

More and more of your effort is probably adrenaline fueled.

You need to be evaluated by a professional.

The most important thing a person can do when there is a possibility of *burnout* is to get input from someone qualified in evaluating the condition. If you are burned out the remedy is threefold:

1. Stop Doing What You're Doing: Meaning that you need an extended period of rest away from the pressures, expectations and 'have-tos' of ministry life and leadership. Without a time-out period you will never (physically, emotionally & spiritually) recover. This typically means a planned Sabbatical of weeks or months, not days.

2. Change: You need to identify the key factor(s) that lead to the burnout and change. Without personal change you will repeat your unhealthy pattern. True non-cosmetic change usually requires coaching, counseling and accountability.

3. Learn Resiliency: It is important to learn how to bounce back from adversity, tiredness and over-exertion and be the better for it in order to sustain effective leadership and ministry. Work on learning how to do so in your life. Ask others how they do it. Become a student of the issue and know where your limits are as well as your coping strengths.