



# SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

## WHEN WE FEEL BURNED OUT

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 40:27-31 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: John 3:16; 10:10; 11:25; 15:5 | Romans 8:37  
Philippians 4:7

### ► SUMMARY

#### Burnout is all too common.

Almost everyone is vulnerable to it. Workplace stress can be overwhelming. Home life, especially when caring for young children or an ailing family member, is often challenging. Missionaries, pastors, and others in full-time ministry are especially susceptible to burnout. Facing trials in our own power will eventually lead to failure. Thankfully, the Lord doesn't ask us to endure difficulty without Him. Believers who lean on the Lord will find that He is faithful through the toughest situations in life.

### ► SERMON POINTS

God desires to fill us with His limitless power rather than leaving us to rely on our own faltering strength:

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator ... does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, 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” (Isa. 40:28-31).

#### What is the progression of burnout?

**Challenge.** Difficult circumstances can arise in any area of life—school, business, relationships, health, and spiritual life or ministry.

**Response.** We give it our best effort; we expend all our energy on overcoming the problem.

**Denial.** The situation begins to take a toll on us, but we still think we can handle it. Eventually, what used to bring refreshment no longer helps. As Christians, we usually pray and keep going, trying to ignore the unrelenting fatigue.

**Withdrawal.** Fearing that no one will understand, we keep to ourselves emotionally, if not physically.

**Bitterness.** Believing no one understands and renewal is impossible, some individuals become resentful or hostile because they feel God or fellow Christians let them down. Often, believers leave the church feeling overwhelmed with all their human efforts to perform. Even worse, they may abandon their faith altogether.

#### Why do we get burned out?

■ **A wrong view of the gospel.** Because we trusted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, our sins are forgiven, and we have a place in heaven. This is truly good news! But a wrong view of salvation is thinking that remaining saved requires following certain rules. Some people reduce a relationship with God to a series of do's and don'ts. That approach is opposite to the teachings of Christ.

Several words translate to “life” from Greek, the language of the New Testament. One is *bios*, earthly or physical life, and another is *zoe*, “the eternal life of God Himself.” The second one Jesus used in these verses: “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly,” and “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 10:10; 11:25).

When we were born again, we received the life of God (John 3:16). It's hard for us to believe, but the power within Christ while He was here on earth is the same ability now within each believer. This is why Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). As we walk in relationship with Jesus, we can continue to bear spiritual fruit even under great adversity.

The Christian life doesn't mean our circumstances always change for the better, but that we go through them in Jesus' strength. With His power, we can face even the most difficult hardship. Without it, the Christian life is impossible.

■ **A wrong view of spiritual maturity.** Many people think that being a wise believer means a person is doing all the right things consistently and never experiencing temptation. But if we could get to the point where we had life under control, we would no longer need the Lord! Thank God that the Christian walk isn't about changing our behavior on our own.

Instead, spiritual maturity means recognizing that we can't improve ourselves, but we can choose to rely on the Father to make us righteous. It's His power within us that brings real change. Ideally, believers never stop growing. With each new test, we can be sure God is going to demonstrate His power to us in a fresh and inspirational way.

### How do we avoid burnout?

Isaiah 40:31 promises new strength to those who wait on the Lord. This passage indicates that God didn't create us to be self-sufficient; He understands we are weak. But as we wait on the Lord, we exchange our weakness for His strength. Then, like the graceful flight of an eagle, our path through trials will be one with supernatural peace and power.

"The Everlasting God ... does not become weary or tired" (Isa. 40:28). If we are tapping into the Spirit's inexhaustible

source of divine life within us, we will not burn out spiritually. If we do start to feel spiritually depleted, we can stop and ask, *Lord, what are you saying to me?* Failures can be the best learning opportunities if we seek God for correction and guidance.

### How do we lean on God?

Isaiah 40:31 compares those who wait on the Lord to eagles, who can effortlessly soar over the earth. In other words, when we lean on Jesus, we won't frantically struggle through life in our own power but lean on Jesus for His ability in every situation.

When you feel overwhelmed, seek to immediately respond, *Lord, I trust You with this. Help me.* He is delighted to provide everything you need at that moment. You don't have to try to suppress ungodly desires in your own strength or follow a never-ending set of memorized rules. Just do three things: surrender all control, depend totally on God, and trust Him for everything.

Even if we face ever greater battles, pressures, and responsibilities, the Lord desires that we continually experience "the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension," as we turn our concerns over to Him (Phil. 4:7).

### ► RESPONSE

- Have you ever felt the need to live according to a strict list of rules to be considered a good Christian? How does the New Testament differ from such a view?
- When you surrender and let God live His life through you, what difference does that make? What greater ability or insight have you gained in surrendering to Him?
- The Lord doesn't expect you to live a godly life apart from His strength. Reflect on what that statement means to you in the context of burnout.

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