

What Should I Do When I Am Exhausted and Want to Give up?

Why is ministry sometimes such a struggle? Why does my desire to help people so often end in frustration and exhaustion? Is there a way of doing ministry that brings encouragement and refreshment? This Webinar will unpack the hidden landmines of ministry and how we get stuck in unhealthy patterns. Together we will then explore God's biblical pattern for rekindling joy and the path of refreshment.

Paul Coulter lives in Lisburn, Northern Ireland, with his Chinese Malaysian wife, Gar-Ling, and their two teenage children. He is Head of Ministry Operations with Living Leadership (www.livingleadership.org), an organisation that helps leaders and their families across the UK and Ireland to live joyfully in Christ and serve Him faithfully through training, mentoring and pastoral support. He is also Executive Director of the Centre for Christianity in Society (www.christianityinsociety.org), which seeks to connect Christ with contemporary culture through evangelistic speaking and training in ethical issues and apologetics. Paul is the author of two books - *Clarion Call: Finding Joy in Christ with John the Baptist* and *Serving Two Masters? Probing the Tensions Between Science and Faith in the Art of Healthcare* - several book chapters and multiple articles, including several on BeThinking.org. He speaks and writes regularly on leadership, pastoral care, the Christian mind and contemporary culture. In his spare time, he loves to walk in hills and forests, cycle on flat roads, and read about history.

I. Causes of exhaustion for “embodied souls”

A. Physical – body needs – we forget we are limited creations of God *Isaiah 40:28; Genesis 3:19*

- Balanced diet
- Exercise
- Sleep
- Time management
- Sunlight
- Physical balance (including brain chemicals)

B. Psychological – soul needs – we forget we are beloved children of God *Isaiah 40:29-31; Ephesians 3:16*

- Assurance from the Spirit of the love of God
- Nourishment from the Word
- Prayerful intimacy with Father God
- Confession of sin and embrace of forgiveness

- Encouragement and exhortation from God's people
- Sabbath rest

II. Keys to endurance (Hebrews 12:1-17)

A. Two risks (verse 3)

- Weariness and burn out (especially activists)
- Faint-heartedness and drop out (especially 'apathists')

B. Two temptations (verses 4 and 15ff.)

- Root of bitterness – idolatry (Deuteronomy 29)
- Esau and instant gratification – immorality

C. Two potentials (verses 7,11,14)

- Peace with everyone
- Holiness

D. Two actions (verses 12-13)

- Straighten your posture to focus on Jesus (especially 'apathists')
- Straighten your paths to aim for Jesus (especially activists)

Endurance comes not by our resilience, but through Jesus, "the founder and perfecter of our faith" (verse 2)

E. A final warning (verse 13b) – don't press on if you're hobbling – seek healing

III. Christ's invitation (Matthew 28:18-20)

A. Prayer (verses 25-26)

- God is Lord (sovereign) AND Father (care)
- Human wisdom and knowledge aren't paths to spiritual insight
 - i. Seeing God as He is
 - ii. Seeing ourselves as we are

B. Comment (verse 27)

- “All things ... no one ... no one” – Jesus is exclusive
- “All things have been handed over to me by my Father” – Jesus is sufficient
 - i. Christ-centred doctrine
 - ii. Christ-centred devotion

B. Invitation (verses 28-30)

- Ministry is Christ's gift – heavy burdens are not (c.f., 1 Kings 12:1)
- Not working until we need rest, but working from a place of rest
 - i. Christ's call is to walk closely with Him
 - ii. Christ's priority for us is character (“learn from me”)

Suggested Readings:

Ash, Christopher (2016) *Zeal Without Burnout*. Good Book Company.

Martinez, Pablo (2018) *Take Care of Yourself*. Lausanne Library.

Murray, David (2017) *ReSet*. Crossway.