**Take Care Of Yourself**

**Surviving and Thriving in Christian Ministry**

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# -“*They made me take care of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I neglected”*

*(Song of Songs 1:6b)*

**-** “…*take care of yourself and of the doctrine…”*  (1 Tim. 4:16).

* Some people never think of others; they are the paradigm of selfishness. But others never think of themselves; they become the paradigm of stressed and burn out people.
* Far from being a sign of a more “spiritual” attitude, this can be a serious mistake and sometimes even a sin. To care for our own garden (person) is not only a right but a duty.

Robert Murray M¨Cheyne, young Scottish minister lay dying at the age of 29, turned to a friend and said: “*God gave me a message to deliver and a horse to ride. Alas I have killed the horse and now I cannot deliver the message”.*

**1.** **The Empty Pool Syndrome**

**The** **principle of the two movements.** Everything in nature has rhythms which are complementary alternations: winter and summer, night and day. One must follow the other.

Output without adequate input leads to the “empty pool syndrome”

“*Most of the misfortunes of man come from the inability to stop and rest” (*Pascal)

# 2. Identifying When the Pool is Getting Empty

Prevention is better than cure. We should identify the warning symptoms

* Irritability: nervousness, fatigue, harsh words
* Inability to enjoy small things in life; work itself becomes burdening and boring.
* Bitterness: “too disappointed”. Complaining about others: the causes (responsibility) seem to be outside, not within me. We may become hypercritical and even cynical.

# 3. Why The Output Exceeds the Input

* **Perfectionism:** **too responsible?** The struggle against the “inner policeman”.

**The awareness of the needs of the unreached: burden and guilt. It is a common and specific problem for evangelists. Learning to sow without anxiety.**

* **Activism: too many things?**

Being involved in too many front lines jeopardizes both excellence and health. The difficulty of saying “no”. When I say “no” I feel guilty. Learning to refuse is essential to health.

The word “yes” is very powerful, but the word “no” is very healthy (!)

* **Self- ambition: too worried about “my name”?**

The ultimate goal is not self- fulfilment but Christ being exalted through my life (Phil. 1:20-21)

-The importance of building up a small personal advisory/accountability group. Choose a few people who can help you take care of yourself.

1. **Some Duties in the Garden: The prevention of “Burn Out”**

How can we take care of the other´s vineyard without neglecting our own vineyard?

If you do not want to neglect your garden, three tasks are necessary:

* Pruning: learning to renounce. “Less means more”. Learn to do less in order to do better.

* Watering: learning personal renewal: finding the balance between ministry and “monastery”.

* Waiting: learning patience. God ´s calendar is different from ours.

**Conclusion:** “Nevertheless I will bring health and healing….I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and truth…(Jeremiah 33:6).

In the Bible **peace, health and truth** go together.

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