



## TIME OF GRACE®

# Burned Out: Spiritually Study Notes

## Summary

The answer to our burnout can sound easy: “Just do less!” However, for many of us, it’s not that simple because deep in our souls we don’t want to let people down. We want approval. We want to be liked. But Pastor Mike reminds us that we will never find true joy in getting people to like us. Instead, we need to remember that because of Jesus, we already have the approval that matters the most.

- The tension—Burn \_\_\_\_\_ out or let \_\_\_\_\_ down?
- Matthew 11:28-29 — “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Luke 5:15-16 — Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. 16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.
- Ephesians 2:8-9 — For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.
- The solution — The \_\_\_\_\_ gives you rest.
- Next Step — \_\_\_\_\_ with the gospel.

## Points to Ponder

1. Hebrews 10:25 says that gathering together for church can be a source of encouragement when we are weary. Name three ways that can happen for those who stay in the habit of every weekend worship.
2. Take an honest look at your schedule with a trusted friend. If you are overcommitted, discuss whose approval you are craving and how the gospel can help you rebalance.

3. Meditate on Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28-30. Accept Jesus' invitation and go to him in faith and in prayer.
4. Evaluate: Most Christians volunteer too much.
5. Do you know someone who doesn't have time for church due to their busy schedule? Share this message with them and pray that Jesus would offer them a better blessing.

## Homework for Next Week

Read 1 Corinthians 4, Proverbs 1:32-33

Time of Grace Ministry  
**Burned Out? Spiritually**  
Matthew 11:28-29, Ephesians 2:8-9  
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*Pastor Mike Novotny*

The more I thought about burnout and why some of us know the rules and know what we should do with our bodies, and yet we break the rules, I kept coming back to this one thing. I have a hunch, if you're exhausted right now and tired and weary, if I could dig and counsel you and pull back the layers, I would bet my favorite Bible that at the heart of it is this one objection that almost every human shares that makes us compromise and push too hard and too fast, to sprint instead of running the race that God has called us to. Here's the objection, "But pastor, I have to or someone will be mad. You're right. It's too much. I'm too busy. But honestly, I have to do this because if I step back from this, if I take a break from this, if I slow down with this, people will not be happy. They won't be proud of me for following the biblical model and Jesus' example. They won't clap. They'll scowl. They'll frown. I have to be this busy or someone will be mad."

I have a hunch for a lot of you here today. That's the reason you're running too fast. And I think if I could see your schedule and I could just objectively say, "Well, stop doing this. You really shouldn't be doing that. You don't have margin in your schedule for this right now." There will be something emotional in you that would say, "But if I do that, someone will be disappointed." And honestly, maybe the one who would be disappointed is you. It feels pretty good when people clap. It's really nice to get the volunteer of the year award. All of us like to be appreciated, approved of. It's nice to not just make the team but start. It's not just nice to work there and be an average employee but the one that the boss respects, the one that you can count on. It feels really good when you serve someone and they appreciate it and they see it.

So, to step back, to be less than you used to be, even for the sake of your own sanity, it's emotional. Or maybe I could visualize all of that like this. I found these weights in my basement. They haven't been used in a while, so... This little ten-pound dumbbell, it's not a hundred pounds, not fifty pounds, not even twenty-five pounds; it's pretty light. I could easily lift it. Let's imagine that this is like a responsibility you have in your life. It's not your only responsibility. You have this other responsibility. And, you know, this is enough. You could lift both of these at the same time, but then someone else wants you to do more. So, what -- "Ah, yeah. Maybe if I do this, well then, I could do this other thing. I could volunteer on the side. I could help out my church. I could join this extra team, squeeze in this extra thing." And then, someone else wants something from you. "Yeah, so I can pick this one up. I have room for this in my life." And then, someone else wants something else from you. "And maybe if I do this and then I grab like this, maybe I could -- yeah, I can do this." And honestly, I tried

preaching like this the other day for about 30 seconds and I got super -- super winded, not because I'm carrying 100 pounds of weights but all the fives and the tens put together, I started to feel it in my back, feel it in my legs.

And if you looked at me right now, you'd say, "Well, there's an obvious answer to your problem." Set this down, slide these off, maybe one, maybe two, maybe all of it. Ah, that feels better. But only if you know the problem. Yeah, this feels like such a little thing. But if this was someone's thing and you sat it down, if the coach wants you or your kid on the team to go to the camp, to be in the club so you can make it to State, make the playoffs, and you step back from their thing, if you're boss has goals, profit that he or she wants to make, and you set down -- They actually think, they're not asking you to do that much. Just one more shift, just one more tournament, just one more thing to sign up for at church.

To them it doesn't feel like much because it isn't. They're not trying to be mean or oppressive to you. What they don't know is that you're not just carrying their little thing, you're carry that thing, and this thing, and the other thing, and the other thing. There's family stuff, there's friend stuff, there's life stuff, there's neighbor stuff. Your kid, maybe your spouse, maybe you're dating someone, maybe you have grandkids, you have this job, maybe another side job. And all of these things put together, all these five and ten and fifteen-pound weights leave you exhausted. And you know, maybe from experience, that if I set this down, if I stop doing all these things someone will be so disappointed in me.

This, I think, is the real issue behind the issue. It's attention that explains so much of our schedules. The answer to your burnout is likely very easy. But for you, it is anything but easy. It is emotional because it involves the approval of people. If you're taking notes at home or here in church, grab a pen and write this down. I think the real tension is this, we feel like we have to burn ourselves out or we're going to let someone down. "I wish there was some easy solution, pastor. But if I don't do this, someone will be mad. I'm going to choose for another week, another season, another year to push pass my creator's limits."

So, the big question for you today is, what are you going to do? You and I live in this culture that's going to push us in a thousand different ways, to load up another responsibility, ask us to do more, and more, and more. Encourage us to make resolutions to do more and more and more. So, how will you, personally, resolve this tension?

Well, today, I want to help you find an answer. Today, we're going to run back to Jesus. Because Jesus, for all the things that are amazing about Jesus, I love this one. He doesn't just give us the perfect example. He also offers us the perfect solution. Last week, we learned that Jesus was okay with disappointing people. We read that crowds of people came to be healed of their sickness. They were desperate for Jesus. Can you imagine? He heals, he heals, he heals, he heals, and then it's finally your turn in line, and he says, "Sorry, ending my shift," and he walks away with peace and joy in his heart. He's not bad because he knew that God wasn't mad. He was honoring the

rules of his body. He was okay with people not liking him, being disappointed in him. Every single day someone was disappointed in him. That's a great example for you.

But today, I want to tell you that Jesus is not just a great example. He offers you the perfect solution. He's offered you biblical and divine and spiritual help at the level of your soul. Look with me in Matthew 11, one of the most beautiful things, the best invitation that Jesus ever gave. Jesus said, "'Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.'" First, Jesus says, "Come." Right, it's an invitation. The door's unlocked, it's standing wide open. At the ticket office, there's a ticket that's been paid for with your name on it. Jesus said, "Come. Come to me," don't come to a place or to some program, some list of things you've got to do, a checklist. Jesus says, "I want to look you in the eye, come to me as a person."

I love this, "All of you," it doesn't matter who you are, doesn't matter how old you are, doesn't matter what you've done, doesn't matter your background, your mistakes, your sins. He says, "To all of you, come to me and especially all of you who are weary and burdened. If you've been carrying just too much for too long, if you can't keep doing this, if you're impatient, and you've lost your joy and your fire for God, if you're just weary in both body and soul, come to me," he says, "and I will give you rest. I'm gentle, I'm humble, and I will give you rest for your souls."

Now, that's an interesting little word. I mean, you had to expect him to say, "You know, come to me if you're tired out, you're beat up, you haven't had a break, and I'll give you rest for your body." But Jesus says, "If you come to me, you will find rest for your souls." What does that mean? Apparently, Jesus isn't offering you a year supply of free bath bombs. He hasn't paid for an all-inclusive trip to a Mexican beach to gorge yourself in the buffet and get away from the stresses of life. No, he says, "Come to me and you will find rest for your soul."

Here's what I think this means. What Jesus is saying at the deepest level, at the level of your very soul, your spirit, he wants to offer you the love and approval of God apart from works. That's my interpretation of that phrase. He says, "Come to me." I won't give this long list of things to do. I will give it to you, gift it to you. You don't work for it. I'm just giving it. And what am I giving you? You will just have this rest knowing that God loves me, God likes me, God sees me, and God smiles upon me.

Jesus isn't saying to you, "You know, come to me and I'll give you some things you can fix or come to me, I'll give you an update on your karma so you can do some good to balance out that bad." He's not saying, "Come to me, I'll give you a ladder so you can climb your way up to Heaven." He's saying, "If you come to me, if you believe in me, I will make you good with God, not by your works, but as a pure gift."

I love how the apostle Paul talked about the same concept. In Ephesians 2, Paul said this, "For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by," say this with me, "works," not by works, this

isn't how this works, "so that no one can boast." Now, some of you have heard that message ever since you were kids growing up in church. But have you ever paused to think about how absolutely beautiful and liberating and unique and wonderful that message is? Wait, God likes me even though I haven't done enough work?

Let me prove it to you. When you were in school, if you wanted to make your teacher smile, what did you have to do? Answer, work. Right? If you didn't show up for school, if you didn't do your homework, if you didn't do the presentation, if you flopped, they would be disappointed in you. Want to make the teacher smile? You have to work. And you get older and you get your first job, if you want to make your boss happy, what do you have to do? You have to work. If you don't show up for work, it's not going to work. Right? You have to show up and you have to do this stuff, and check the boxes, and go the extra mile. Want to make the boss smile? You have to work. And then you get into a relationship. You start dating someone. You get married. If you want to make your spouse, your significant other happy, what do you have to do? You have to work. Yeah, if you sit there on the couch and play Call of Duty for your entire marriage, she will not like you very much, alright? You have to find what their love language is. You have to speak it, you have to serve them, you have to go the extra mile.

In every area of life, if you want to see a smile on someone's face, you better work. But then, Jesus comes along. And he says, "God is so perfect" How are you going to make God smile? Help a little old lady cross the street? Come on, he's God. You can never do enough work. "So, about this. How about I do the work for you? How about I'm perfect for you? How about you just come to me if you're tired at the very level of your soul and I will give you rest." Because you can know that today and tomorrow and for all eternity God's going to look at you and his face is going to light up. And he's going to see you and he's not going to send you away. He's going to accept you, not with some asterisk, but his arms will be wide open and no matter how deep and messed up your sin, that's what Jesus offers us. This is the gospel that gives us rest.

So, write this down. Grab a pen. So, my main point for today, it is the gospel, the good news of what Jesus has done that gives rest to our soul. Yeah, in the back. "Pastor, I don't want to interrupt in the middle of your sermon, but I think you just pulled one of those, like, pastor sermon Jesus judo flips on us." And I would say, "What do you mean?" You say, "But we were talking at the start of your message about our schedule, and then you grab the Bible and started talking about our salvation. We were talking about disappointing my parents, or my kids, or my coworkers, or my boss, like that's why I push too hard. And then you jumped and started talking about Jesus. I see what you did there, pastor. Yeah, we were talking about this tension, I have to burn out or I'm going to let someone down. Then you opened, then you started talking about grace, and faith, and the cross, and getting to Heaven, and making God happy. And that's great. I love the gospel. But you didn't, you didn't actually fix the tension. You didn't address the problem." And I would say to you, imaginary objectors, "Good objection. Believe it or not I prepared an answer."

See, we sometimes think that the gospel is just a thing for then. You know, the day you die, your sins are going to be gone, God's going to accept you into Heaven. That's true, but the gospel is actually so much more than that. The gospel has benefits for right here and right now that allows us to make the decisions we need to make. Let me connect the dots for you. Deep within your heart, when God created you, He created a passion to be liked. He did. You can be a pastor, you can be an atheist, you could be old, you could be young, male or female, all of us, all of us deep down wants someone to see us and smile. Right? Some kids become the class clown because they want to be liked. And some of you push hard to never get a B+ because you wanted to be liked. Some of you were amazing athletes or musicians because people were impressed and they liked you. Some of you have like those crazy birthday parties where you are mom of the year because there was a fancy cake with like Legos on top that your kid loves. Like-- you like that. Some of us work hard on sermons because we want people to like us. Some of us work hard on our yard or sneaker game, our fashion, our filters, our TikTok videos.

Why is it when you see that someone likes your picture or comments something nice about you or compliments your -- why does your heart... Because God created within you a deep, deep desire for approval and acceptance to be liked. But here's the problem, most of us try to fill that hole in our heart with the approval of people. We work, and we work, and we work to get people to like us. We push, and we push, and we push to get people to like us. It feels so good when they do.

But I don't know if anyone has ever told you this. If you try to just satisfy that craving of your heart with people, it will be both impossible and exhausting. If your goal in life is to feel good because everyone likes you, number one, it's impossible. You can't make everyone happy all the time, and it's exhausting. Right? My wife feels this all the time. She's super hardworking, super responsible. She will go the extra mile for these people, and these people, and these people, and then this person over here still needs her help. "How do I do all of it?" she says. And she's right. When you try to be a great employee, you push hard and the boss is happy, and then you come home and you've been kind of an absentee spouse, and your spouse is not happy. It's impossible to make everyone happy. It's exhausting. You push hard, you go the extra mile, you stay late, you come early, you do this for him and her and them, but then what about these people?

Most of us are trying, at the deep level of our soul, to find joy and acceptance; to find peace by making people happy. But it does not work. It kills us. In fact, I would say bluntly to many of you here today, if you are trying to find your joy in getting people to like you, you will put some of the most important things that God has given you as a sacrifice. If you are trying to get this world to like you, your boss to love you, you will not be a present parent. No, your job will pile you with weight and you'll have nothing left for the people who matter most. If you're trying to get people to like you by doing everything for everyone, you will not take care of your body. It will backfire on you and people will have to care for you because you haven't cared for yourself. If you're trying to make every coach happy, the scouts happy, you're going to be gone

every other weekend. You're going to start missing church and the things of your soul will start to shrivel.

When we mess this up and try to fill that space in our hearts with the approval of people, it kills us. It's impossible and it's exhausting. And that's why Jesus says, "Come to me." Are you weary? Have you been working so hard and someone's still disappointed in you? It's never enough. Are you burdened, so all these responsibilities, all these things, it's hard to even sleep? You have to make sure everything's right in your head. He says, "Come to me and I will give you rest."

That reminds me of the story of Bobby Reid. Back in 2021, a Florida businessman named Bobby Reid wanted to buy this small piece of property that was right next to the city water tower in the town where he lived. So, he went to the city and they drew up the paperwork. I think he bought this little piece of property for \$55,000. And then, after the paperwork was signed, both Bobby and the city found out something rather shocking that none of them knew. According to the document, Bobby Reid had not just purchased that little piece of land, he had also received the city water tower. He thought he was just getting this. He didn't even know. But he had actually gotten so, so much more. Don't worry, he gave it back.

I think for a lot of you, you didn't know this about Christianity. You thought that when you believed in Jesus, he just gave you heaven, and you won't go to hell, and you get to be with your loved ones, and escape the pain. That's true. Praise God. But there's so much more the gospel gives to you right now. The love of God, the presence of God, the double thumbs up approval of God, a God whose face is shining on you, not one day, but right now because of what Jesus has done. You could spend your whole life burning out, trying to make everyone happy, or you could listen to this, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and you will find rest for your souls."

It's the best step I want you to take today. Grab a pen. It's the last fill in the blank for you today. I think an answer to burnouts that so many Christians miss is this, to schedule with the gospel. When you make your schedule, when you have this much work, and this much rest, when you say yes to these things and these people and no to those things and those people, schedule with the gospel. When someone is mad or disappointed, when you're not getting the approval and praise that you used to, you don't need it. Through the gospel, I have God and God is enough.

So, that means you have some homework. What would it look like this year to schedule with the gospel? If you're tired and burdened, if you're weary, if you're doing too much, if you're not sleeping, not working out, if you don't have just downtime for you and your loved ones to relax and just be. What would you change? What would you step back from? Who would you say, "You know, it's been an honor to serve but I'm going to need to be a little bit different this year." What hard conversation would you have to have? They might be disappointed, but after it's over, you could breathe and find rest. It's hard at first, but you get the muscle of disappointing people and actually people maybe aren't as disappointed as you



assume. And you get into these beautiful rhythms where you look at your sleep schedule and it's healthy. And you look at how much you've worked out and it's healthy. And you think of how many times you're around the dinner table instead of the drive-thru and it feels right. Some of you might love that and respect that. Some of you might be disappointed in that like, "I'm not working hard enough." But I'm ok if you're disappointed.

Years ago, I heard a pastor's wife say, "In life, you will always disappoint someone, don't let it be your kids." So, if I'm a mediocre pastor and a great dad, I will not die with regret. How about you? As you think about what matters most, your soul, your body, your family, what can you say yes to and what can you say no to? I don't know what your schedule will look like but I do know this, whether people respect it or hate it, whether they approve of it or shake their head at it, it really doesn't matter when you schedule with the gospel. The good news of Jesus who said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Let's pray.

Our Father, it's tricky because we can't see your face but we can see theirs. We can't hear the angels applauding when we make wise decisions but we can read people's comments and their texts. And so, we really need your help today as the Bible says to, "Walk by faith and not by sight." Now, we can see people, their expressions, and reactions. We can't see you, so open the eyes of our hearts to see you by faith, to know that if your face is shining upon us today, we have everything we need. We have you.

If the Lord is our shepherd, we shall not want, we shall not be in need. We will have learned the secret of being content and the secret of being balanced and not burned out. Our Father, there are a lot of people here who are used to pleasing people, they're used to being that person who's always there to step up and step in. There are some people who are used to excelling and exceeding and impressing. For all of us -- those of us who are like that, God, we need you today to remind us that what we have in Christ is so much bigger and so much better.

We thank you today for Jesus' love. We thank you today for the gift of heaven which we will receive one day. And we thank you also for the gift of God's approval which we receive on this day by faith in Jesus' name. It's through Him that we ask and pray all these things, and all God's people say, "Amen."