



TIME OF GRACE®

Burned Out: Emotionally Study Notes

Summary

There are three lies we fall for that lead to burnout: we need to be perfect; we must make everyone happy, and thinking we're "fine." Pastor Mike tackles these lies head-on, helping us replace them with truths from God's Word.

- 3 Lies that Lead to Burnout:
 1. It has to be _____.
 2. I have to make everyone _____.
 3. It's/I'm _____.

- 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 — This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.
 - Truth #1 — Don't be _____, be _____.

- 1 Corinthians 4:3-4 — I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.
 - Truth #2 — I want to make _____ happy.

- Proverbs 1:32-33 — “... the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.”
 - Truth #3 — Wise people _____ before they _____.

Points to Ponder

1. Which of the three lies are you most likely to believe? Share an example with a friend or with your Life Group.
2. Take a closer look at 1 Corinthians 4:1-5. Why was Paul so focused on God’s approval instead of his own opinion or other people’s approval?
3. Biblical giving is a joyful response to all that God has given to us through Jesus. If you don’t know much about Jesus, please ask us! If you do, please give generously as an act of worship.

Homework for Next Week

Read Genesis 1:28, Genesis 26:12, Ephesians 1:3, Numbers 6:22-27

Time of Grace Ministry
Burned Out? Emotionally
1 Corinthians 4:1-4, Proverbs 1:32-33
April 21, 2024

Pastor Mike Novotny

If your last week was a piece of paper or your last year could fit onto a page, how much -- how much margin would there have been? Well, for some of you, the answer is a lot. Maybe for a few of you the answer will be too much. You binged every season of Yellowstone in less than a month. You have very much margin. You scroll, Tik Tok or Instagram every day. You haven't worked a 50-hour week in forever. Some of us, our struggle is to persevere and endure and not quit, to run and not walk the race that God has called us to. But I would bet in our modern American Christian culture, for every one person who struggles with laziness, there are probably five of us who struggle with burnout. Who minimizes the margins, who squeeze in an extra commitment, who push the hours and compromise the rules that God has set up for our body. Are you one of those people?

But here's what I think might be happening to some of you. Even though you've been here for this whole sermon series, even though I can prove to you from the Bible that Jesus rested, even though that Sabbath is a huge theme throughout the scriptures, even though your heart has everything it needs in Jesus, even though the father created you with rules to sleep, and unplug, and rest, and not serve people all the time, even though I preach all of that; there are some of you who haven't changed a thing just yet. Same commitments. Same craziness. Same pace. Same pushing it.

Now, if it was just you and I and a cup of coffee in a quiet office and I ask you, "Why are you doing this again? Last year's page was to the edge, well, it seems like you're repeating it for round two. Why are you doing that again?" I bet what you would share in that vulnerable moment after we explored it a bit would be something that's very much here and very much there. You would repeat to me some things that you believe deep down at an emotional level that make it almost impossible for you to slow down and stop. I would say that there are lies or half-truths that you believe in your head. They are very important to your heart that no matter what I say, or what passage I quote, you won't slow down because you think you can't slow down.

Now, there's a whole list of lies that people like us believe, that keep us so busy. I want to share just three of them with you today. So, if you're taking notes at home or you're here live, here are the three biggest lies, I think, that lead to frequent burnout.

Lie number one, it has to be perfect. Some of you, do good work, you get good grades, your boss thinks you're a good employee. But for some of us, good just isn't good enough. It has to be perfect, right? Maybe your parents said to you, "You're still studying? You're doing fine. Your teachers love you. You get good grades." But for

some of you, an 88 is absolutely unacceptable as is a 92, or a 94, or 96, or 97. You have a reputation to -- I see some people nudging each other right now. Right? You're just used to this super high level of academic excellence. The world would be fine. You'd still make it to heaven if you got a B, but you can't get a B. It has to be perfect. Some of you are that way at work. You put together a presentation or a pitch, the numbers are strong. You're not going to get fired. You've been faithful to your job. But faithful just isn't good enough, it has to be perfect. And so, you rewrite the email and you improve the project, and you stay up late and you got the laptop open in bed and you just want to not be good at your job but great at your job, not great at your job, but perfect at your job. In a thousand different ways, our education or athletics, not just making the team, but starting, not just starting but being all conference. We're busy and exhausted and we really don't have the time, but we push it and here's why, it's very, very emotional and important for us to be perfect.

Or how about lie number two? Lie number two is that I have to make everyone happy. I covered this last week at a deep level but it is such a pervasive thought and so personal to many of you here today, I want to cover it just briefly again. If I could see last year's schedule where you answer the question, "How are you?" with the word, "busy," all year long. If peace, and joy, and resting in Jesus didn't define your last year it was just too much, and yet, we flip the calendar and you're doing the same thing again. If I would say, isn't that the definition of insanity? What do you think is going to happen to your spirit? The same thing that happened last year. You're going to -- you're going to miss all the promises and the goodness and the peace of Jesus because you're running, running, running. You're exhausted.

My wife and I run together. If we try to sprint side by side, the conversation is not great, right? We have to slow down to a pace that's not perfect, but it's good and we can connect. I would ask some of you, "Why are you not slowing down so you can connect with Jesus?" And you'd probably say, "Well, if I change this, they wouldn't be happy. If I stop volunteering for this, if I didn't coach my kid's team, if I told my boss I can't do as much, if I stepped back from what people are used to receiving from me, if I didn't host, you know, the holiday party again, if I didn't make the famous desert that everyone loves to eat, people would not be happy. They'd be sad or mad."

And for some of you, instead of saying, "Okay, well, that's how they feel." You feel very responsible for other people's emotions. Which is a destructive way to live, by the way. Instead of saying, "Okay, he's mad." You panicked and say, "He's mad and I have to fix that." No, you don't. "She's disappointed in me, obviously, I need to work harder." No, no, no. She's disappointed, sure, period.

Or for some of you, that deep desire to have everyone like you, and love you, and applaud you, and approve of you, means you can never slow down. You'll just say, "yes," to everything everyone asked you to do, and there will be no exit ramp until you crash and burn. Because deep down you believe you have to make everyone happy.

Or how about lie number three? Lie number three, it's fine, also known as I'm fine, also known as whatever. Wait, how many weekends was your family gone to sports tournaments? "Yeah. It's crazy, but it's fine." How many hours do you sleep? How much coffee do you drink? "Yeah, I know, but I'm fine." Some of you think deep down in your heart that God has given you a cheat code. Back when I was growing up playing the original Nintendo there was a game called Contra. Some of you played Contra and you know the cheat code, up, down, up, down, left, right, left, right, A, B, A, B, select, start and you get unlimited lives. And you can do whatever you want. You can jump off a cliff. You can get shot by the enemy because, "I'm fine, whatever." Some of you think you have a cheat code to life. "I go through the drive through. I go through the drive through. I go through the drive through. I skipped work. God, I skipped work. God, I skipped work. God, I work too much. I work too much. I work too much. I never slow down. I never slow down. It's fine." So, whether you're striving for perfection, trying to make everyone in your life happy or just thinking that you're the exception to God rules, all of us have some lie or lies that keep us sprinting instead of running the race that God has called us to.

So, here's what I hope to do today. I want to grab that book, the Bible, the Word of God, and I want to take those three lies head on. I want to try to push them out of your brain, convince you with the help of the Holy Spirit and replace them, renew your mind with the truth of God's Word so you can shake free from the slavery of needing to be perfect, make everyone happy, or the foolishness of thinking it's fine. That's our goal. Replace those three lies with three bits of God's truth with a hope that, not that you would walk in laziness, but some of you would slow down and not sprint at foolishness, but instead run the race that Jesus has called you to.

So, let's jump in. Lie number one, it has to be perfect. I want to share with you what the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4. A time in his life where he was under severe criticism for being good enough at something. Do any of you know this? The apostle Paul was critiqued and criticized for not being good enough at public speaking. Shocking huh? He started a church in the Greek city of Corinth. Apparently, Paul admitted himself he wasn't as good at this kind of stuff as other people. And after he'd left to start other churches, people came in and critiqued him. "Paul is a chump. Like, Paul didn't get enough YouTube views. He's not good enough." They criticized him and critiqued him. He wasn't perfect at that craft. And to defend himself and the validity of his ministry, Paul responded with these words from 1 Corinthians 4. He said, "This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries that God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."

You will run out of time and energy to be faithful with all the things that God has entrusted to you. Some of you actually grew up this way. Maybe you don't have a super close relationship with your dad, but your dad had a super close relationship with his work. He was striving to be perfect. He'd put in extra hours. The boss loved him. He accomplished great things, nothing wrong with doing good work. The problem was, if he strove for perfection in this area of his life, and as a limited human being only had so much time and so much energy; when he came home, was he able

to be faithful to the things that God had entrusted to his care? Was he able to be faithful to you? You see the dark side of perfection.

This sometimes happens to parents. We want to be perfect parents. We want our kids to have the best life. We want them to be involved in all the things. And so, we sign up for this and that, and there's lessons, and there's tournaments, and there's opportunities, and there's teams to make. Mom and dad may both pour themselves in. They're sitting on a bleacher every single weekend. We're trying to be perfect parents. But you know what happens if you try to be a perfect parent? I've seen this too often. You're often a very, very, very, unfaithful spouse. Right? You're exhausted from all the kid's stuff. And is there time and energy for me to love you like Christ loves His bride? Do I have ways to show you respect and speak your love language or have the kids absolutely exhausted us of everything? I try to be perfect here and I end up very unfaithful there, right?

In so many different ways, wise people know as a limited human being, if I overextend myself in A, I'm not going to be faithful at B, and C, and D. And so, here is what scriptural wise believers do. They say, "No," to most things. They focus on the few things that God has entrusted to their care. And they know, "I'm never going to be the best at any of these." Will there be better public speakers than me? Millions of them. Will there be better husbands than me? Not to Kim, but yes. Will there be better fathers than me? For sure. Will there be better athletes than me? Yes, and I'm okay with that because to be perfect, to strive for it in any of those areas would cost me something that matters way too much, my body, my soul, my relationship, my work.

Paul says, "If God has given you a trust, it is required that we should prove ourselves faithful." So, in the name of Jesus, I give you permission to be average at stuff. The only other option is to look back in life with regret. When I get much older, I want to have a close relationship with my grown daughters, and that means I have to make some choices now, so they want to be closer to me when they're grown. Don't be perfect. It costs too much. Be faithful.

Last bit of advice. This is the bonus content. Be careful of social media. On social media we see people's perfection, but there's no algorithm that rates their faithfulness. You know, you see this guy, he's really ripped at the gym with his woman who looks amazing in her swimsuit. But you don't realize, is her soul okay? Has she neglected her most important relationships? And you see the championship trophy, the traveling team and you want to be like that. But do you want to be like that? Do you know if they've been faithful to all the callings? We see the one thing that's going great, we don't see the four things that are falling apart. So, take it with a grain of salt. Most posts are people's perfection, not their faithfulness. See someone up close who's faithful, who says, "no," more than they say, "yes," whose life is balanced and Biblical. Imitate them. Because God doesn't want you to strive for perfection in one calling but to be faithful in all of them.

Ready for lie number two? Alright, here it is. I have to make everyone happy. The Apostle Paul in the very next verses of 1 Corinthians 4 addresses this as well. Here's what he says, starting with verse 3, "I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court. Indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me." Wow. Isn't that an amazing scripture? Maybe these days we're kind of -- "I don't care if you judge me." What did Taylor Swift say? "Haters gonna hate." You know, you just got to shake them off. Ignore that stuff. But Paul says something that is so unlike Taylor Swift and everyone else in America. He says, "Indeed, I do not even judge myself. "What do I think? I don't care. Do I think I'm a good person? Is this my truth?" Paul says, "No, no, no, no, no. You don't get to judge me. I don't even get to judge me. I'm trying to do what's right. My conscience is clear, but that doesn't make me innocent."

Here is his point. It is the Lord who judges me. I'm not trying to make me happy. I'm not trying to make you happy. I'm trying to make God happy, alright? That's the truth I want you to write down. This is so liberating and so beautiful, that I want to make God happy. And when I get to the end of every day, my goal is not to think, "Did I do the things I wanted? Is everyone speaking well of me?" No, the number one most liberating question is, "Is God happy? Is there a smile on God's face?" And I want to apologize for repeating the gospel from last week but if you are connected to Jesus through faith, the answer is yes.

I've told some of you at this church this story maybe four times now. I'm going to say sorry for saying it the fifth because some have never heard this before. And it's probably the best advice I've gotten in my whole life. It has protected me from burnouts in 15 years that I've been a pastor. It has blessed my marriage and my children and my body and my soul. So, really quickly, let me tell it again. When I was 26, I think, I was about to become a pastor. I got a call for the very first time. My home pastor up in Green Bay, Wisconsin said, "Mike, whatever church you end up at, wherever you get called to, I want you to go to your very, very, first leadership meeting and I want you to ask the leaders of your church how many hours you should work." And I said, "No, no, I'm not going to do that. That sounds like terrible advice." "You know, what's the minimum I have to put in around here so you don't fire me or get really angry." And my pastor said, "No, no, no, you don't get it. You could work 60, 70, 80 hours a week and then you won't be at the one thing, and someone will be mad at you, so ask them what it looks like to be faithful as a pastor."

And so, I did. Short version of the story, I didn't have these words for it when I was 26, but I asked, "I want to run and not sprint and crash. I don't want to be another pastor who's amazing until he morally fails because he's running on fumes. I don't want to be the guy who you love as a church but whose wife and children don't love because he's always at church. I don't want to preach out of an empty soul, but times of refreshment that I've had in the Word of God, not because I'm trying to do double duty at studying for a sermon and calling that my personal devotion. I want to serve you well for a long time. I asked the people in that room, "How many hours could you do that?" And they gave an answer. One guy said, "Ah, 45." Another said, "55." Someone said, "I could work 50." Another said, "50." Another said, "50." And one

said, “60.” And one said, “40.” So, we took the average of all the numbers, and we came up with a faithful work week. Fifty hours, not scrolling Facebook but serving people in God’s word. And now for 15 years it’s exactly what I’ve done. I’ve tried to work hard and be faithful, but I’ve been able to step away. Before I had a number, I would always feel guilty. “I could be doing more. The sermon could be better. Someone needs my help. A guest came to church, I could follow up.” The work was never ending so I needed a place to not feel bad when I stopped, to know that God was still smiling and I was being faithful. I know your work is different than mine but it’s really important for you to know, wherever that line is of how much you can invest, when you get to the other side of it, God’s not scowling. If you work hard to serve people in love and then you step away, it doesn’t make you bad, or unfaithful, or unlike Jesus, actually, it makes you just like Jesus, who for every second of his life made his Heavenly Father happy.

Last but not least, the lie number three, it’s fine. I’m fine. You know the tricky thing about that lie is that you’re probably right, right now. It’s not like if you sleep four hours a night, drink four cups of coffee in the morning, skip your workouts this week, you will die by next Monday. It’s kind of the tricky thing about seeds and fruits. You don’t see what they become or what they don’t today or tomorrow. It takes a bit. But for a person who is breaking the rules that the creator put into our body, is playing with fire and it catches up to you soon. Maybe you’ve been living physically and with your schedule, kind of like that person who never wears their seatbelt in the car and they’re always texting and driving. “It’s fine. Dumb rules. I don’t need them. Nothing’s happened.” To which you would say, “yet.”

But for those of you who aren’t readers and you’re not going to binge ten books on burnout, let me tell you what I learned when I binged them. Every big story of burnout has the exact same script. Pretty talented, accomplished person who did well at their job, had extra opportunities because they were good at their job. Said yes to those opportunities and ran out of time for rest and Sabbath and sleep. Got more opportunities because they worked more hours until it got to the point where it stopped being fun, and peaceful, and joyful, and it felt like an obligation. An obligation that they carried until they compromised, until their body one day, boom, blew up.

For some of you today, you need to hear this passage from Proverbs 1. I love this. It says, “The complacency of fools will destroy them.” Complacency; to be complacent and not change. But whoever listens to me,” to the voice of wisdom, “will live in safety.” Alright, maybe you’re pushing it. All last year, all your life you’ve been pushing it. If you’re complacent after learning these truths from God’s word, and you think it’s fine, here’s the promise, it will destroy you. It’ll catch up to you. Something will fall apart, but it doesn’t have to be that way. “But whoever listens to the voice of wisdom,” the Word of God, “will live in safety.”

Here’s the truth I want to put into your head today. Write this down. That wise people change before they crash. Today, for some of you in the room, is your opportunity to change. Maybe to disappoint your sown standards, to disappoint

other people and to save yourself from something that is six months, 12 months, two years down the road. Something you would deeply regret and wish you could come back to this Sunday, and this sermon and say, "Why didn't I listen." You can listen. "Whoever listens to me will live in safety." So, brothers and sisters, let me summarize it this way. For the past three sermons, God the Father, his Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit have been standing here and visibly on this stage reaching out with compassionate arms to you.

Kim and I try to run together most Saturday mornings. Some days the wind is blowing pretty strong. We get to the end of the driveway, and we have to turn into the wind or run with it. Really tempting to run with the wind but after you run three miles, do you know what happens? You have to run home... or call an Uber. I never thought of that. So, she and I, we have this phrase, it's our philosophy of life, "Into the wind." Let's do the hard thing right now. Because there's going to come a time when we can turn around and life will be so much more enjoyable.

Brothers and sisters, would you go into the wind, do the hard thing, make the hard decision? It will not be easy. It will not be unemotional. But you will get to that moment where you'll turn around, feel the wind of God's blessing at your back, and you'll find the very thing that Jesus promised, rest. Let's pray.

Dear God, thank you for speaking the truth to us. It's not easy, it's not always convenient or popular, but it is good for our souls. With this many people here, this many people watching at home, we're all in such different places. Some of us need a kick in the pants from you and some of us need an arm around the shoulder to slow us down. I pray more than anything that you would help us all to remember that through Jesus we have an identity that can't be shaken, that our worth and our value is not in how much we produce, but instead, what we have been given free of charge at the cross of your son.

Help our greatest joy not to be in our income, our home, our looks, our accomplishments, but instead, in everything that Jesus accomplished through his death and resurrection. Ours is free of charge by grace and through faith. O heavenly Father, I can just picture five years from now, marriages that are restored, and kids who aren't anxious because there's a million things on their schedule. I'm picturing people lingering over open Bibles with a cup of coffee having time to actually pray and realizing how beautiful and glorious you are.

God, such things are possible when we stop sprinting and instead, run this race of faith that you called us to. Help us to get there, by your grace and with your help. We pray this all in the beautiful name of Jesus. And all God's people said, "Amen."