BURN OUT
1 Kings 18

All these New Year's Resolutions
Now what?
How do you keep this year's New Year's resolutions from becoming next year's cause for burn out?
How do you avoid burn out?

Even godly people burn out?

Remember our **last Sat. evening worship?** The drama?
About the guy who tried to keep all the plates spinning at the same time?
Eventually he just couldn't keep up with them all.

"The pressures of our busy lives are mounting to the point that burnout is inevitable."«

Dan and Linda are a typical dedicated church couple. In addition to her work at a counseling center, Linda taxis her three kids to swim meets, band concerts, and scout meetings--edits the church newsletter and leads junior worship. Dan teaches public school--serves on the outreach committee and works with the youth ministry. Like many couples, you half expect to find them in the fetal position, babbling incoherently about their next event. In recent years American society has bombarded the American family with such a menu of activities that burnout may be the unforeseen result.

Godly people DO burn out!

It happened to **Moses.**
He eventually came to the point where he said, "Lord, take my life! I've had it!" (**Num 11:15**) *"If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now—if I have found favor in your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin."*

Jonah came to the same place (**Jon 4:3**) *"Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."*

Job felt that way (**6:9; 7:15**) *6:9 "that God would be willing to crush me, to let loose his hand and cut me off!" 7:15 "so that I prefer strangling and death, rather than this body of mine."*

Jeremiah felt that way (**20:18**) *"Why did I ever come out of the womb to see trouble and sorrow and to end my days in shame?"*

*Do **YOU** ever feel that way?*
What do you do when you feel that way?
...When you're ready to throw in the towel on life?

=> **Elijah** was another of God's servants who came to that point in his life. Interestingly it was right after one of the greatest victories of his career!

Evil reign of Ahab over Israel 16:29-22:40

The son of Omri, Ahab, who succeeded him as king, formed a marriage alliance with Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon.

Her influence was felt in both Israel and Judah for several generations.

God raised up Elijah for prophetic ministry in Israel during Ahab's reign.

His role is to foretell God's program for the nation, which is confirmed by the signs demonstrated through both Elijah and Elisha.

God is about to judge His people.

They are headed for destruction.

Ministry of Elijah presented 17-19

Control over weather 17-18:15

God said that disobedience would produce cursing (Dt. 28)

Among the curses described, He included drought.

Elijah, as God's spokesman, uses this curse against Ahab's kingdom, because of his disobedience to God.

Though Ahab blames him, Elijah makes it clear that Ahab himself was the cause of the drought because of his unfaithfulness.

[After a long absence, Elijah returns to confront the prophets of Baal]

Confrontation with prophets of Baal 18:16-46

Challenge 18:16-21

He challenges them to commit themselves either to Yahweh or to Baal.

"Make up your minds! Decide Whom you will serve!

"If Yahweh is God, serve Him!"

"If Baal is God, serve Him!"

"But get off the fence! Stop trying to hang on to both!"

Both can't be right.

Test 18:22-39

He presents the test of fire to demonstrate which is the true God.

Victorious conclusion: *36 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. 37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." 38 Then* ***the fire of the LORD fell*** *and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. 39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried,* ***"The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!"***

Slaughter 18:40 *40 Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.*

The story continues with another great victory for Elijah!

Rain **18:41-46** *And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." 42 So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. 43 "Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked. "There is nothing there," he said. Seven times Elijah said, "Go back." 44 The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea." So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'" 45 Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. 46 The power of the LORD came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.*

CONFLICT WITH JEZEBEL 19:1-18

Jezebel's threat **19:1-2** *Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."*

Elijah's depression **19:3-5a** *Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4 while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." 5 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep.*

Angel's provision **19:5b-8** *All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." 6 He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. 7 The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.*

God's encouragement **19:9-18** *There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him:* ***"What are you doing here, Elijah?"*** *10 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword.* ***I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."***

11 The LORD said, "Go out & stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great & powerful wind tore the mountains apart & shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, ***"What are you doing here, Elijah?"*** *14 He replied, "I have been*

very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. ***I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."***
15 ***The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came,*** *and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16 Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. 17 Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. 18* ***Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him."***

Elijah is commissioned to anoint a new generation of leaders.
Hazael takes over Syria; Jehu replaces Ahab; and Elisha replaces Elijah
There is about to be a complete change of conditions in the life of Israel.

5 CAUSES OF ELIJAH'S BURN OUT (AND OF OURS!)

(1) Fear **19:3** *Elijah was afraid and ran for his life.*

(2) Lack of food **19:5-8** *5 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." 6 He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. 7 The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.*

(3) Lack of sleep (exhaustion) **18:46; 19:3-4, 5, 6, 8 => 9**

18:46 The power of the LORD came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

He ran from Carmel to Jezreel ahead of Ahab's chariot—that was 35 miles (56 K!)

19:3 Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4 while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."

Then out of fear he ran another 120 miles down to Beersheba to get away from Jezebel.

Then he went a day's journey into the desert!

Hendricks observes: "No wonder he finally plopped down under the broom tree; he was ready to be swept up and thrown away!"

5 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat."

6 He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and

forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. 9 There he went into a cave and spent the night.

After God fed him, he took off again and traveled another 200 miles to the south, to Mt. Horeb.

No wonder he was depressed, discouraged, and burned out!

(4) Spiritual battle

It is often after our greatest triumphs
that Satan brings on the greatest discouragement

(5) Feeling that he was indispensable—to God and to the work 19:9-10

*And the word of the LORD came to him: **"What are you doing here, Elijah?**" 10 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. **I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."***

He had to escape because he was the only one left.
If they get him, God's work is finished! He says it twice!
That's always a dangerous place to be!

If God's success or failure depends on my survival, God's in big trouble!

4 SOLUTIONS FOR ELIJAH'S BURN OUT (AND OURS!)

(1) Food 5-8 *5 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." 6 He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. 7 The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. 9 There he went into a cave and spent the night.*

(2) Sleep 5, 6, 9 *5 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep.*
6 . . . He ate and drank and then lay down again.
9 There he went into a cave and spent the night.

(3) Renewed Focus 11-14 *The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of*

the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 14 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

God wasn't in the spectacular manifestations!
God wasn't in the wind!
God wasn't in the earthquake!
God wasn't in the fire!
God was in the WHISPER—that still small voice
God spoke to him in the silence
God assured him of His presence and His love
When he came face-to-face with God, he was renewed
Like Elijah, we need to take time with God, in order to renew our vision and recharge our batteries, and thus prevent burnout.

Leroy Eims has observed: "Burnout doesn't result from overwork but from getting too busy to have time with the Lord. Pretty soon you're functioning out of the energy of the flesh rather than the power of the Spirit. By His own example, Jesus showed us how it is possible to have the right priorities in the midst of a very busy life."

(4) Helpers/co-laborers/disciples **15-18** *The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16 Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. 17 Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. 18 Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him."*

God raised up a whole new generation of leaders—co-laborers who would serve together to accomplish God's purposes in the next generation.

One writer observed: "The antidote for burn out and discouragement is to see the power of God at work."

As we've been seeing on Sunday morning, when their generation, the culture surrounding them was in decline, they needed a renewed vision of God.
For when there is no vision of God, the people perish.
So it is for us today,
when our culture is headed the wrong direction, . . .
WE need a fresh vision of God!

We need a fresh vision, first, of Him! . . .
. . . then, of what He wants to do in our midst!
Why has He left us here?
What does He want to do through us?
That kind of vision will recharge our batteries and give us reason to go on living!

It was great for Elijah to be on Mt Carmel and see God,
but most of us live and work in the marketplace of life
--at school --in the secular community --in the workplace
We need to catch a glimpse of God in the marketplace
We need a fresh vision of God, right where we are!
We need to learn to take time apart, to listen to His still small whisper!
Listen! Do you hear Him?