

FORMULA FOR FACING BURNOUT

Exodus 18

Problem all over world: Guatemala or Mexico, the Philippines, or Papua New Guinea:

People are overloaded, overworked, burned out, while others stand around watching.

All kinds of ministries: pastors, missionaries, elders, SS teachers, business people and homemakers.

We all "bite off more than we can chew!"

When we're overworked, irritation sets in, followed by loss of perspective, burn out, sometimes loss of family.

A pastor confessed: "My wife left me because I had another lover. I was married to my church!"

Special danger in Christian work--we work ourselves to death to overcome guilt, or gain approval of God, or others.

We're not alone! Moses experienced same pressure.

Lessons apply to all of us--Christian professionals, teachers, students, all who have responsibility

As Moses traveled through the desert, God gave him many victories.

God used a visit by Jethro to give him wise counsel.

Jethro heard of mighty works God performed through Moses. 18:1

Brought Moses' wife and sons for a visit. 18:1-7

TESTIMONY TO THE GREATNESS OF YAHWEH 8-12

Jethro was a priest of Midian--a descendant of Abraham by Keturah

Moses tells what God had done for them 18:8

This is the one guy in the world--it seems--Moses can unload on!

He tells him the whole story--the hard times and the blessings.

Jethro is able to encourage him and tell him the truth

Jethro acknowledges God's greatness

Now he discovers what a great God Yahweh is 9-11

Jethro leads them in worship 12

Jethro offered sacrifices to Yahweh. Everyone joined him.

It was a great family reunion!

Moses allows Jethro to lead them in worship

[Jethro watched Moses' activities the following day, . . .]

WISE COUNSEL FOR A GODLY LEADER 18:13-26

Jethro notices something anyone who watches spiritual leaders notices:

Too often too busy! 18:13-14a

Two key questions: 14b

1. *What are you doing?* (Priorities)

2. *Why are you doing it alone?*

You're doing the work, the people are watching!

"That's why we're paying him the big bucks!"

A typical response: 15-16

"I'm doing all this work because people keep coming to me!"

"I was in neighborhood. Nothing better to do. So I thought I'd stop by and talk for a while!"

"They expect me to solve their problems for them!"

Wise counsel 17-23

Jethro doesn't approve of what Moses is doing 17-18

You're hurting yourself and your people

--you won't be able to help them

--they won't be able to help themselves

We all fall into this trap too easily--I certainly do! We say "yes" to too many things.

"Just say 'No!'" to some things.

Focus on what He has called us to do.

If you keep doing it all yourself, you and your people will suffer.

We're not exempt from the consequences of natural law.

Greek saying: "You shall break the bow if you keep it always bent."

We focus on "equipping saints for work of the ministry--training saints to transform the world--building a loving foundation ...

God's people carry out the work of the ministry--*NOT paid staff.*

We too often hear: "But that's what we pay *them* to do!"

Too often, I--and our staff--prone to do more than we should. ***People let us do it!***

That's a formula for failure.

Formula which leads to burnout:

All the people stand around watching the leader work

Formula which leads to effective ministry:

All the people are mobilized for ministry.

Four priorities for godly leaders: 19-22

1. Dedicate yourself to prayer 19

2 Dedicate yourself to teach the people 20

Primary role of godly leaders: make disciples.

Teach them God's laws--let them know what GOD says.

When preacher is wrapped up in administrative details pulpit ministry suffers.

3. Select godly leaders to lead and share the load with you. 21

People who are:

Capable (gifted)

God-fearing (godly character)

Men of truth (honest, trustworthy)

Men who hate dishonest gain

If you find this kind of leaders, God's people will respect them
 Oswald Sanders: "God assumes responsibility for enabling His man to fulfill every task to which He has appointed him. Now there are some self-imposed tasks which others can do better than we, and we should relinquish them. But even should they do them worse, we should still relinquish them--a severe test for the perfectionist."

Swindoll: "When you know how to do the job better than anyone else, it's difficult to hand it over to someone who's still learning, who may drop the ball, who sometimes fumbles and trips and requires a clean-up team in his wake. But that's the price you pay, and it's worth it."

Beacon: availability of seniors for powerful ministry.--we should be taking advantage of seniors available for ministry!

4. You deal with major issues they can't resolve 22

As godly leaders model godly decision making, others will learn from their example how to make similar decisions.

Moses teaches and handles difficult problems they can't solve.

Parallels with NT solution in Acts 6? 3 Priorities:

*"We will give our attention to **prayer** and to **the ministry of the Word**"*

"Choose seven men . . . known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom" (godly and gifted) and we'll turn this responsibility over to them.

Fundamental Condition for Success: "If God so commands 23

God's approval 18:23 (+ v. 19 ("*and may God be with you*" (in this)))

Answer isn't in a program. Answer is to do God's will!

Moses, the godly leader, followed Jethro's godly advice before sending him back to his home. 24-26

If you add 12 princes of tribes, 70 elders, and assume heads of 10 were responsible for heads of families, with their family under their authority, the administrative structure is realistic.

With 2 ½ million people, no one's responsible for more than 12!

God established plan for personal discipleship among His people.

Overworked leaders could learn from Jethro's counsel.

God never intended for spiritual leaders to carry the load alone!

What are YOU doing?

Why are you doing it ALONE?

What can you do to spread the load and share it with others?

