



Kibogora Polytechnic November 2024.

Welcome!

Has anyone held on to a match which has burnt all the way down?

How does it feel?

Describe the pain – what happens to the burning match – you drop it!

Then what happens – it can set fire to the house! **YOU ARE THAT HOUSE!**

We call it burnout.



Burnout, or stress situations – happens on three levels:-

At the level of our humanity – first of all, we are people! What happens when that turns sour and we become physically ill. Can't sleep, panic attacks How to manage them. It's not supposed to be like this! (Contrast with the bible's promise of Abundant Life in John 10:10, 14:6 and 14:27).

At the level of our role and purpose – You lose your way and your priorities. You find yourselves spending all your time responding to situations – you bounce from one thing to another because everything seems urgent, and you find yourself unable to focus on the important.

At the level of our walk with God. You've had enough of your call, you want God to take it away, and give it someone else. You feel shackled, a prisoner to circumstances, and God's power seems to have diminished in your life.

When we're running empty, we don't handle temptation well, and we become vulnerable to all sorts of things!

BURNOUT- The problem and a solution!

Fatigue brought about by devotion to a cause that has failed to produce the expected reward.

Herbert Freudenberger

God give me the serenity to accept the things I can't change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference between the two.

Reinhold Niebuhr (Written in midst of WW2)

Always good to start with a definition

Herbert Freudenberger describes 'Burnout' as 'Fatigue brought about by devotion to a cause that failed to produce the expected reward'

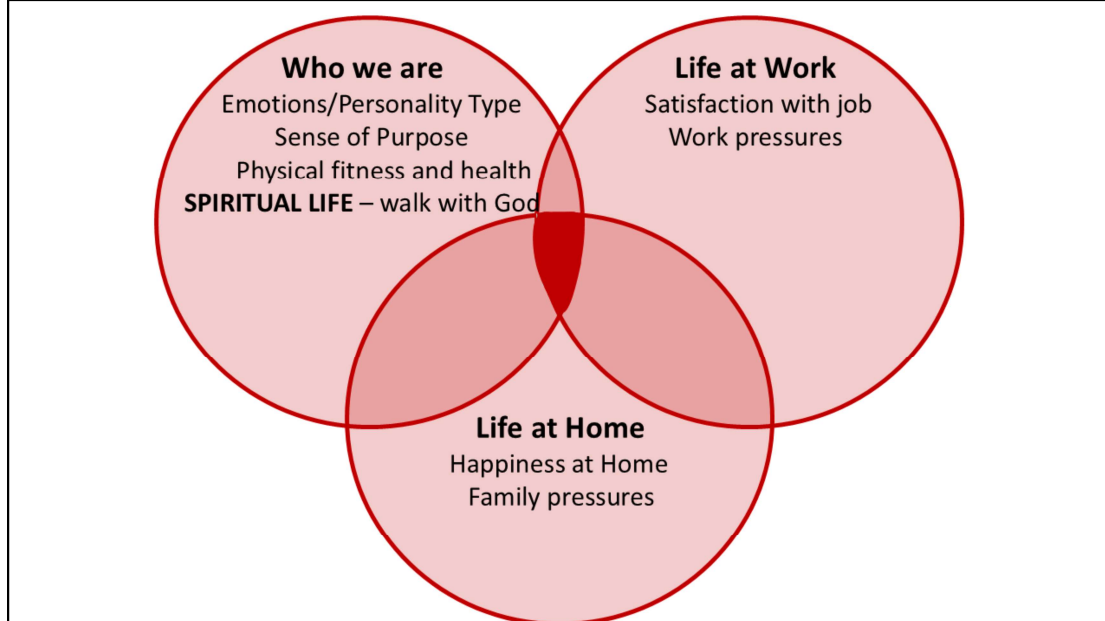
There are some things we can't change – and if we spend our life in frustration about that we damage only ourselves.

The prayer of Reinhold Niebuhr (an American) written in the midst of WW2 is very relevant here –

God give me the the serenity to accept the things I can't change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference between the two.

What I want to do today is identify some areas of our lives, or some behaviours that lead to burnout, where we can actually DO something to change things.

I don't want this to be academic – but practical stuff that may change your life.

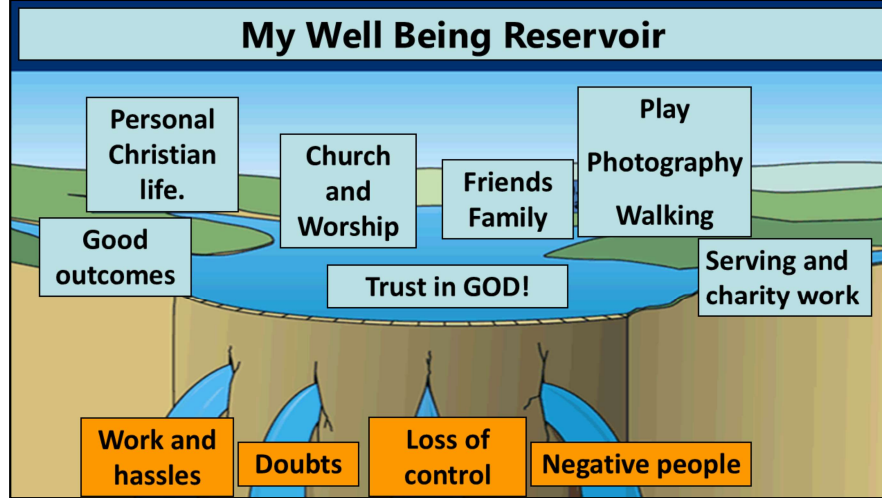


Our life consists of three parts – who we are, our personality types, our physical fitness, our sense of purpose, our walk with God life at home - family happiness/stress and life at work,

Something may stress me today, but not tomorrow. Some things stress me, but not someone else. Each circle represents a part of life. We can manage with stress in one part of our life pretty well. It can make us better people, hone our character.

We can cope with stress in two parts of our lives if we can see it's for a limited time – eg if we are a positive person, in a good place spiritually and emotionally, we can cope with stress at work and at home – but not for a long period of time. **TOP TIP 1 Stress in each part of our life for more than a short period of time will result in a breakdown. If you see that happening ACT!**

IF YOU CAN'T MODIFY EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES YOU CAN MODIFY YOUR RESPONSES TO THEM. How you feel can be changed by how you think/talk. Your words can be negative or exaggeration, stressful. **CREATE POSITIVE NEURAL PATHWAYS**
See Phil 4 – filling your mind with good squeezes out the bad



Let's first look at what makes you healthy – we call it the well-being reservoir.

Our sense of wellbeing is like a reservoir, there are some things that fill us, and some things that drain us. It's a continual process. If there's more coming in than going out you can refresh others, if it's the other way round, you simply dry up and burn out.

Everyone has different things that fill them up and drain them dry. This is mine – yours may look like this – or it may be entirely upside down! – expand..

What tends to happen when we are stressed is that we say we haven't the time for the things that fill us up, and so the reservoir gets drier, until you shrivel up and burn out!

We have to be purposeful in obtaining these key things, which we know we need'.



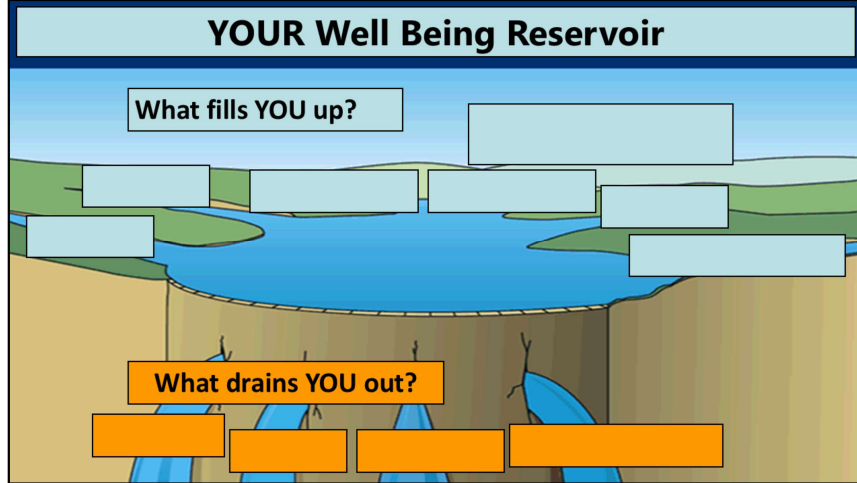
We also need to consider whether we have hurts, habits or hang-ups pulling us down?

All the recent research indicates we are now addicted to our phones and devices – we can't put them down, and for many they are spoiling relationships.

Many of us are chained to our devices – purpose driven men and women think that completion of the next project will bring us satisfaction – our devices can take us places we simply shouldn't be. It becomes addictive.

Many of our people suffer the consequences of a family that is in debt, and others had suffered from the consequences of alcohol, either in their own lives, or the lives of those close to them.

It's a fool's paradise – we think these things will satisfy us and please other people. They don't. And we end up addicted and enslaved.



So what – very practically, do we need to do?

This is a blank version of our last slide, there's a copy available for you to pick up afterwards.

1. Write down the things that YOU need to be filling into your life, to meet your deepest spiritual, emotional and physical needs
2. What do you need to do to increase the level of filling.
3. Then look at the four biggest things that drain you – is more going in than out, or out than in? Is the balance right? Are there any things that you need to remove from your life?
4. Does MY life or lifestyle stress other people or bless them? Do I need to change anything? Seek help if you need to.

Take time, fill it in carefully, and HONESTLY, then DO something about it.

TOP TIP 2 – Never give up the things that fill you because you're too busy with the things that drain you.

Faced with a challenge?

7 Questions to help you



1. Where is this issue on a scale of 1-10?



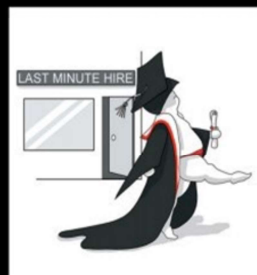
2. How important will this be in 6 months' time?



3. Is my response appropriate and effective?



4. How can I influence or improve the situation?



5. What can I learn from this?



6. What will I do differently next time?



7. What can I find that's positive in this situation?

With thanks to Prof. Paul McGee

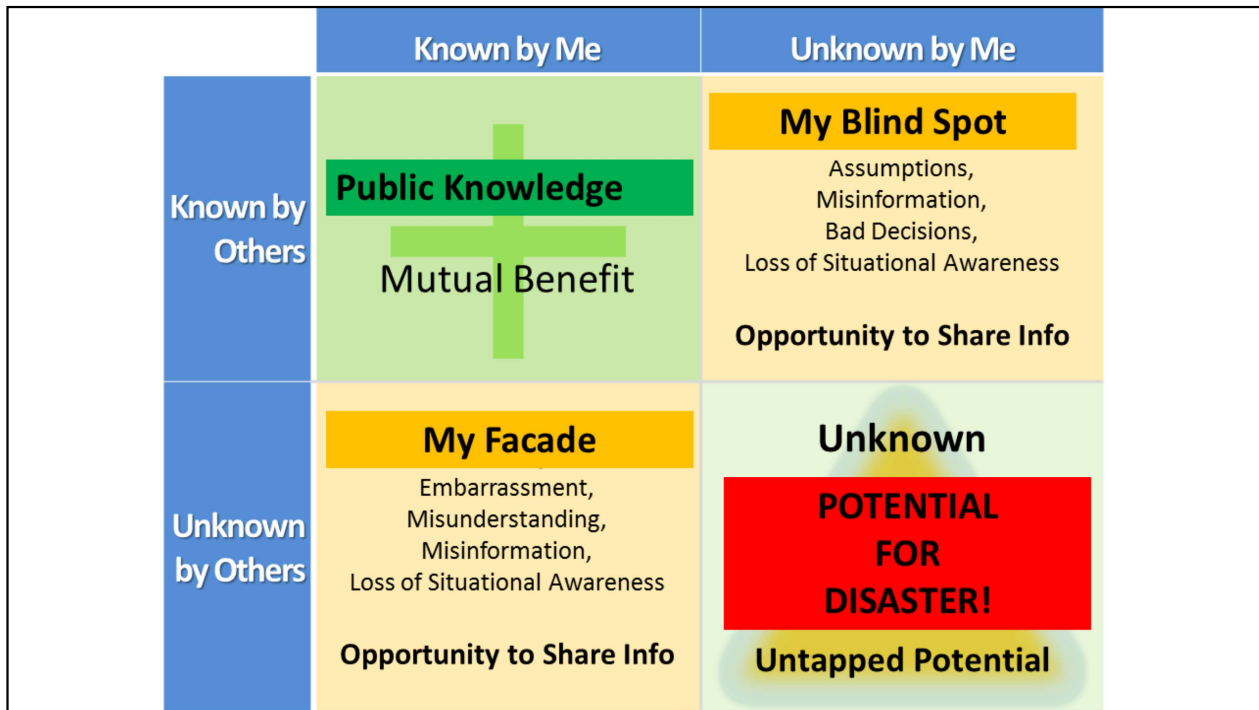
One of the big causes of burnout, it when our sense of perspective and proportion gets out of line – here are some helpful reminders from our friend Paul McGee of Sumo fame.

TOP TIP No 3 – Step back and get things in perspective. Maybe ask others to help you with these questions.



BURNOUT IN WORK/LEADERSHIP/HOME LIFE

Let's take a look at this second area of burnout.



This is the Johari Window – you can use it to review your business, your church, or your personal life. Explain

The more of your life that is for mutual benefit, the better for all

If you spend your life in denial about things or just putting on a façade, or alternatively going through life with a huge blind spot about yourself – then you’re headed for trouble.

The red area is where disaster, or huge opportunity comes, apparently out of the blue. NOTHING comes out of the blue, there are usually signs there – are you watching for them?

The more life you live in the Façade and Blind Spot boxes, the harder it will be. As soon as you call most things what they are, the heat goes out of it.

When something happens that doesn’t seem to make sense to you, find out what’s going on. Somebody will know, then you can cope.

SANITY

DEPENDS ON: -

- Being honest with ourselves
- Prioritising what I value most rather than what I want now
- The friends you do life with

So, how do you stay sane at home, at work or in leadership.

There are probably three key issues that affect them all.



1. I will be honest with myself

Many people live a lie, pretending things are not as they are. This links in with the Johari Window we've just been looking at.

Here's the bad news 'I was involved in all my bad decisions' – and so were you!

I will not lie to myself, even when the truth hurts. Only when I call something what it is can I move on.

It's no bad thing – once you acknowledge the truth – that something isn't working, then you can get help to fix it.

You can't fix what you won't face up to.

TOP TIP No 4 Take a good look in the mirror – what do you see? What needs to be acknowledged, what needs to be faced. Who needs to help you?

2. I will prioritise what I value most, rather than what I want now.

If we are to live lives of integrity, we must prioritise what we value most, rather than what we want NOW.

I might value having good finances – but can't resist a bargain.

I want to hit my targets – that's what I want NOW – but what about that which I value most – my integrity, my family?

I might value a great family life – but that person at work is hard to resist.

We want a great body – but training.....aaargh. Athletes did not become what they are by chance!

TOP TIP 5 - Seek a life that is driven by values, not desires. It's the immediate want fighting against the ultimate goal. We must learn to think with the end in mind.

The question is 'What do I value most?'

Show me your calendar and your budget & I'll tell you what you value

PETER DRUCKER

I could very quickly find out your true values by looking at what fills your time, and how you spend your money. If you have any secrets, it always shows up there!

Our diary and spending tell us what is actually happening, but how might things be different.

Let's do a little exercise. I want you to imagine it's the day of your funeral, what would you want people to be saying about you?

Imagine: -

Your parents. Your wife/Husband. Your children. Your friends

Your employer. Your pastor

If those are the things you want said about you, those are your true values. So, everything you think and do, ask yourself, 'How does this achieve my life goals' and do everything with those in mind.

Prioritising – In which box should you spend most of your time?



And finally – before we move on – just ask yourself this question – how does reality differ from desire?

The ‘Important box’ are the things you REALLY want.

My guess is that you spend more of life than you really would wish in the bottom two boxes?

We must never allow the urgent but unimportant to take precedence over the important.

How can you change that?

It's NOT about you, but you are stressed and burnt out because of the point in your family/group life cycle..

It IS predictable and repairable – you can be trained to fix it.

Introduce Group Life Cycles. They affect every group – whether they be family, church, work or hobby groups.

Discovery (Exciting time driven by emotions)

Disappointment (Miserable time also driven by emotions)

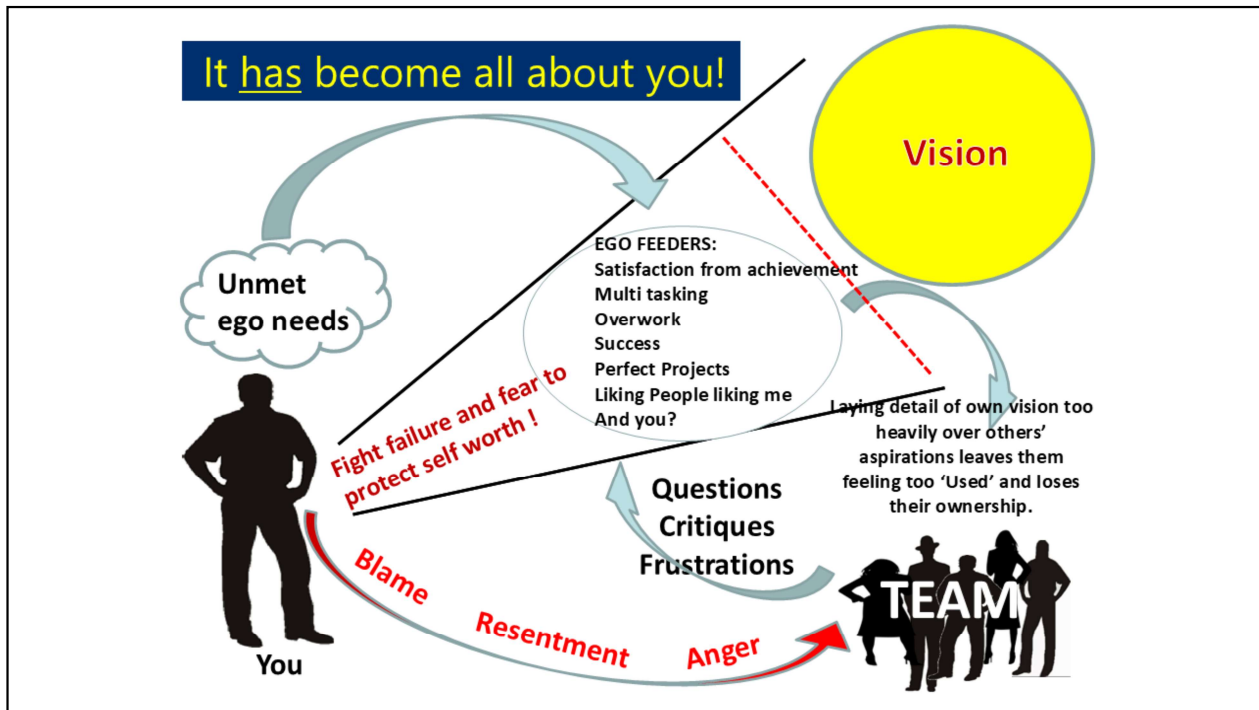
Development (What's in it for me, mind driven, can't develop when depressed)

Dynamic (Heart and mind work together)

Successful leaders are those who can take people from Disappointment to Developing..

How you feel may be down to the point of the cycle of your group – and there ARE things you can do about it.

TOP TIP 6 – Remember most times, it's not personal – don't make it so.



IT CAN become all about you, and you are behaving out of your own ego needs.. The big story is not all about you. – so don't make everything focus round yourself.

Slide reveals the mistakes people make at work, home and church level.

This doesn't always just happen at a personal level – the ego of the organisation or family can be a big problem. You become fixated on being your organisation.

Effective organisations get noticed. How you respond when you receive attention is critical - don't let it distract you.

Help others, but stay focused on who you want to be. Be more obsessed with that than with anything else – remember what you want your legacy to be..

TOP TIP 7 – If it HAS become personal seek help to change.

Your business cause has failed to produce the expected reward – because YOU have got in the way!

1. You've stifled Innovation
2. Management is replacing leadership
3. Maintenance has become more important than mission
4. You criticise young 'upstart' leaders
5. You've gone stale

1. You've stifled innovation

In the early days, most organisations innovate. But as you grow it's easy to let innovation wane. Ideas people will leave. When did you last do something truly new?

2. Management is beginning to replace leadership

This is when we focus entirely on what's already there rather than what might be. Micro-managing is very stressful to all. The key is to manage well but keep innovating to accomplish your mission.

3. Maintenance is more important than mission

Leaders of dying organisations are almost always in 'maintenance mode'—maintaining what they've built is more important than future opportunities.. The end is near.

4. You criticize younger, upstart leaders

Every leader is a young leader at some point. They bring ideas and strategies to the table. Leaders of dying organisations resist them, dismiss them. That's a critical mistake.

5. You've gone stale – ouch!

3. Do life with friends who will be good for you

If you want to see the direction your life's taking, then look at your friends – the ones who are influencing you.

Are they people who share your values and not just your interests. Some of your so called friends may be threatened by your values, if they only share your interests

We cannot lead ourself by ourself – and we need friends around us with whom we can share. People who will support us, challenge us.

If we don't share, we can be alone amongst our friends.

It's friends who can speak into your life – remember the Johari window?

TOP TIP 8 – Remember you become like your friends – so intentionally only let those into your inner circle that you admire and would like to be like.



HANDLING SPIRITUAL BURNOUT

Spiritual Burnout is usually caused by a number of fairly predictable things – here they are.

BURNOUT

Fatigue brought about by devotion
to a cause that has failed to
produce the expected reward.

Herbert Freudenberger

Remember this earlier slide?

You're tired, your Christian life isn't working out as you had hoped.

If you can identify some of the common causes why your faith isn't working out, then you can do something about it, and go some way to reducing your own stress levels.

Let's look at some of the common ones: -



The things we want are like some sorts of food. You can have as much as you like, but you still feel hungry – nothing seems to satisfy you. It's values that satisfy.

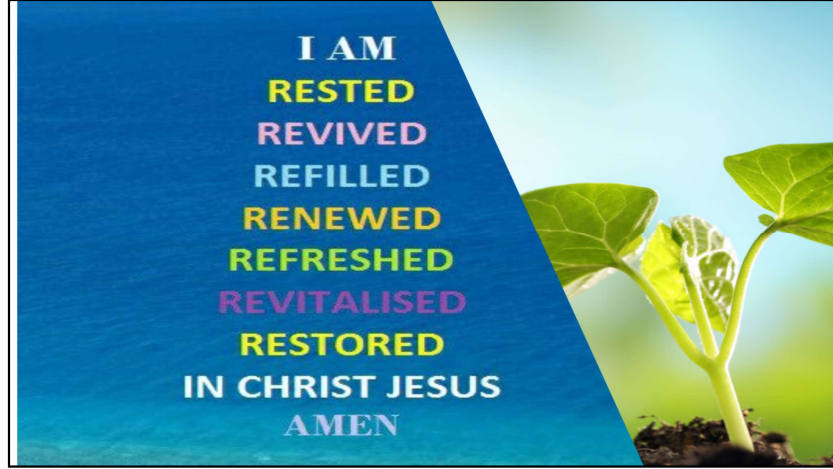
If your attitude is that you want your walk with God to be the same way you want everything else – neatly packaged, pre-processed, and at as little cost as possible to myself – then you've got it wrong, and will never be satisfied.

It sounds tough, but Jesus continually said 'If you are not prepared to follow me wholeheartedly – don't bother'

These are Jesus' words in Matthew 16:24-26

If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross and follow me, If you try to hang on to your life you will lose it, but if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. What do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your soul. Is ANYTHING worth more than your soul?

TOP TIP 9 As a Christian, wholeheartedness is the secret to wholeness.



Revitalising a stale relationship with God – in no special order.

We covered some of the words listed on the screen under 'wellbeing' – but they're all connected!

1. Is all the time you spend with God in preparing for a message, or a meeting. You never spend time with God purely for its own sake. Set aside time with God just for the two of you. Plan to do Coffee with God in the morning!
2. Talk about it with your accountability partner as we discussed earlier in the wellbeing section– has something got in the way maybe: - Some behaviour – unhelpful or even sinful. Some addiction. Some relationship
3. Take a break – do something different to get out of your rut.
4. Spend more time with people whose passion for Jesus and the mission burns white hot. It's infectious.
5. Listen to quality podcasts on your phone from inspirational speakers – let the Word of God through them inspire you.
6. Seek a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit.
7. What you think is holding you back may be the key to your ministry! (e.g. Paul spent much of his ministry chained up – but it enabled him to write, witness, and gain access to people who would otherwise have not been accessible).

When it all gets too much!



ELIJAH

A burnt out warrior.
1 Kings 19:1-18

There are some fascinating insights into what happens when people burn out in scripture – and much to learn.

This is a remarkable story, about a remarkable man, and one of the best known Old Testament Prophets. Let's set the scene.

Elijah was a pain in King Ahab's side – as he kept prophesying against the evil things he had done. Ahab would have liked to be rid of him, but Elijah faced him down and Ahab never had a chance.

Elijah kept up his prophesying, ultimately declaring a 3 year drought, which duly came about. Impact was devastating, and all this time Elijah was hiding in plain sight at the house of a widow in Zarepath, near Sidon, which was ironically Jezebel's homeland, and a centre for Baal worship.

And then three years into the drought – and famine – Elijah is led by God back to speak to Ahab, and we have the famous contest on Mount Carmel



Elijah's finest hour perhaps, when he calls fire down in the great contest between God and the prophets of Baal.

It results in the Baal prophets being killed, and Elijah announcing that the drought has now finished, and it will rain again, which it duly does.

Ahab gets back and tells Jezebel what's happened. She's infuriated. She was closely identified with Baal worship, and sends a note to Elijah threatening to kill him.

Elijah fled from Jezreel to Sinai – about 360 miles as the crow flies – on foot.



This brave man, who has been amazingly used is suddenly spooked. He's faced down armies, King Ahab, and many other foes – but this irate woman is the straw that broke his back.

It had all got too much – tired and somehow depleted, he runs for his life and keeps on running – after a break at Beersheba, all the way to Sinai. It's about 360 miles as the crow flies.

He's heading to Sinai – and many consider it was to the very same spot where Moses received his commission in Exodus 33:19-23, when he hid in the rock and God's glorious presence passed by.

So – maybe Elijah started off running FROM something, but he ended up running TO something - a meeting with God.

TOP TIP 9 If you started off running away from something – a fear, a problem, a sin, a threat – now would be a good time to consider where to run TO.



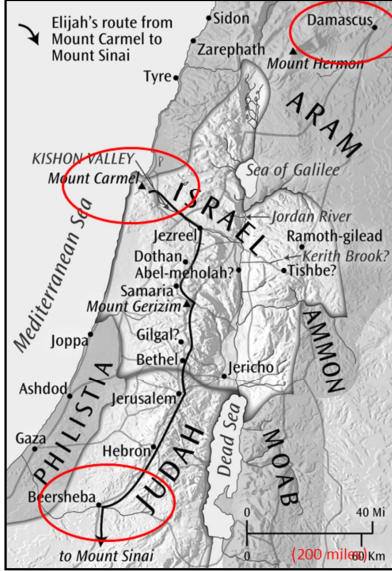
Elijah's seen big supernatural events, but he wasn't prepared for how God revealed himself. God tells him to go and stand outside on the mountain. There's a mighty windstorm, an earthquake, and a fearsome fire – but God wasn't in any of them God wasn't in the remarkable, he was in in the whisper.

WHY DOES HE WHISPER – BECAUSE HE'S RIGHT NEXT TO US

He's right there with you, he knows your feelings, he's with you every step of the way. The devil shouts lies, but God whispers truth – not by shouting louder, but by calling us closer.

TOP TIP 10 - If you're overcome by stress, anxiety, and wonder why God's voice seems so quiet? Remember it's because he wants us to lean in and listen to him, to be close to him..

“Go back, walk with me, and I'll sort everything out – and incidentally, you're not alone – there are 7,000 others with you”
AND THAT'S GOD'S PROMISE TO YOU TOO, HOWEVER BAD THINGS MAY SEEM!



Mt Carmel to Beersheba – 100 miles

Beersheba to Mt Sinai –
260 miles

Return
Sinai to Jezreel –
360 miles

Jezreel to Damascus
100 miles

Journey – 820 miles

The final twist to this story is that in 1 Kings 19:15 we read Elijah’s re-commissioning would take him on an even longer walk to Damascus and see him take on remarkable challenges. Park that in your mind for another day!

Even after Elisha’s commissioning, we read of many incidents where Elijah is still actively prophesying, and making a major impact for God.

Just because you have had a breakdown, does not mean that you’re finished. The world is full of men who’ve had major breakdowns. And yet recovered to make a big impact.

Be encouraged.