

### 3. BURNOUT AND EXHAUSTION

*A. B. Simpson, approaching middle age, broken in health, deeply dependent and ready to quit the ministry, chanced to hear the simple spiritual, 'Nothing is too hard for Jesus. No man can work like Him.' Its message sped like an arrow to his heart, carrying faith and hope and life for body and soul. He sought a place of retirement and after a season alone with God arose to his feet completely cured, and went forth in fullness of joy to found what has since become one of the largest foreign missionary societies in the world. For thirty-five years after this encounter with God he labored prodigiously in the service of Christ. His faith in the God of limitless power gave him all the strength he needed to carry on. –A. W. Tozer, the Knowledge of the Holy*

#### **1. The prophet Elijah experienced severe burnout and exhaustion after his confrontation with the prophets of Baal. He pleased with God that his life be taken.**

*\* He himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, 'It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers. . . I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Baal have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.' (1 Kings 19:4, 10 NKJV)*

#### **2. The Lord reached out to Elijah in his state of weakness and discouragement and restored him to productive ministry.**

*\* So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God . . . Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD. And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broken the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind, and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. (1 Kings 19:8, 11-12 NKJV)*

#### **3. Samson's disobedience and sinful relationships resulted in the loss of his unusual strength.**

*\* So he told her all that was in his heart and said to her. "A razor has never come on my head, for I have been a Nazarite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me and I will become weak and be like any other man.' . . . She said, The Philistines are upon you, Samson! And he awoke from his sleep and said, 'I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.' But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him. Then the Pharisees seized him and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains, and he was a grinder in the prison. (Judg. 16:17, 20-21 NASB)*

#### **4. Samson's strength was restored by the Lord in answer to his earnest prayer.**

*\* Then Samson called to the LORD and said, 'O Lord God please remember me and please strengthen me just this time. O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two*

eyes.' Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and braced himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left. And Samson said, 'Let me die with the philistines!' And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life. (Judg. 16:28-30 NASB)

#### **5. David's unconfessed sin left him drained of strength.**

*\* I am dying from grief, my years are shortened by sadness. Misery [or sin] has drained my strength; I am wasting away from within. (Psa 31:10 NLT)*

*\* When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. (Psa. 32:3-4 NIV)*

*\* A raging fever burns within me and my health is broken. I am exhausted and completely crushed. My groans come from an anguished heart . . . My heart beats wildly, my strength fails, and I am going blind. (Psa 38:7-8, 10 NLT)*

#### **6. God's strength is available to his people in old age.**

*\* Do not cast me off in the time of old age. Do not forsake me when my strength fails . . . I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD. . . Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come. (Psa 71:9, 16, 18 (NKJV)*

#### **7. Scripture repeatedly encourages us to look to the Lord as the source of the strength we need to overcome weakness.**

*\* The joy of the LORD is your strength. (Neh. 8:10)*

*\* I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. (Psa 18:1)*

*\* The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psa 27:1)*

*\* The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him. (Psa. 28:7)*

*\* When I pray, you answer me; you encourage me by giving me the strength I need. (Psa 138:3 NLT)*

*\* I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Phil. 4:13)*

#### **8. The Lord can use our weakness to display his strength.**

*\* But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. (1 Cor. 1:27 NIV)*

*\* I will take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak then am I strong. (2 Cor 12:10)*

**9. The Lord's supply of strength is never exhausted and is available to his people who wait with confidence.**

*\* Have you never heard or understood? Don't you know that the LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth? He never grows faint or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. Even youths will become exhausted and young men will give up. But those who wait on the LORD will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. (Isa 40:28-31 NLT)*

**10. God expects us to reach out to our brothers and sisters in their times of weakness.**

*\* In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Acts 20:35 NASB)*

*\* Now we exhort you, brothers, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. (1 Thess. 4:14 NKJV)*

**PRAYER**

Lord, I am ready to throw in the towel. The energy and enthusiasm I once had for life are a thing of the past. The physical and emotional resources I once relied upon are completely spent.

Once again, my inadequacy has brought me back to home port. I cast myself upon your loving mercy and pray that you would deliver me from this overwhelming feelings of uselessness and helplessness. Correct my focus and renew my relationship to you Restore to me the joy of my salvation, and enable me to dedicate the remaining days and years of my life to proclaiming your love.

**PROMISE**

Have you never heard or understood? Don't you know that the LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth? He never grows faint or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to those who are tired and worn out, he offers strength to the weak. (Isa. 40:28-29 NLT)