

# Equipping Thoughts for Leaders

September 23, 2017

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## Fighting through the fog

Any type of spiritual leadership can be very taxing. Authentic leaders pour their heart into God's work and are subject to challenge and disappointment. At the same time the enemy of our soul knows that "Smite the shepherd and the sheep will scatter" (Mk 14:27, Zech 13:7). Leaders cannot be naive about the challenges nor can they ignore the potential of burn out. Consider what Paul faced.

*2 Corinthians 11:23-29 MSG 23-27 I've worked much harder, been jailed more often, beaten up more times than I can count, and at death's door time after time. I've been flogged five times with the Jews' thirty-nine lashes, beaten by Roman rods three times, pummeled with rocks once. I've been shipwrecked three times, and immersed in the open sea for a night and a day.*

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*In hard traveling year in and year out, I've had to ford rivers, fend off robbers, struggle with friends, struggle with foes. I've been at risk in the city, at risk in the country, endangered by desert sun and sea storm, and betrayed by those I thought were my brothers. I've known drudgery and hard labor, many a long and lonely night without sleep, many a missed meal, blasted by the cold, naked to the weather. 28-29 And that's not the half of it, when you throw in the daily pressures and anxieties of all the churches. When someone gets to the end of his rope, I feel the desperation in my bones. When someone is duped into sin, an angry fire burns in my gut.*

### **Here are 12 things you can do to help when you are feeling overwhelmed.**

- **Maintain personal disciplines not matter how bad you feel (prayer, worship, Presence, and the word).** If you let go of these things your spiritual engine will run out of fuel.
- **Never make important decision when in the valley of stress.** Decisions made in the fog of stress are rarely good or God ones.
- **Be open and ask close friends to pray for you.** Also make sure you get some time with friends not connected to "doing ministry." It is important to spend time with people who will encourage your soul.
- **Work from a "to do" list is good during foggy times.** Doing one thing at a time will help you not feel so overwhelmed.
- **Take time to exercise.** Walking, running, exercising in the gym can help us release stress, lower heart rates, and become healthier.
- **Don't respond to negative emails, posts, or exercise church discipline when stressed.** It will usually be a knee jerk reaction rather than a leading of the Spirit that you will usually regret later. It is better to wait and sleep on it.

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- **Talk with and seek counsel from a trusted mature believer or you pastor.** They may not fix anything but just getting a calm, trusted, other perspective will help.
  - **Repent of trying to be God.** You can't do everything, fix everyone's problems, and keep everyone happy. You are not Jesus but your job is to point people to Him.
  - **"Rejoice always, again I say rejoice" (Phil 4:4, 1 Thes 5:13).** Give thanks for the gospel of Jesus and the grace of God. It is always good news and will give you a God-filled perspective.
  - **Keep sowing good things.** *Gal 6:3 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we don't give up.*
  - **Honor the Sabbath.** In other words make sure you take breaks.
  - **Remind yourself that the most important thing is point #1 and make sure you pursue that.**
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