

Session #8: Overcoming Soul Fatigue

Watch!

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/hWSzIH4uLak>

Review!

In the previous lesson, we looked at the barrenness of busyness and how it related to soul fatigue. The Israelites “walked after emptiness and became empty” (Jeremiah 2:5). If we follow things that are worthless and empty, we will become worthless and empty ourselves. If we are empty for too long, we become fatigued in our soul. There are three reasons for soul fatigue:

1. We are Ruled by Busyness.
2. We are Overcome by Stress.
3. We Experience Overload.

Soul fatigue is the exhaustion of one’s inner life. It happens when we don’t take time to be refreshed by the Lord. Instead we run after worthless and empty things, things that have no value in eternity and ultimately don’t satisfy. In this lesson, we will study how to overcome our soul fatigue.

Study!

Scripture Focus: Jeremiah 2:5,13,18

5 Thus says the Lord:

“What wrong did your fathers find in me
that they went far from me,
and went after worthlessness, and became worthless?
(Jeremiah 2:5)

13 for my people have committed two evils:

they have forsaken me,
the fountain of living waters,
and hewed out cisterns for themselves,
broken cisterns that can hold no water. (Jeremiah 2:13)

18 And now what do you gain by going to Egypt
to drink the waters of the Nile?

Or what do you gain by going to Assyria
to drink the waters of the Euphrates? (Jeremiah 2:18)

Lesson Framework:

Soul fatigue is the tiredness, the exhaustion in one's inner life. When this happens, we almost always feel rushed, bored or isolated. We become restless and tired at the same time. There is no passion for God and no energy for life. As a result, our relationships—with God and with others—decline. There are two root causes of soul fatigue.

The Root Causes of Soul Fatigue

- a. **We are running on empty.** We don't take time to re-fuel ourselves. Hence, we become spiritually exhausted. We end up leading an empty life and we end up having a superficial relationship with God.

3 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. 4 Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.' (Jeremiah 7:3-4)

8 "Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail." (Jeremiah 7:8)

- b. **We are running after emptiness.** What's worse than running on empty? It's running after emptiness. Chasing after things that do not satisfy. We run after things that may satisfy temporarily but in the long run, cost us more. We live such stressed-out lives because we are running after worthlessness and becoming worthless.

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The Results of Soul Fatigue

- a. **We lose the sense of Destiny.** We are all created and redeemed for God-appointed purposes. But when our soul is fatigued, we forget our destiny. We neglect to follow God and align ourselves to His purpose for us. Our compass is no longer Him but everywhere and hence, nowhere. We become aimless wanderers, mindlessly filling our time on earth when we should be marching to the drum of our eternal King!
- b. **We lose the sense of Courage.** An American coach once said, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all." When we're tired, we can't think, we're unable to make decisions,

we lose the will to win and we are no longer the best version of ourselves. When we are fatigued in our soul, we lose faith and can't act when God calls us. That's why we can't let ourselves become fatigued, so we can continue to operate from a position of strength.

- c. **We lose the sense of Legacy.** When our soul is fatigued, we lose all notion of finishing well. We fail to take stock of what we live for and what we leave behind. We give no thought to our impact on others, or on how others will remember us. Consequently, we end up living for ourselves instead of for the glory of God.

The Remedy for Soul Fatigue

1. **Recognise and Repent.** We must recognise that we are fatigued and repent. We must recognise the weariness of our heart, our emptiness and dryness, then repent and come back to God.
2. **Remove and Replace.** After we have recognised and repented, remove the things in our lives that cause us to be fatigued. Remove idols and worthless things that we have been running after. Remove everything in our lives that doesn't satisfy and replace them with the things of God.
3. **Refresh Yourself in the Lord.** We must learn to come before God and be refreshed by Him. Look at what it says in Isaiah 40:27–31:

27 Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
"My way is hidden from the Lord,
and my right is disregarded by my God"?
28 Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
29 He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases strength.
30 Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;
31 but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:27-31)

Reflect!

What are some key insights that I can take away from today's session?

What are some things you pursue that you know are spiritually worthless or empty? Are they becoming false idols in your life?

What are some intentional steps you can take over the next few days to refresh yourself in God? Name some things that need to be removed so they can be replaced.

Discuss!

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
(Matthew 11:28-30)

When he taught, Jesus often used illustrations that resonated with His listeners. In an agricultural society, the illustration of a yoke, placed on oxen to enable them to carry a load together, was something His audience related to.

In these verses, Jesus revealed to His listeners that the first step to finding rest is to come to Him. This is the initial rest of salvation. There is peace in knowing that Jesus is our Lord and Saviour. This first rest is given by God.

Once we have come to Him and believed in Him, there is a second rest. This second rest is something we need to find. Many believers never find this rest because this rest comes only after we take up the yoke of Christ.

Once oxen are yoked together, they work together in tandem until the task is finished. There is no room for independent wills. Taking up the yoke of Christ involves surrendering our wants and desires, letting go of our own will and seeking God's will. This is a struggle for most believers. We like being in charge and having things our way.

That's why Christ calls us to learn from Him. Jesus submitted to the will of the Father throughout His life and ministry. In Matthew 26:39, His submission is evident as He prayed to the Father, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

Jesus knew firsthand what it meant to carry a heavy burden, to face disappointments, trials, betrayal and abandonment by friends. And it is with this understanding that He makes the invitation to all believers to take up His yoke—to find rest in doing life together with Him.

Difference between relief and rest

There's a difference between "relief" and "rest". We gain relief from stress-reducing activities. But this relief is temporary; it doesn't resolve the issues in our soul. Our heart and inner life remains restless.

When we seek growth-enhancing activities however, we obtain rest. We experience restedness from within.

Are we merely seeking temporary relief, or are we truly resting in a way that refreshes and strengthens us? Jesus invites us to come, unpack and unload the burdens of life in His presence. When we allow Him to deal with our heart and to bring wholeness, we will come to a place of true rest. Our circumstances may remain the same but we will experience a deep restedness of heart, unspeakable joy, and a peace that transcends understanding.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:7)

Q1: What differences have you noticed between the way believers and non-believers face the disappointments and stressors of life?

Q2: How are stress-reducing activities different to growth-enhancing activities? What are some examples of both?

Q3: As your relationship with Christ matures, how has your way of dealing with stress and fatigue changed?

Q4: Who is Jesus' audience in Matthew 11:28–30?

Q5: Please share with your group a heavy load (hard struggle) that you carried in your past. How did this heavy load affect your daily life, e.g. emotionally, spiritually, physically, relationally and financially?

Q6: What makes Jesus' yoke easy to bear and "light"?

Q7: Why do people hold on to their burden instead of allowing Jesus to carry it for them?

Q8: What steps can you take in the next two weeks to take up the yoke of Christ?

Between Sessions

Challenge!

We can develop a healthy lifestyle through four different modes:

1. Parked Mode

Sometimes, a car needs to switch gears from drive mode to parked mode. Likewise, we too need to cultivate the discipline of building parked mode into our lives. In parked mode, we set

aside time for contemplation as well as to be with God. Parked mode allows us to deal with the things that cause fatigue, to meditate on Scripture, reflect on life and find true rest in God.

2. Low Mode

These are times set aside for family, friends and mentors. We need to invest in these relationships, carving out unhurried, focused time to be with the people we love and care about.

3. Drive Mode

Drive mode is a time of energy and productivity. We can't be in low mode when we go to work. We must be in drive mode as we're striving for results.

4. Overdrive Mode

There are times that call for extra effort, where we must "switch it on" to get things done. Overdrive mode is necessary at times, but we wear ourselves out if we are always on overdrive. So pay attention and balance these four modes for an effective, God-pleasing life.

Over the next two weeks, mark out appointments for yourself in both parked and low modes. Challenge yourself to keep those appointments and reap the benefits from them. Journal your experiences and be ready to share them with your group at the next session.

Memorise!

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

(Matthew 11:28-30)

Before next session!

Next session, we will discuss the Sermon on the Mount, specifically some lessons found in Matthew 6. Take time beforehand to read through Matthew 5, 6 and 7. Highlight key verses or passages that stand out to you. Then write down what God may be speaking to you through the reading of His Word.