

Burnout!



by Robert Prins

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Busy, busy, busy. That was me in 2015. I was married with four children aged between 10 and 20, worked a stressful full-time job, was busy at church as a speaker, teacher, elder, musician, and involved in almost everything else. In the past few years, I had been a speaker at numerous camps and conferences both overseas and in New Zealand. I had ministries I was running, and was working toward setting up another ministry promoting strong marriages and families in our local area. And there was always plenty of work to do on our not-so-low-maintenance house.

My week was packed. After work on Monday, I spent the evening answering emails and keeping up with our *Thinky Things* ministry. On Tuesday there were often meetings, but if there were no meetings it allowed more time to clear the backlog of emails or prepare the next talk. Wednesday was Bible Class; Thursday was date night; Friday was family night; Saturday was spent working around the house in the morning, preparing for Sunday in the afternoon, and often youth group in the evening; and Sunday was a full day of work at church, followed by visitors for lunch or dinner.

It was my birthday weekend. For me it was a busy weekend of commitments followed by an extra busy week ahead. I was tired, but I had planned out my weekend to the minute so that I could fulfil all my commitments prepare for the week to come. My schedule was tight. Then it was squeezed tighter still with a birthday event for my nephew. The straw that broke the camel's back was when a last-minute get together was arranged to celebrate my birthday. I didn't want it. I couldn't afford the time, but I couldn't say no.

That night I turned into a blubbering jelly. My mind, body and emotions burnt out. I sat on the bed, trembling, crying, and unable to stop. The toll it took on my physical and mental health was immense. It was all I could do, after a week off work, to sleep, work and repeat. Even then I would burst into tears for no reason at all.

But God was working through me. He gave me strength at work and did miracles to help me cope. He took away all my church responsibilities (which I hated), but I saw so many other people grow through them. He gave me time to rest, opportunities to write and opened new doors.

If it hadn't been for the burnout, I would never have had the time or opportunity to write *Resisting the Devil*, a book that has helped so many people resist sin. Through my burnout God changed the direction of my life. Through burnout he grew and developed the ministries he had given us.

Burnout has been one of the most horrible things that has happened in my life, but it has also been one of the best. When God is in control even the bad things turn out better than we could ever imagine.

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Busy, busy, busy. Robert was much too busy. And then suddenly there was burnout. Physically, mentally and emotionally he was wrecked. But when God is in control, even the nightmare of a burnout can have a silver lining.



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