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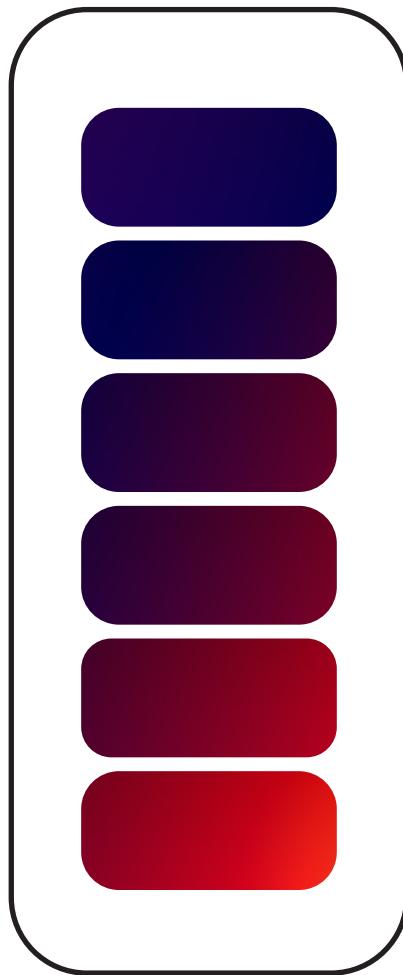
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WEEKLY STUDY



FUELLED SERIES // WEEK ONE

THE FOUR INTERNAL TANKS

This series consists of:

- 6 x Sunday messages
- 6 x midweek videos
- 36 devotional readings

The goal of this series is _____.

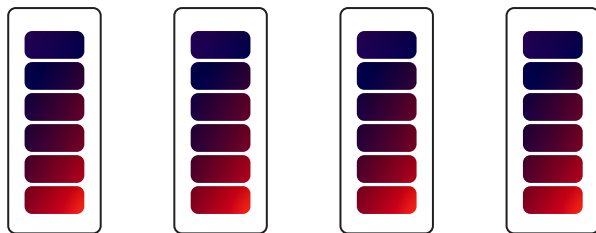
²⁸ 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ _____ my yoke upon you and _____ from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will _____ for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.' Matthew 11:28-30

The process of internal change requires:

1. Taking _____ for my internal health.
2. Making a _____ to change where necessary.

This always results in _____.

The four tanks of my internal energy:



Energy

Energy

Energy

Energy

_____ zone

_____ zone

_____ zone

"Love the Lord your God with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____"
Luke 10:27

Over the last 12 months what levels have your tanks been at on average?

Physical energy: _____%

Emotional energy: _____%

Spiritual energy: _____%

Mental energy: _____%

1. These tanks are designed for purposeful _____.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden _____ and take care of it.
Genesis 2:15

2. We were designed to live in the _____ zone of each tank.

Our loving heavenly Father did not design us to live depleted, overbusy, stressed out, exhausted lives. And yet many of us do.

3. Each tank has _____ and _____.

Outflow > Inflow =



Inflow > Outflow =



4. As each tank empties there are _____ that alert us.

I have come that they may have life, and have it _____
_____. John 10:10

Action required: Set aside _____ minutes each day for this 6 week journey.

MANAGING MY PHYSICAL ENERGY

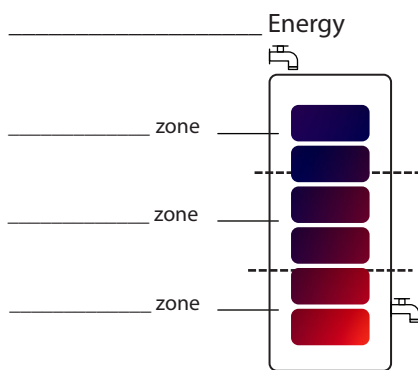
"Love the Lord your God with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____" Luke 10:27

The process of internal change requires:

1. Taking full _____ for my internal health.
2. Making a _____ to change where necessary.

This always results in _____.

For _____ we live and move and have our being. Acts 17:28



My Physical Energy: _____ %
(average over the last 12 months).

If your _____ exceeds your inflow,
your _____ will be your downfall.

1. SIGNALS my body gives me

when this tank _____:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I was designed to live in the _____ zone of my physical energy tank.

2. OUTFLOW - these are things that _____ energy _____ of this tank:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. INFLOW - these are things that _____ energy _____ this tank:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Highlighting two key aspects of physical energy:

1. Sleep

My body & brain _____ and _____ itself while I sleep.

Work out how many _____ of sleep you need.
Plan to get them!

2. Water

Water makes up more than _____ of my body.

MANAGING MY EMOTIONAL ENERGY

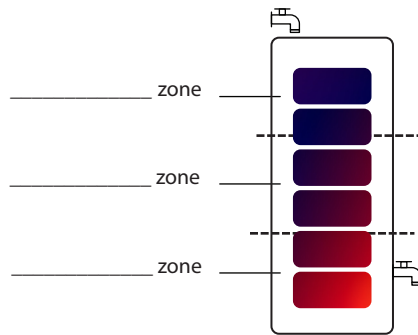
*“Love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your _____ and with all your **strength** and with all your **mind**” Luke 10:27*

The process of internal change requires:

1. Taking full _____ for my internal health.
2. Making a _____ to change where necessary.

This always results in _____

_____ Energy



My Emotional Energy: _____ %
(average over the last 12 months).

1. SIGNALS I get when this tank _____:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I was designed to live in the _____ zone of my emotional energy tank.

2. OUTFLOW - these are things that _____
energy _____ of this tank:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. INFLOW - these are things that _____
energy _____ this tank:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Key aspects of emotional energy:

1. My emotional tank is _____

Things that fill up the tanks of _____ might empty _____.

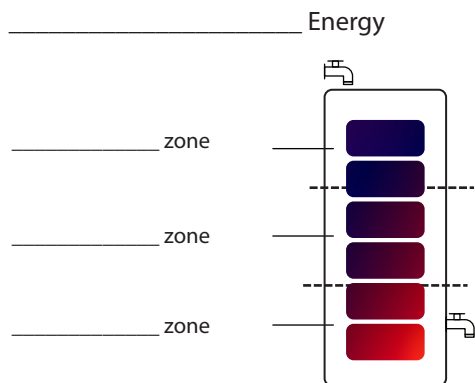
2. One of the best places to process my emotions is with my _____.

*Why, my soul, are you _____? Why so disturbed within me? Put your _____ in God ...
Psalm 42:5*

Give us today our _____ bread. Matthew 6:11

MANAGING MY SPIRITUAL ENERGY

*“Love the Lord your God with all your _____ and with all your **soul** and with all your **strength** and with all your **mind**”
Luke 10:27*



This tank has to do with my relationship with _____.

*The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth...²⁹ _____ strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak ...³¹ those who _____ in the Lord will renew their strength.
Isaiah 40:28-31*

My Spiritual tank: _____ %
(average over the last 12 months).

1. Signals I get when this tank _____:

- I feel far from God
- Get more of my inner fulfilment from created things (people, money, things, achievements, adventures)
- I try and control the small things
- A lack of inner peace
- Opinions of others matter more to me than God’s opinion
- I feel like He has forgotten me
- My inner world feels messy and jarring

- I get more fearful
- I lose sight of eternity
- I feel like it’s all up to me
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. INFLOW - these are things that put energy into this tank (i.e. move me _____ to God):

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. OUTFLOW - things that move me _____ from my relationship with God, are usually the _____ of what we filled in above.

Some key things about this tank:

1. God has promised to never _____ us nor _____ us (Hebrews 13:5)
2. My faith journey is my _____.

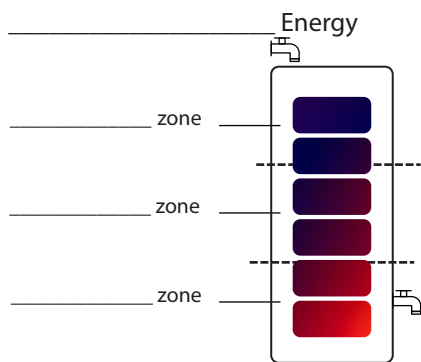
MANAGING MY MENTAL ENERGY

"Love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **strength** and with all your _____" Luke 10:27

The process of internal change requires:

1. Taking full _____ for my internal health.
2. Making a _____ to change where necessary.

This always results in _____.



This tank has to do with the:

- _____ of my thoughts
- _____ of my thoughts
- _____ of my thoughts

My Mental Energy: _____ %
(average over the last 12 months). What has the quality, agility and creativity of my thoughts been like?

I was designed to live in the _____ zone of my mental energy tank.

1. As this tank empties:

- the quality of my thoughts becomes more _____
- the agility of my thoughts _____

creativity in my thoughts _____

2. OUTFLOW - these are things that _____ energy _____ of this tank:

3. INFLOW - these are things that _____ energy _____ this tank:

Key aspects of mental energy:

1. The wise person _____ to what they are thinking about.

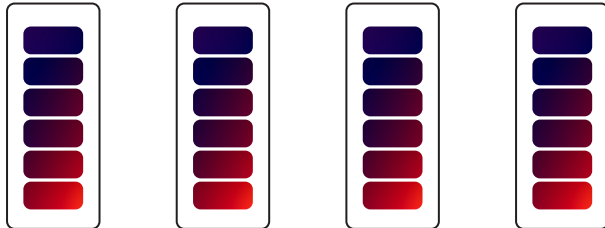
For as he _____ in his heart, so is he.
Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV)

2. God has given us the ability to _____ our thoughts

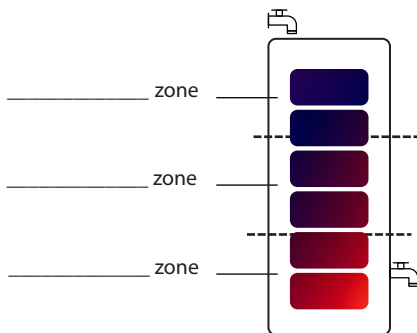
... we take _____ every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5

LIVING BEYOND MYSELF

The four tanks of my internal energy:



Energy Energy Energy Energy



1. The ultimate reason for living a “healthy zone” life is to

Our loving heavenly _____ did not design us to live depleted, overbusy, stressed out, exhausted lives.

Love the _____
with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **strength** and with all your **mind**” Luke 10:27

2. When I live a “healthy zone” life I am more able to

I have come that they may have _____, and have it to the full. John 10:10

To this end I strenuously contend with all the _____
Christ so powerfully works in me. Colossians 1:29

3. When I live a “healthy zone” life I can _____

And the second [greatest commandment] is like it: ‘Love your _____ as yourself.’ Matthew 22:39

Note the sequence: Loving God changes _____ to be able to love _____ better.

²⁷ He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?”

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “_____ and _____ likewise.” Luke 10:27-37

Loving others involves my _____,
my _____ and my _____.

WEEK ONE

INFLOW—OUTFLOW

Once upon a time, there was an eager traveller with a grand destination in mind. They embarked on a long journey with a car full of dreams and aspirations. All that was needed was determination—so they believed. Their foot was heavy on the accelerator pedal. Their eyes focused only on the road ahead, never glancing down at the gauges on the dashboard.

Suddenly, their destination still a far, far way off, the car sputtered, coughed, and came to a complete stop. With all their go-go enthusiasm, the driver wondered what had gone wrong. Then, they looked down at the fuel gauge. They realised they had forgotten a crucial part of their journey: to refuel along the way.

RENEWAL

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them ..."
(John 7:37–38)

Stephen R. Covey, in his best-selling book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, asserts that the seventh habit involves taking responsibility for our own personal renewal. Covey identifies four primary areas where personal renewal should occur: physical renewal, maintaining energy and health in our bodies; mental renewal, stimulating and refocusing our minds; emotional renewal, developing emotional energy for greater resilience in the face of life's challenges; and spiritual renewal, helping us stay connected to our deeper sense of meaning and values in life. As we will see, the Bible places emphasis on all four areas, leading us as followers of Jesus to be attentive to each one.

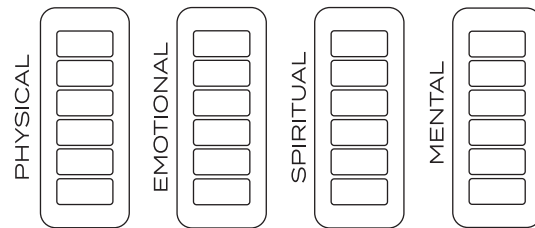
Let's explore four metaphors to help us visualise the importance of personal renewal:

Fill Your Tanks. According to Jesus' invitation in John 7, first, we drink water in; then water flows out from us. Inflow enables outflow. So, imagine a fuel tank with an inflow tap at the top and an outflow tap at the bottom. The primary analogy we will consistently return to is that we, as humans, are made up of four fuel tanks: physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental tanks. Each of these tanks contains varying levels of vitality, depending on how much fuel flows in compared to how much flows out.

Sharpen Your Saw. In his chapter on personal renewal, Covey uses the metaphor of a lumberjack trying to cut down a tree with a dull saw. If the saw is not periodically sharpened and maintained, it becomes less effective at cutting through wood. The lumberjack may work harder and longer, but the results will be subpar compared to someone who takes the time to regularly sharpen their saw.

Watch Your Dashboard Gauges. In a car, the fuel tank is the most obvious tank that needs to be regularly refilled, but there are others—engine coolant, windshield washer, oil reservoir, brake fluid etc. Imagine there are four crucial gauges on the dashboard of personal renewal—the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental gauges—each

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



representing an aspect of your life that needs to be refuelled.

Send Down Your Roots. A common metaphor of the biblical authors is to nurture the root system of our lives so that we can be a greater blessing to others in our public lives: "Blessed is the one... whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers" (Psalm 1:1-3, see also Jeremiah 17:7-8). Roots must grow deep and anchor the tree in nutrient-rich soil, quite literally laying the groundwork for the fruit that is to come. Just as trees have a visible, above-ground presence and a hidden, below-ground foundation, our public lives are what is visible to the world. However, the true health and vitality of our lives depend on what's beneath the surface—the depth of our roots and the stability and nourishment they provide. The biblical authors emphasise the root of our spirituality—and indeed, it is the main root. However, in this journey, we will also explore the physical, emotional, and mental roots. Though these may initially seem less "spiritual," we will discover that the Bible places enormous value on them, too.

If your outflow exceeds your inflow, the shortfall will be your downfall. If you fail to refill those tanks, forget to sharpen that saw, run out of fuel, or neglect the habits that personally nourish the root system of your life, your capacity to bless and serve others in your family, church, and world will diminish—even as your capacity for misery will expand.

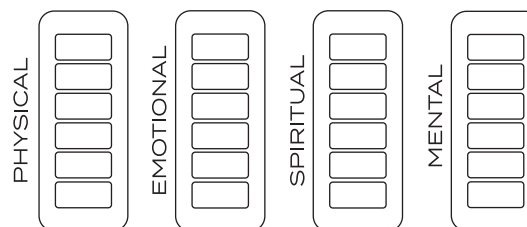
Which metaphor for personal renewal do you prefer? Can you think of another?

Write down the chapters of your personal Bible readings. Look at page 59 or 60 for optional reading plans.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

SELF-CARE

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God. (Acts 20:28)

There was once a man who owned a remarkable goose. Each day, this extraordinary goose laid a single golden egg. These eggs were of immense value, and the man had become quite wealthy from collecting them. However, as time passed, the man grew impatient and greedy. He wanted to have all the golden eggs at once instead of waiting for one each day. He reasoned that if he could acquire all the eggs immediately, he could amass a vast fortune in no time. One day, he could bear it no longer. He grabbed a knife and killed the goose, thinking he could extract all the golden eggs from within. To his shock and dismay, he found nothing inside the goose but ordinary innards. He had sacrificed the source of his wealth for immediate gain and ended up with nothing.

This classic Aesop's fable serves as a powerful reminder of how we often make demands on our bodies, minds, emotions, and spirits without considering the need for their sustained nourishment. We live in a fast-paced world where the pursuit of immediate results and gratification is common. Chasing success, we too often overwork our bodies, overload our minds, ignore our emotions, and neglect our spirits. Like the man who killed the goose, we unwisely sacrifice our well-being and long-term usefulness for short-term gains.

Self-care supports other-care. Paul's words in Acts 20:28 to the Ephesian church leaders emphasise a dual responsibility: to care for themselves and for the spiritual well-being of the congregation. Just as shepherds cannot effectively care for the flock if they are exhausted or ill, church leaders must prioritise their own well-being. The same principle applies to all of us who wish to fulfill our callings and responsibilities in the world. Caring for ourselves allows us to care for others. Sustainable service and success require nurturing and nourishing all aspects of ourselves—body, mind, emotions, and spirit—rather than depleting them for rapid achievements and results.

Self-care is not selfishness. LR Knost reminds us: "Taking care of yourself doesn't mean me first; it means **me too.**" Of course, self-care can be selfish if we are fixated only on personal happiness and ease of life. But there is a kind of self-care that is the necessary twin to the service of others. Sometimes, we feel guilty for taking time to do things that fill our tanks when there are so many responsibilities that await us. This is especially true of parents and those who work in compassion-related fields.

We cannot give what we do not have. We must insist that, as far as is realistically possible, we live in the top 30% of our tank. If our tank is empty, we have nothing to offer anyone else. We care for ourselves precisely because we want to be able to care for others. If we allow our tank to run dry, we inadvertently end up hurting or depriving many other people: self-neglect leads to neglect of others. Over the long haul, there cannot be more outflow than there is inflow.

In all this, prevention is better than cure. It is better to refuel our tank long before it runs out. With our emotional, physical, and spiritual tanks full, we will be more discerning about our priorities and choices, less inclined to chase after anything and everything, and more able to pace ourselves. We will also find that our yoke is easier—that's an idea we will come back to tomorrow.

Do you think of self-care as a form of selfishness or as crucial for the service of others?

Write down the chapters of your personal Bible readings. Look at page 59 or 60 for optional reading plans.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

YOKE

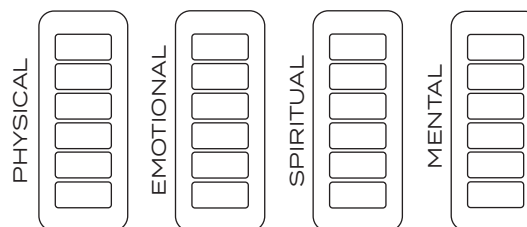
Come to me . . . and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28–30)

Following John Wesley's evangelistic success, when the early Methodists congregated in small group meetings, the first question they asked one another was, "How is it with your soul?" The question is even more crucial today. Some of us are aware that we are gradually losing fragments of our essence on a daily basis, and we are deeply concerned about the prospect of reaching a breaking point. Others among us are managing reasonably well for now, but we're uncertain about how much longer we can sustain ourselves. Into this sense of vulnerability comes Jesus' invitation to find rest in Him, in His easy yoke.

What does it mean to take Jesus' yoke? A yoke binds two farming animals together for a common purpose. In spiritual terms, Jesus wants us to bind our lives to Him. He desires to be our pace-setter, guide, strength, and leader. This doesn't mean that our lives and callings will always be easy—in the words of John Mark Comer, "An easy life isn't an option; an easy yoke is." It means that underneath whatever we give ourselves to is a restful heart—not a striving one.

To yoke ourselves to Christ, we first have to realise how we have yoked ourselves to our culture of self-validation. One of the reasons we are weary, burdened, exhausted and empty is that we feel a restless need to prove ourselves. We think that if we've got a lot of things to do, places to go, stuff to get done, and people to see, we must be important, right? We're driven along by this yearning to validate ourselves through our performance. Philosophers have coined this as "ontological lightness". It means the feeling that we don't have a self or an identity but that we think we can add substance to our core by activity. In a performance-orientated world like ours, the moment we stop doing—stop working, stop going from event to event, stop socialising—we feel restless, empty—an "ontological lightness". There's nothing left of us. We might be called human 'beings', but that's no longer true. We're now human

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



'doings', addicted to moving, achieving, performing, and filling up our time, all so we can validate our worth. We're hamsters on a spinning wheel, trying to look poised to others, of course, all while we breathlessly spin that wheel.

Now, let's consider the depth of the rest Jesus offers. It's not just about clearing our schedules or creating margin; it addresses the restlessness deep within our souls. Saint Augustine wisely said that our hearts are restless until they find rest in Jesus. Jesus is the One who can validate us, who can fill our restless souls with His love, forgiveness, purpose and presence. The Greek word "rest" is "anapauso". Notice the second part of the word: it is the root word for our English word "pause". When we come to Jesus, and unyoke ourselves from our activity-addicted culture, we will find that Jesus is the breathing room our soul needs.

Take a moment to reflect on your life. Are you weary, burdened, or restless? Jesus offers rest that goes beyond what the world can provide. Embrace His easy yoke. Bind your life to His. Let Him be your guide, strength and source of true validation. Stick with Jesus. Keep company with Him. Stay attuned to Him. You will be busy at times, of course, and neither your life nor your calling will be easy—but this is what you will find: you will be free from the needless strain that comes from going it alone. His yoke will be easy, and His burden will be light.

Are you letting Christ or your performance validate you?

Write down the chapters of your personal Bible readings. Look at page 59 or 60 for optional reading plans.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

OVERLOAD

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened ...
(Matthew 11:28)*

One way to miss the easy yoke Jesus offers is to accept overload as a way of life. We will explore that concept over the next three days.

First, a disclaimer. For many of us, we might be lazy and under-committed, spending too much time on trivial things. There are more ways we can serve others, for example.

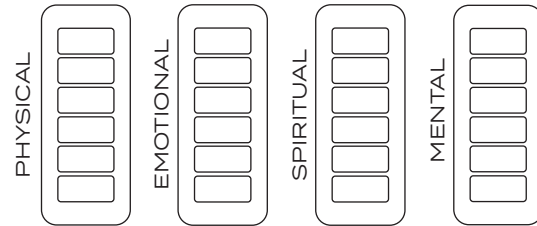
But for others of us, we may need to pull back. In the fast-paced world we live in today, a societal epidemic is on the rise: overload. Our society is currently experiencing a rising tide of distress. We're exhausted and struggling to keep up, besieged by anxiety and fatigue. The daily barrage of events seems beyond our control, leaving us perpetually on edge. Many of us are grappling with exhaustion and distress, struggling to keep up with the demands of our lives. It's a feeling of being overwhelmed, and often, we can't quite pinpoint the exact cause.

To understand this phenomenon better, let's define three crucial terms: load, overload, and limits.

Load. Load refers to the commitments and responsibilities that we bear, whether they are chosen or thrust upon us. Galatians 6:5 succinctly reminds us that "Each of us must bear our own load." In essence, everyone has responsibilities they need to carry, tasks that need to be accomplished, callings that must be fulfilled, and relationships that need to be fostered.

Overload. Overload occurs when our commitments and responsibilities surpass our limits. Ask people about their biggest stressors, and you'll often hear, "There's just too much to do and not enough time to do it all." Our culture tends to encourage adding more details and demands to our lives, pursuing the "one more" mentality—whether it's one more job, debt, purchase, or decision. However, we all have limits to how much we can handle before we reach a breaking point. Overloading, overscheduling, and overextending happen when our requirements exceed our capacity, leading to feelings of disorganisation and frustration.

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Limits. Limits refer to the amount of commitments and responsibilities we can cope with.

Understanding the concept of overloading necessitates grasping the law of limits. While physical limits and time limits are measurable and easier to gauge, performance limits, emotional limits, and mental limits are more elusive. Often, we are reluctant to accept these limits. It's similar to how a person can physically carry only one other individual, but emotionally carrying others in relationships seldom has a clearly defined limit until we have already exceeded it.

What are the effects of overload? Overload diminishes our capacity to love. Our relationships suffer. We may physically be present with our loved ones, but our mind remains elsewhere. Also, when we find ourselves overloaded, stress levels skyrocket. While there's such a thing as good stress, or "eustress," which can motivate and bring out the best in us, there's also "distress," which is the type of pressure that brings out our worst.

Burning the candle at both ends isn't a very bright thing to do. We must recognise that humans are not infinite. We have inherent limits, and these limits are not our enemies; overload is. God designed us to live within certain boundaries for our well-being.

Are there any signs your load has exceeded your limits?

Write down the chapters of your personal Bible readings. Look at page 59 or 60 for optional reading plans.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

LIMITS

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Dream big, work hard. Refuse to be outworked. Chase perfection, catch excellence. Rise above the ordinary. Be relentless in your pursuit of success. Don't just meet expectations; exceed them. Be better than the best. More! Better! Faster! Be a hero.

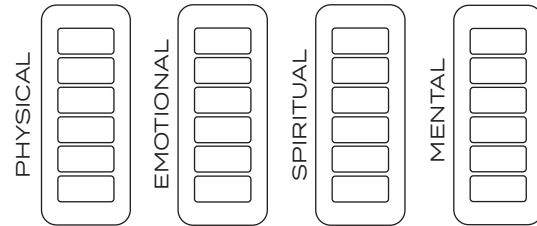
Many of us think we're superhuman, believing these maxims of our day. However, they only tell half a story. Of course, we can become more, achieve more, and squeeze more into our day or week, but part of taking on Jesus' easy yoke and light burden is understanding that Jesus will not often ask you to take on more than you are capable of doing. We must live with an understanding of our limits.

Everything in life has limits: relationships, governments, buildings, brains, and organisations. Our limits include our bodies—we can be in only one place at a time; our minds—we don't even know what we don't know; our giftings—God has only given each of us a few; our personalities and emotional wiring—some people have far more capacity than we do. If we live within the boundaries in each of these areas, there is room to flourish within them.

It's okay to push your limits occasionally. If you overextend yourself and experience negative consequences, not all is lost—learn and grow from the experience. The problem is when you habitually overdo it because of an exaggerated sense of yourself. In that case, you may be pushing yourself harder and faster than God ever intended and harming your soul, body, closest relationships, and capacity to serve God's purposes over the long haul. When your life's load crosses your limits, the result is distress.

Even Jesus lived acutely within His limits, though He was tempted to transcend them. After not eating for 40 days, the devil suggested He turn rocks into bread: "Hunger is not something You of all people need to feel!" Then Satan takes Jesus to the temple's apex and tells Him to jump and be caught by angels: "If people can see You are superman, then they will surely believe." The final temptation says, "Worship me, and take all the glory right now, right here—no need to die on a cross." But Jesus would

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



not try to skip over the limitations of His flesh-and-blood existence. How different we are: like Eve, when tempted by Satan to "be like God," we try to deny our human limits and climb upon the throne of divine invincibility.

By the power of the Spirit, we can get much done for God. We have "the treasure" of God's power. However, as we give ourselves to the call of God, it's important we also face up to the dust and the jar of our inbuilt limitations: we might be naturally anxious or have inadequate understanding or less natural energy and resilience than others. Our capacity may be at a low point while we parent small kids or troubled teenagers or recover from a past wound. Thankfully, the God who calls us also "knows our frame; he is mindful that we are but dust." (Psalm 103:14)

We are not infinite, immortal, or invincible. We are not an island (we need others) nor are we irreplaceable (others will one day do what we now do).

In no way does this minimise the treasure of God's power within you—but it takes seriously the fact that you are but a jar that will crumble to dust. There's a liberty when we accept this fact. It also helps us focus on our unique callings—Jesus did not ask Peter why he was not more like John. In fact, Jesus once rebuked Peter for envying John's calling: when Peter asked, "Lord what about him?" Jesus replied, "What is that to you? You must follow me." (John 21:21–22)

How aware of your limits are you?

Write down the chapters of your personal Bible readings. Look at page 59 or 60 for optional reading plans.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

MARGIN

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? (Luke 14:28)

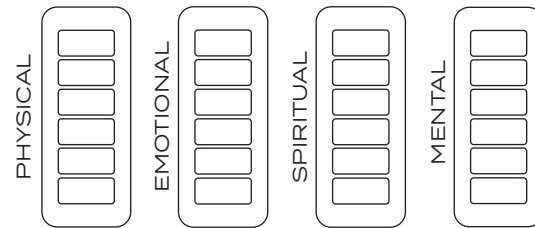
When we find ourselves in a lifestyle of overwhelm, we may wonder how we got to this point. Perhaps we had tried so hard to commit to responsibilities that were within our capacity. Why do we feel like we're drowning now? A maritime analogy answers the question.

Cargo ships have something called the Plimsoll Line. This is the line around the carrier that, depending on the weight of its load, marks the maximum load that the ship can safely carry in stormy waters. In the centuries before it was introduced, a typical boat would be loaded to the limit in the harbour. All would seem fine until a storm came. Though the boat looked like it had a manageable load in port, big waves would easily swamp over the sides and threaten to sink it. The Plimsoll Line, however, anticipated the big waves and in doing so, provided a margin to keep the ship afloat.

What a powerful insight! We tend to forget that life usually demands more from us than we expect. We then look at the empty spaces in our calendars and the extra capacity we imagine we have, and we commit in advance all our time and efforts. And sure, if the waters are calm and all goes to plan, we do manage. The problem, however, is that there are often surprise challenges and setbacks or unexpected interruptions and complications. If we are already maxed out, we find ourselves dangerously overloaded. Meanwhile, all of this could have been avoided if we had simply organised our calendars and committed to responsibilities in a way that allowed for more margin—space between our load and our limit.

If overload comes from committing over our limit, then margin comes from committing a little below it—in expectation of surprise loads and storms that will probably come upon us. This may seem counterintuitive when we're planning during a calm season, but the shipwrecked lives of those who have gone before reminding us to expect the unexpected and to anticipate the storms that are bound to come.

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



To be healthy, we require a margin in at least four areas: emotional energy, physical energy, time, and finances. Emotionally, we have seldom been so stressed, so exhausted. Physically, too many of us are overfed, underactive, and sleep-deprived. Time-wise, many of us are busy and worn out; financially, struggling to stay afloat with record debt levels. We are so used to living without margin that we often don't know anything else. But once we get a taste of it, we won't want to ever go back.

Fight for margin in your life. Here are some ideas to do that: Become more assertive and say 'no' to some stuff. Clarify with your boss what is not in your job description. Write up a personal not-to-do list (and share it with your small group for accountability). Add to that list things like getting off social media and setting up an automated response to emails that you will respond in a day or two. Reduce spending on nice but not necessary things. If you have kids, reduce the amount of extramural stuff you sign them up for. And so on.

Be prudent. Loading our lives up to but not beyond our Plimsoll line is not a fear-based approach to life. It is a form of foresight and wisdom, like that of the tower-builder Jesus speaks about. "The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it" (Proverbs 27:12).

Do you create margin between your commitments and your limit?

Write down the chapters of your personal Bible readings. Look at page 59 or 60 for optional reading plans.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

WEEK TWO

PHYSICAL RENEWAL

*Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;
But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar
on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk
and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:30–31)*

BODY

It is exciting to think God actually wants to relate to us in our bodies, loving our idiosyncratic shape and size, our bodily quirks, our physical appearance. God wants to love and interact with us not only spiritually but in our entire being. (Nancy Pearcey, Love Thy Body)

One reason to care for your body is that God places an astonishingly high value on it. He could have made us like the angels—spirits without bodies floating around in spiritual space. Instead, He created us with bodies in a space-matter universe. In Scripture, body and soul are two sides of a coin, the inner life of the soul expressing itself in the outer life of the body. This is why the Psalmist prays, *“My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You.” (Psalm 63:1 NKJV).*

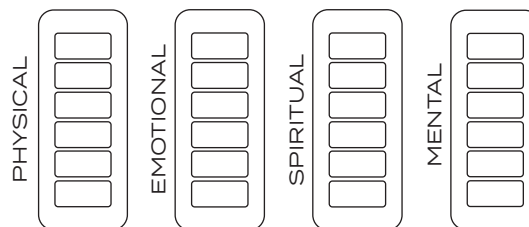
The early church’s high view of the body was radically countercultural. Various philosophies—especially Gnosticism—disparaged the material world as intrinsically evil. Gnosticism saw the body as an unruly piece of matter. The goal of salvation was for the soul to finally escape its physical prison in death. A Greek pun says the body (Greek: soma) is a tomb (Greek: sema).

Consider how revolutionary Christianity was. It proclaimed the material realm—especially the human body—as the handiwork of a loving God. After making light and sky, land and sea, sun and moon, birds and fish, wild and tame animals, He says, “It is good.” After making human beings—repurposed “dust” with God’s own “breath” (Genesis 2:7)—He says, “Very good!” (Genesis 1:31). CS Lewis rebukes those who think that bodies are “crude and unspiritual” by saying, “There is no good trying to be more spiritual than God. God never meant man to be a purely spiritual creature. ... He likes matter. He invented it.”

In Gnosticism, the highest deity wanted nothing to do with the material world. What a scandal, then, that the transcendent God broke into history as a baby laying in a manger. “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14) so that “all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9).

Jesus never treated His body as something to shake off—it was the instrument through which He achieved our salvation when “he bore our sins in his

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



body on the cross” (1 Peter 2:24). His crucifixion was the means by which He purchased not only our soul but our body: “You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Just when the Gnostics assumed the crucified Son of God would surely make His getaway from His bodily existence, shock upon shock, He returned in His glorified body. His friends could touch, embrace, and feed Him. Then, forty days later, He ascended to heaven—in His body!

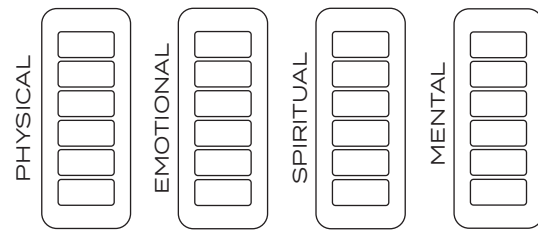
For the Christian, salvation is not mainly about going to heaven when you die. In the end, God promises to redeem our bodies. “The body that is sown is perishable; it [will be] raised imperishable. ... It is sown a natural body; it [will be] raised a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:42, 44). The term “spiritual body” does not describe what our bodies will be made of, but what will animate and empower them: the Holy Spirit. Augustine, the church father, explains, “They will be spiritual not because they will cease to be bodies but because they will be sustained by a quickening Spirit.” Pearcey agrees: “At the end of the great drama, we will not be floating around in heaven as wispy, filmy spirits. We will have physical feet firmly planted on a renewed physical earth.”

How do these insights change your view of your body?

TODAY’S BIBLE READING

EAT

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened. Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, 'Cursed be anyone who eats food today!' That is why the men are faint. (1 Samuel 14:27–28)

God provides food for your sustenance. King Saul had forbidden the weary Israelite soldiers from eating until evening. Unaware of this decree and weakened by hunger, his son Jonathan dipped his staff into honey and tasted it, which invigorated him. Reenergised for battle, he and his armour-bearer defeated an entire group of Philistine soldiers, turning the tide of the war in favour of the Israelites.

Praise God for the nutrients found in food: carbohydrates for energy in our brains and muscles; proteins essential for the growth, repair, and maintenance of muscles, organs, and enzymes; vitamins and minerals that aid metabolic reactions and support our immune function; and water, crucial for proper digestion, nutrient transport, and temperature regulation.

God provides food for your satisfaction. Although God didn't need to make us enjoy food, He did so anyway. Jonathan experienced joy when he tasted the honey, echoing Proverbs 24:13, which advises, "Eat honey, for it is good, and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste." We can pray, "You provide food to every creature. Your love endures forever" (Psalm 136:25). In a way, tasty and nourishing food is God's love made tangible.

Ask and thank God for your food. Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). Dependence on God is better than assuming that food will always be readily available. Let's remember to both ask and thank God for our food: "Let them give thanks to the LORD ... for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things" (Psalm 107:8-9). We should also be mindful of the many people involved in bringing this food to our table.

And when enjoying honey, let's not forget to thank

the 1286 bees that dedicated their entire lives to collecting nectar from a million flowers to fill that jar.

Place your trust in the Provider of food, not the food itself. Food should not be our primary source of comfort and stress relief. Instead, during challenging times, it's better to turn to God for solace: "The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite, but the belly of the wicked suffers want" (Proverbs 13:25 ESV).

Lastly, opt for healthier food choices. In Daniel 1, Daniel and his friends serve as examples of how faith can motivate healthier and more disciplined eating. They declined the excessive palace food and, in a ten-day experiment of consuming only water and vegetables, appeared "healthier and better nourished" (v 15) than those who ate the palace food.

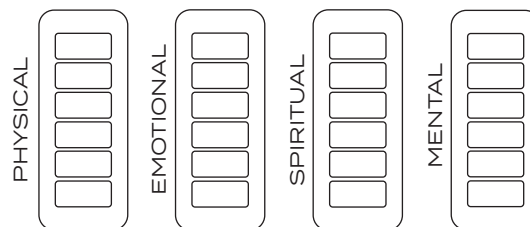
Minimise consumption of foods filled with added sugars, excessive salts, unhealthy fats, artificial additives, or deep-fried, fast, or highly processed foods. Instead, choose real foods like unprocessed meats and fish, eggs, fresh fruits and vegetables, unrefined grains, and nuts—anything that recently grew or lived. This aligns with the type of food God promised in the Promised Land: "a land of [unrefined] wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey" (Deuteronomy 8:8).

Do you express gratitude to God when you eat? How can you make healthier food choices?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

SLEEP

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. (Matthew 8:24)

If the Son of God needed to sleep, how much more do we? And if Jesus knew how to sleep restfully even in the midst of life's chaos, He can teach us, too. More than any other activity, we sleep. Our Creator has decreed that a third of each day—totalling many decades of our lives – our heads are on a pillow.

Sleep scientists say we need at least 7 hours of uninterrupted sleep every night.

Why do we need enough sleep? It restores our bodies from the previous day's wear and tear. It consolidates information and forms memories from the day. It strengthens our immune system and helps us to process and regulate emotions. It reduces stress and irritability and improves mood and emotional well-being. It also provides the mental sharpness we will need for another day of attentiveness, decision-making, and problem-solving.

Sleep is also a spiritual reminder. We can sleep tight because we know that God is wide awake: like David, we can say, "I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me" (Psalm 3:5). Sleep reminds us every day we are not God. "Once a day God sends us to bed like patients with a sickness—" says John Piper, "a chronic tendency to think we are in control and that our work is indispensable. To cure us of this disease, God turns us into helpless sacks of sand once a day." Sleep is God's way of saying, "Your life's provision, progress, and fruitfulness do not require your constant busyness." Or as Solomon prayed, "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. ... In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for God grants sleep to those he loves" (Psalm 127:1-2).

Sleep spiritually prepares us. As John Ortberg, writing on the subject of spiritual disciplines says, "I have discovered I have a very hard time thinking and feeling and acting like Jesus when I lack sleep." Sleep is a form of spiritual preparation that equips us to follow where Christ leads. Getting proper rest is therefore one of the most important daily spiritual

disciplines.

Improve your sleep habits. Professional trampolinists understand well the importance of jumping in the middle of the trampoline. To reach higher heights, they try to go deeper as they land. Sleep is like that—the deeper and longer it is, the better our next day will be. Each jump—each sleep—sets a person up for a better one the next evening.

Avoid bad evening habits that hurt our sleep: don't consume too much alcohol or sugar, or go to bed too late and at haphazard times, or (so common in our age) watch a screen too near to bedtime. You will sleep better if you exercise during the day, reduce your intake of sleep-damaging substances like caffeine (in the second half of the day) and sugar (at night), avoid TV or smartphone screens for at least an hour before bedtime (thereby allowing for our brain's pre-pillow release of melatonin to help us sleep better), and have a cool, quiet, and dark room. Also, go to bed at the same time every day, even on weekends—perhaps setting an alarm for bedtime.

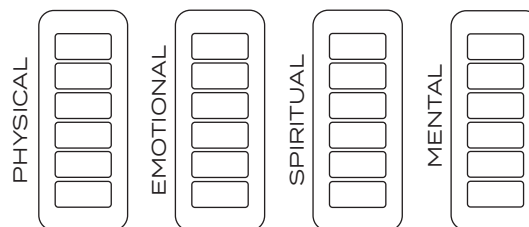
Finally, ask God for sleep—as with all His gifts, ask your Father during your bedtime prayers for nourishing, restful sleep. Since anxiety can rob your rest, also use the time to turn your troubles over to Jesus, who said, "Do not worry about tomorrow" (Matthew 6:34).

Do you thank God for sleep? How can you improve your sleep habits?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

MOVE

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? (Jeremiah 12:5)

In the last few decades, we have witnessed the emergence of sedentary lifestyles characterised by prolonged periods of sitting, whether it be in front of screens, at desks, on couches, or in cars. The physical consequences of such a lifestyle include weight gain and associated health problems such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and certain forms of cancer. Also, it leads to elevated blood pressure, higher levels of "bad" cholesterol, and an increased risk of heart disease and stroke. Additionally, it can result in musculoskeletal issues, including back pain, neck strain, and posture-related problems. All of these factors contribute to a higher risk of a shorter life. It has been said that "sitting is the new smoking"—with each hour spent seated reducing life expectancy by 22 minutes, compared to 11 minutes lost per cigarette.

A few verses touch on the importance of physical exercise. For instance, Paul writes to the church in Corinth, a city known for hosting the renowned Isthmian Games, which featured various athletic competitions such as foot races and combat sports. Paul states, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave..." (1 Corinthians 9:24–27). While Paul in this passage uses exercise as a metaphor, he acknowledges the importance of goal-setting, discipline, and motivation in exercising effectively.

Why does the Bible provide limited emphasis on exercise? The reason is simple: physical fitness was an integral part of life in the ancient world. Consider Jesus' travels, for example; as a Galilean Jew, He made two or three trips to and from Jerusalem each year, covering about 300 kilometres on foot during each return journey. Although the ancients may have faced challenges related to hygiene and medical knowledge, they maintained their physical

fitness through daily activities.

Another verse that highlights the significance of maintaining good physical shape: "Physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:8). What is the value of physical training? It leads to a stronger heart, lower blood pressure, improved circulation, increased metabolism, better posture and form, greater bone density, reduced stress, improved mood and mental health, a better night's sleep, and an extended life.

Dr Michael Mol, a Christian doctor and health advocate, asserts, "For spiritual health, there's the need for faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love. For physical health, there's the need for eating, sleeping, and moving—and the greatest of these is moving. Take care of your body, and you will discover energy you never knew you had. You will work better, run better, feel better, heal better, and live better. Exercise is the miracle drug. It's also addictive and free."

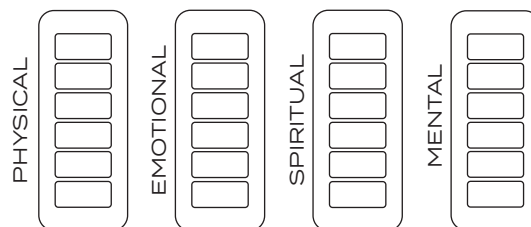
When asked which exercises should be incorporated, he advises, "Every week, aim for two or three sessions—adding up to at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise. This exercise should be intense enough that you struggle to hold a conversation while doing it. If you need extra motivation, listen to music, as it can make the exercise feel at least 10% easier. Engage in exercises that you enjoy, and if possible, exercise in the morning as it can boost your mood for the rest of the day. Additionally, keep moving throughout the day, for instance, by parking farther from your destination. Lastly, do not forget the importance of weight training or resistance exercises, as inactive adults experience an 8% loss of muscle mass per decade, and these activities help maintain muscle and bone density."

How can you incorporate more movement into your daily and weekly routines?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

PACE

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. (Mark 6:30–32)

These disciples had just returned from a high-adrenaline mission—demons cast out, sickness healed, lives transformed. They were eager to share all they had accomplished and encountered with Jesus. The disciples, barely having a moment to catch their breath, found themselves plunged back into the chaotic demands of needy people. One group would leave, and another would arrive, incessantly seeking their presence and help. The disciples became so busy in serving and ministering to others that they forgot to take time for themselves—to eat, to rest, to breathe.

And in that moment, what did Jesus say? Did He rebuke them, saying, “Work harder, you lazy people!?” No, Jesus cares more about His workers than the work they do. He was concerned about the relentless pace of their lives.

In our modern world, the term “busy” seems to define us. Work, exercise, email, sports, homework, social media, shopping, blogs, TV, work again, and if you have them, kids—almost all of us use the word “busy” to describe ourselves. Many of us may be wealthy in material goods, but we are impoverished when it comes to time. In some third-world countries, people remark that Westerners wear their gods on their wrists—referring to our constant obsession with time. Elevator companies have even observed that the CLOSE button wears out more quickly than the others due to our pressing of that button in elevators. Our society is constantly hurrying, and even those of us with more laid-back tendencies are becoming conditioned to this fast-paced culture.

To be clear, busyness itself isn’t inherently wrong. We are meant to be busy doing what God has called us to do—working, raising families, or serving in our church. Some of us are in exceptionally busy seasons of life, such as caring for young children or embarking on new work ventures. The problem arises when busyness becomes continual overbusyness. The problem is that this constant rushing from

one task to another, meeting deadlines, and managing multiple responsibilities can cause chronic stress, poor sleep quality, fatigue, increased susceptibility to illness, and poor eating and exercise habits. And that’s not even considering its impact on our relationships with God and others.

What drives our relentless pace? Part of it is FOMO (the Fear of Missing Out). We see the exciting lives and experiences others are having on platforms like Facebook or Instagram, and we fear missing out on the latest trends, events, or adventures. Another factor is the expectation of constant availability and accessibility. Technology has accelerated our cultural expectations, and we are now irritated if someone doesn’t reply to an email within hours. Smartphones have blurred the lines between personal and work life, making us constantly accessible. There’s also an addiction to adrenaline. We’ve grown accustomed to the rush of adrenaline that comes from moving quickly, multitasking, and always being on the go. We’re addicted to the need for speed, and it’s taking a toll on our well-being.

What did Jesus do when He saw His disciples caught up in this frenzy? He said, “Enough!” And they listened. They got into the boat with Him, leaving the craziness behind. To those of us caught in the same whirlwind, can you hear the Lion of Judah roaring over your life the word: “Enough!” It may be the time to get off the hamster wheel and into the boat with Jesus.

What is your pace of life? How often do you use the word “busy”?

TODAY’S BIBLE READING

PLAY

Jesus said, "Look at the birds ... See how the flowers of the field grow" (Matthew 6:26, 28)

He was a man on a mission, to be sure, but the Son of God also had time to watch the birds and smell the flowers. In these words, He commends the same to His disciples. It once concerned Him that they were so busy helping people that "they did not even have a chance to eat" (Mark 6:31). The Greek word for "chance" (eukairoun) can be translated as "leisure" (KJV). The prefix (eu) means good and joins to the word for appointed time (kairos)—God "appoints" for us "good times"—enjoyable and nourishing moments in the midst of the demands of life.

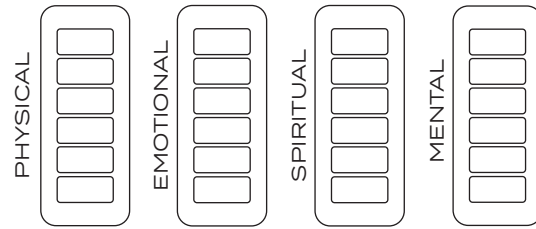
In Protestant-dominated countries, societies tend to embrace a strong work ethic. And sure, God commissions and calls us to get things done. But a life lived well does more than achieve goals and fulfil work and spiritual obligations. Books of the Bible such as Nehemiah focus on work—the rebuilding of walls. But others like Song of Songs focus on pleasure, joy, and bonding.

When you're rushing, so busy gulping down your food, you forget to savour the taste. Our physical senses—sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch—are given to us by God to enjoy His creation. "I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk," says the lover in Song of Songs 5:1.

We too quickly see the relishing of creation as a means only of refuelling, so we can—as soon as possible—get back to work, doing something "useful"—the real purpose of our life. When we think like this, we end up saying to ourselves during respites in the day or week or year, "There's so much to be done. I feel a bit guilty. But I will later pay for this rest with the work that it gives me energy for." But wait! If we read Genesis 1 correctly, it is not work but rest that is the goal of creation. Each day of creation ends with the Creator enjoying His handiwork. On day seven He enjoys the "eukairoun" to revel in the marvels of His works. As David Atkinson puts it in his commentary on Genesis 1-11, "What is God's rest? Is it not delight in His creation? Is it not looking with joy on His world and saying, 'This is good!'"

As His image-bearers, we learn that joy, fun, and play in God's good world are a goal in itself. It is not

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



a means to an end; it's an end with its own meaning. Thomas Aquinas, a medieval scholar, summed it up well: "God plays. God creates playing. And man should play if he is to live as humanly as possible and to know reality since it is created by God's playfulness."

Jesus not only enjoyed the flowers and the birds. Being present to them, He was also present to the Father who revealed insights about God's ability to provide and to make us truly beautiful people (Matthew 6:25-34). An 18th-century revivalist and theologian, Jonathan Edwards, said that the child of God should specialise in enhancing earthly joy with spiritual joy: "The earthly comforts of the Christian are also very much sweetened by the consideration of the love of God, that God is their Father and friend, and gives them these blessings from love to them, and because he delights in them."

Sunshine, pets, laughter, treats, walks, runs, reading fiction, picnics, games, sharing stories, sunsets, music, stargazing, art, gardening, beaches, baking, dancing, banter, and so on—these are God's precious gifts. Prioritise them. Respond to them not with guilt as if they are wasted time, but gratitude for God's gift of "eukairoun." And as you appreciate them, who knows what your Father may teach you through them?

Do you still know how to play?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

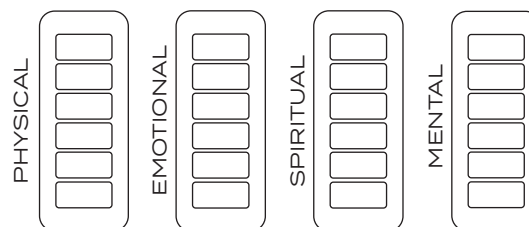
WEEK THREE

EMOTIONAL RENEWAL

*The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.
(Psalm 34:18)*

SINKHOLE

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." (1 Kings 19:3–4)

A sinkhole is a sudden ground collapse caused by dissolving rocks beneath the surface. The underground void slowly grows until the surface can no longer support the weight. Suddenly, the hidden emptiness becomes obvious to all.

In 1 Kings 19:1-4, a sinkhole suddenly opens up in Elijah's life. Though he had not realised it, prolonged exertion had been carving out his soul for some time. This comes as a shock in the story, for 1 Kings 17–18 gives the impression that Elijah is invincible. But then a final straw—a simple threat from the corrupt queen Jezebel—causes him to cave in. Overwhelmed by fear, loneliness, and despair, he flees to the wilderness, his inner life imploded. He collapses beneath a solitary broom tree, his body trembling with fatigue. He pleads for death, unwilling—no, unable—to carry on.

Notice all the signs of over-extension and personal depletion that have become so common in 21st-century life: Like Elijah, when we're depleted, we become irrational, unable to be objective about what's happening in our world. Like him, we may feel hopeless, sure that things will only get worse. The peace and joy that once marked our lives are nowhere to be found. Feelings of worthlessness and defeat cause us to withdraw from people closest to us (notice how Elijah rejects his God-given life-assistant in Beersheba). Bitter towards life, God, others, or even ourselves, we sign ourselves out of any further service to God and others.

The art of emotional self-awareness consists of answering three questions:

First, what am I feeling? Is it fear? Am I disappointed? Sad? Lonely? Dejected? Angry? Research has proven that if we experience a surge of distress or anxiety, by merely verbally labelling our negative emotions, we may reduce stress by half. Dan Siegel, a leading professor of psychiatry, coined the effect: "what we name, we tame." However,

taming pain is not the same as terminating it. Especially with sad feelings, once we name them, we must not then try to abruptly shake them off. Psychologists also speak of learning to "sit with our pain"—allowing ourselves to feel what we feel.

Second, what brought this feeling on? Identifying triggers makes it possible to come up with ways to manage this situation better as well as to be more self-aware next time a similar trigger occurs.

Third, who can I ask for help? Whether through counselling, a close friend, or support groups, there are resources available to assist us on our journey. It does us no good to pretend our intense feelings are not real. Some of us put on a façade of happiness, telling people, "I'm fine, thanks" when we're actually coming undone on the inside. No need to go it alone. We can do all things through Christ, yes—but this includes asking others for help.

On this point, if we ever, like Elijah, think of suicide or self-harm, let's talk to a trusted loved one who can help us get support right away! A study reveals that a trifecta of three crippling thoughts tends to converge in the suicidal mind: "I am alone" ... "I am a burden" ... "Things will never get better." Yet these thoughts are mostly a misinterpretation of reality—by reaching out to others, someone can help us find the care we need; the agency we actually have; and the hope that is around the corner.

Have you experienced an emotional sinkhole in your life? What are you feeling today?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

DRAINED

Elijah was a man just like us. (James 5:17)

Our ability to sustain effective service to God and others over the long haul hinges on our capacity to maintain emotional well-being. Like a car with a fuel gauge, we must monitor our emotional reserves to ensure they remain ample. When our emotional tanks are full, we are more buoyant, less anxious, more creative, loving, and playful. We make wiser decisions, have more to offer others, live out our values more authentically, produce our best work, and derive greater enjoyment from life's journey.

However, even the most resilient individuals can find themselves at an emotional breaking point if they neglect this self-awareness. The story of the prophet Elijah serves as a case study showing the dangers of extended emotional depletion. To comprehend Elijah's emotional descent, we must examine the events leading up to his breakdown in 1 Kings 17–18:

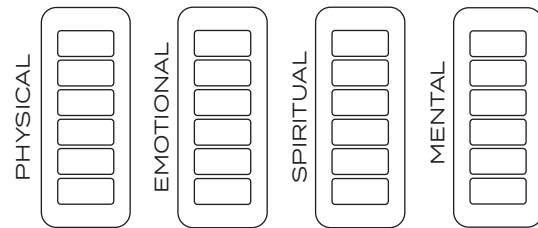
Initially, he confronts King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, who rule over a nation deeply entangled in the worship of the false god, Baal. Elijah boldly proclaims, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word" (17:1). His declaration sets in motion a severe drought and a chain of events that progressively saps Elijah's emotional reserves.

First, though dependent on God's provision for sustenance, this period of isolation amplifies his emotional burden, taking him away from human contact and intensifying his contemplation of his prophetic mission.

As the days stretch into weeks and the weeks into months, Elijah remains cut off from society. His status as a wanted man intensifies the oppressive shadow of Ahab and Jezebel's reign. The text later tells us that "there is not a nation or kingdom where Ahab has not sent someone to look for him" (18:10).

Elijah's experiences highlight several common emotional drains that can erode our well-being, too: Prolonged isolation can induce sadness, depression, and despair, compounding a sense of weariness. Long-term uncertainty can hinder planning, feed hopelessness, and contribute to deep exhaustion. The next episode in Elijah's journey introduces

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



further emotional strains. When the water and food supply ceases, Elijah is instructed to rely on a destitute widow and her son for hospitality and food. Tragedy strikes when the son falls seriously ill and eventually dies. The grieving widow accuses Elijah of coming to remind her of her sin and blames him for her son's death.

This episode introduces another set of emotional drains that affect Elijah and us: There's feeling responsible for others' suffering because of guilt or empathy; there's also the agony of witnessing innocent people in tragedy; and there's the being wrongfully accused or misunderstood and the sense of injustice, anger or hurt that this brings.

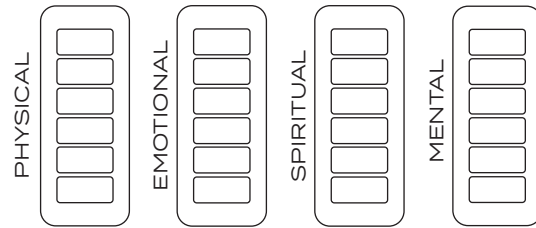
Tomorrow we will continue to analyze the circumstances that slowly crushed Elijah. For now, we ask: surely the average person is strong enough to survive these kinds of experiences? Sure—but let's not forget that it is when we experience several draining experiences back to back or on top of each other, with no space for decompression or healing in between, that our survival chances reduce. That is the story that is unfolding in Elijah's life—and sometimes in ours.

Can you relate to any of these draining experiences? What experiences have recently drained you?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

DEPLETED

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



The human spirit can endure in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear? (Proverbs 18:14)

1 Kings tells the story of Elijah's rapid rise in the service of God, which is paralleled by a serious decline in his personal well-being. His outflow surpasses his inflow, and the shortfall leads to his downfall. Yesterday and today, we are revisiting his story piece by piece while also attempting to imagine how each part may have drained his soul.

Next, in 1 Kings 17:19-23, Elijah assumes the responsibility of bringing a deceased child back to life. He takes the widow's son to the upper room where he was staying, fervently praying to God for a miracle. Elijah stretches himself out over the boy three times.

How does this emotionally drain Elijah? Throughout this ordeal, Elijah's empathy for the grieving widow, who had already suffered the loss of her husband, intensifies his emotional burden. Repeatedly calling out to God over many hours, with his body draped over the lifeless child, would have emotionally drained him. The Lord miraculously resurrected the boy—no doubt releasing a torrent of emotions, shifting abruptly from despair to joy, which in itself can be overwhelming. We, too, can become emotionally depleted when offering assistance to those facing dire circumstances, especially when we absorb their pain and suffering. On the flip side, even the excitement stemming from relief or success can be taxing.

Then, in 1 Kings 18:16-46, the narrative reaches its climax on Mount Carmel. Here, Elijah confronts King Ahab and the prophets of Baal in a high-stakes test of faith and power. Elijah boldly challenges the people to choose between God and Baal, orchestrating a showdown. The intensity of this ordeal is staggering, with Elijah watching as the false prophets desperately cry out to their gods, engaging in futile attempts to summon fire from heaven. Ultimately, divine fire consumes Elijah's offering, affirming his unwavering faith in Yahweh. Following this triumph, Elijah fervently pleads with God for rain, resulting in a miraculous shift in the weather and the end of the drought over Israel.

On a high, he taps into the power of the Spirit to outrun a chariot.

How does this sequence emotionally drain Elijah? Confronting Ahab and the false prophets in this high-stakes showdown would have been emotionally charged and tension-filled. Although Elijah's faith is ultimately vindicated, the emotional toll of the intense build-up and pressure of the moment would have been substantial. The same applies to his pleading for rain, especially after six unsuccessful attempts. The elation following such a prolonged and intense ordeal would have also been draining. Also, the physical feat of outrunning a chariot, although miraculous, would have exerted a toll on both his body and psyche. In our own lives, we, too, can experience emotional exhaustion from the weight of high-stakes endeavours, spiritual warfare, exhilarating highs, and from pushing ourselves beyond our limits.

Furthermore, we must recognise the personal cost of being in conflict with others, even if, as with Elijah, the conflict is necessary. Unless we are callous individuals, tension and disagreements with others create stress. Intense emotions like anger, frustration, hurt, and sadness can be exhausting to manage and navigate. Emotional burnout may result from working too hard, but more commonly it comes from enduring protracted, unresolved, and sometimes insurmountable conflicts with other people. It is in the drawn-out and often distressing interactions with others, where the constant friction and turmoil persist, that emotional burnout tends to find its most fertile ground.

Can you relate to any of these draining experiences? What experiences, not listed here, may have drained you?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

EMPTY

Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. (Isaiah 40:30, NLT)

Starting out with a desire to serve God and others is easy enough. The challenge comes in sustaining a lifelong service of God and people. If our outflow exceeds our inflow over a long period of time, we will become depleted.

Elijah is the Bible's most striking example of this. By the end of 1 Kings 18, having achieved amazing things for God's glory in his generation, he seems unstoppable. But then Queen Jezebel vows to kill him. Surely, he can shake this off? But no, this final blow shatters what little emotional resilience he has left. His implosion reveals that he had been running on empty.

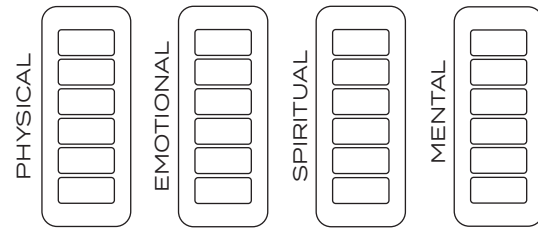
What are the signs you might be running on empty? Of course, Elijah is just one kind of personality type. This feeling of physical, emotional, and spiritual depletion manifests in different kinds of signs and behaviours for each of us. That said, here are some common indicators to look out for:

The lower our emotional tank, the more irritable, anxious, isolated, overwhelmed, dissatisfied, discouraged, withdrawn, exhausted, insecure, or numb we tend to feel. We may experience an upsurge of tears out of the blue. Lacking perspective, we lose our tempers at the slightest offence. We're short and testy with the people we live and work with. Lacking buoyancy and enthusiasm, we are driven along by toxic instincts like anger, jealousy, resentment, or the fear of failure. When our tanks are running low, we're less present to the people we love and have far less to give them. Sexual temptations that we can usually easily overcome seem to take on a new power.

Tasks and situations which we normally handle suddenly overwhelm us. Even work that once energised us feels now more like a burden. As our can-do confidence or self-starting mechanism falters, our work life may deteriorate too.

Alternatively, it may cause us to go into overdrive, working even harder as a means to cover up the emptiness inside us. This spirals us into the deadly cycle of working harder, feeling emptier, working even harder, feeling even emptier, working even harder, and ... crash!

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Feeling so low, the quality of our relationships and our physical health suffers—especially our sleep quality. Many, then, self-medicate and rely on addictive escape methods such as consuming food, alcohol, porn, or drugs, or becoming glued to our screens—binge-watching series or succumbing to the endless scroll on our social media feeds. Yet these “remedies” make us even more empty in the long run.

What is draining you? For Elijah, it was physical exhaustion, an emotional rollercoaster of ups and downs, the intense battle of wills, the adrenaline coursing through his veins, and the seismic spiritual warfare. It may be these or other things for you: Is it heavy responsibilities, health worries, financial stress, unresolved conflict, or a relational concern? Is it an unsustainable pace or too many back-to-back intensive outputs? Is it a season of adrenalised effort and success?

Perhaps it's your inability to influence decisions others are making that affect your schedule, assignments, or workload. Maybe it's a challenging stage of family life: you have young kids or teenagers; or an ageing parent has moved in? Or, it could be the emotionally draining people in your life who seem to have the power to make you feel negative about yourself and your situation. It could be a shattered dream, a devastating accident, the end of an intimate relationship, or the loss of a loved one.

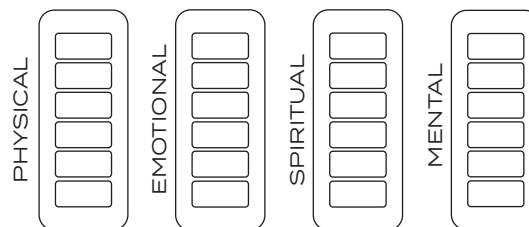
Whatever it is, do not feel bad about your ability to be drained—“Elijah was a man just like us” (James 5:17). You are not God. You cannot survive unlimited pressure and outflow. It's better to keep your eye on your emotional gauge and be alert to what is draining you.

Which of the indicators resonate with your experience? What is your current emotional state?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

RESTORED

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



So Elijah went from there and found Elisha. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. (1 Kings 19:19)

These confident actions occur following Elijah's collapse. His emotional tank is refilled, and after his breakdown, he emerges as a wiser version of himself, regaining his passion. He resumes God's work with zeal, such as throwing his cloak onto Elisha, a prophet who will become even greater than himself. Hope replaces despair, joy displaces sadness, and peace supplants anxiety. His inflow now surpasses his outflow, and he is prepared to once again bear much fruit for God.

There are five ways to restore our emotional vitality:

First, heed the signs—assess your emotional state, whether it's anxiety or peace, limping or dancing, exhaustion or energy.

Second, identify the sources of depletion. What are the outflows or leaks that are draining you?

Third, take responsibility. If our tank is running dry, we should initiate self-intervention: "Wisdom will lead a man or woman to anticipate danger and to take action" (Proverbs 27:12, *The Message*).

Fourth, address the leaks you can mend. Identify undesired outflows you can partially limit or completely seal. In most cases, we retain some control, whether it's saying no to excessive demands, addressing our tendency to derive self-worth from achievement, or the desperate need for others' approval. Do you need to end a draining relationship? Change an unhealthy work environment? Swallow your pride and seek help from others or delegate responsibilities? Or organise a meeting with a troublesome friend, colleague, boss, or relative to express concerns, make suggestions for improvement, establish boundaries, and clarify expectations?

Fifth, accept the leaks you cannot fix. Unfortunately, there are some drainers—be they things, people, or situations—that cannot be eliminated or even restricted. Paul had some constant drains in his life, and he asked God to remove them. God did not, but He promised Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul learnt to "boast in his weakness"—and he experienced

more of God's power resting on him. What are your unavoidable strains? For example, if you have young children, expect chaos until they're four or five. Some callings involve healing the hurting or leading the unruly—in other words, there is no end to the needs we are trying to meet. Accept these drainers as—using Paul's language—"weaknesses, hardships, ... difficulties" in your life through which "God's power" becomes evident.

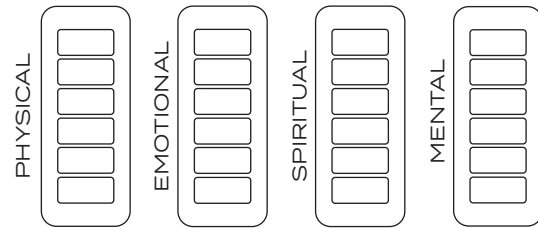
When overwhelmed or scared, let God whisper, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). Notice the four "I" statements in this promise—I am, I am, I will, I will—emphasising God's presence and strength. Focusing on your deficiencies and weaknesses in the face of life's challenges breeds fear, but trusting God in these circumstances allows His strength to prevail.

How can you apply these five principles to your emotional well-being?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

REPLENISHED

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish. (Jeremiah 31:25)

It's better to live with a refuelled tank—that makes for the more restful, creative, loving, playful, and prayerful version of yourself. Emotional outflows are guaranteed. Emotional inflows are not. As important as reducing needless outflows of energy is, you need to increase your streams of inflow too. Here are some ideas for what these inflows may be:

Spend time with people who refresh you. Paul says to Philemon (1:7), "Your love has given me great joy and encouragement because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people." People like Philemon show genuine concern for your well-being. They ask thoughtful questions and validate your thoughts and feelings. They usually have an expectation of God's goodness that inspires hope and resilience. They offer words of encouragement that boost your confidence. They believe in your abilities, but they also love you enough to provide constructive feedback. They are open about their own struggles and vulnerabilities, creating a safe space for you to be yourself. Since laughter is a powerful tool for increasing your energy, perhaps they have a good sense of humour and lighten your mood. Maybe they are role models who have achieved success or have overcome obstacles in their own lives. Of course, no one person can be all of this for you—you will need many people who each offer their own special gifts to your weary soul.

Go to the places that rejuvenate you. Is it being on a mountain, in your own garden, or taking a walk in the park? For many, being near the water, whether it's a beach, lake, river, or ocean, can have a calming effect. The sound of waves and the beauty of the water can lift your spirits. For others, spending time in natural settings such as forests or grasslands with their sights, sounds, and fresh air can be incredibly rejuvenating. For many, the cosy atmosphere of cafes and coffee shops—the aroma of freshly brewed coffee or tea in the air—can create a sense of comfort. For some, artistic and cultural spaces such as viewing art or cultural exhibits can stimulate creativity and a sense of wonder.

For a few, libraries and bookstores offer a quiet and contemplative environment for reading and self-reflection that can be uplifting.

Seek out activities that energise you. Is it swimming, cooking, camping, reading, hiking, gardening, biking, exercise, eating out with friends, or spending time alone? Think especially about how you use your evenings. Watching TV series may take your mind off work and worries, but they also tire your brain, making you a little more tired for the next day. Whereas an evening in which you talk over a meal, listen to music, play Scrabble, or read a book and get to bed early will energise you for the next day. Let's not forget things like prayer or worship that lift you up in your deepest core.

Do work that aligns with your gifts and interests. King Solomon writes that it's good and proper for us to find satisfaction—replenishment—in our labour (Ecclesiastes 2:24). Most jobs involve us doing at least some work that we do not enjoy or having to achieve things we do not value, or demand from us some effort in areas where we lack natural talent. However, as far as possible, take steps in your job selection and working life so that you spend your nine to five (or whatever your working hours are) mostly doing work that: you enjoy, really matters to you, and primarily utilises the strengths and gifts that you have.

Create a list of people, places, activities and kinds of work that uniquely refresh you. Keep it somewhere as a reminder.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

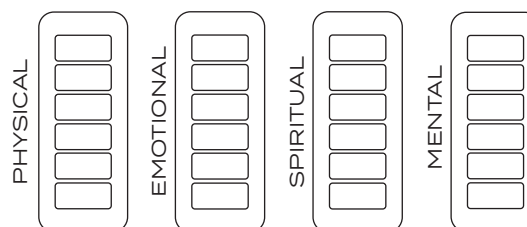
WEEK FOUR

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. (John 7:37–39)

QUIET

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: 'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.' (Isaiah 30:15)

We have closely tracked the loss of emotional reserve in Elijah. But 1 Kings 19 also tells us about the loss of his spiritual passion. The man who was once willing to run for God—faster than a chariot—now runs from God, fleeing first into the wilderness, then finally to a mountain cave. But this quiet place, away from people, demands and distractions, is where he meets with God: 1 Kings 19:9 says, "Elijah went into a cave and spent the night... The word of the LORD came to him..."

If we are always available to people, we will find that will have less to give them. That's why Jesus built solitude into His lifestyle: "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed" (Mark 1:35). The Greek word for "solitary place" is "eremos." The busier and more in demand Jesus became, the more He prioritised finding a quiet place to calm down, to think, and to pray. He introduced His disciples to the same practice: "Come with me by yourselves to a solitary place [eremos]" (Mark 6:31).

We, too, need to prioritise our "eremos." There are two kinds, and we need both: the first is to find a literal calm place where we cut ourselves off from buzz and busyness, from other people and daily tasks. The other is to still our inner life, letting the internal chatter dial down so we recenter ourselves again in the presence of God. Without regularly finding our "eremos", we feel distant from God, from ourselves, our identities, and our callings — constantly rushing through life without noticing God's presence in it. The only way to stand firm in the spiritual battle is if we have stood in the quiet place with our Father.

In today's hyperconnected world, the value of silence and solitude is often overlooked. We are constantly bombarded with external stimuli, leaving little room for reflection and prayer. The ubiquitous presence of smartphones, social media, streaming services, and other digital technologies has made it easier than ever to stay perpetually connected to devices—and disconnected from the Divine.

But every time we feel a bit bored, instead of turning to our screen, let's use the chance to realise again that God is all around us and to become more aware of our inner selves.

There, in that quiet place, we are like Elijah. We may seem to be alone, but we are not really, for like him, we are "in the presence of the LORD" (1 Kings 19:11). These moments of quiet and stillness are essential for reconnecting with God and nurturing our souls. Solitude is not isolation; it is an intentional space for encountering God. In any marriage relationship, it's important to spend time alone now and then—just the two of you—in an unhurried environment where you can just be with each other, soaking each other in slowly. It's the same with our relationship with God.

This may involve establishing routines for quiet to unwind and connect with God. From time to time, sometimes for an hour, sometimes a few hours, and more rarely for one or more days, we get alone. We shut out all the stimulants that keep us busy and pacing. We put our phones and computers off. We go somewhere peaceful. We take nothing but our Bible and maybe a notebook. When we're alone, we're saved from the constant effort to try to change others. When we're quiet, we welcome God's presence. We let go of control and let God take charge in our lives. Having abandoned people for a while, we now have more to give them.

Where is your "eremos"? How can you prioritise solitude and silence in your life?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

WHISPER

Elijah went into a cave and spent the night. ... The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in it. Then came a fire, but the LORD was not in it. And then came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "... Elijah". (1 Kings 19:9–13)

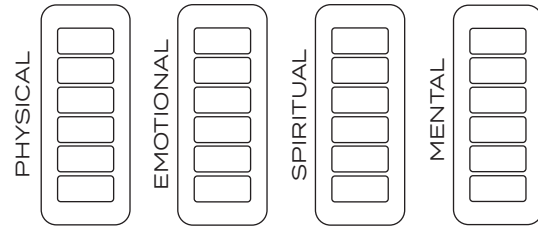
When it comes to our spiritual tank, one way God fills us up is by speaking to us personally and allowing us to sense His presence. By the time Elijah hits bottom, retreating into the darkness and depression of a cave, he has been so busy serving God and hearing God for other people that he has lost touch with God's tender care towards him. We, too, when plagued by feelings of unworthiness, self-pity, or disappointment, need more than anything else a touch or word from God.

Not in the wind, earthquake, or fire. When we slide into a way of life or a pace of life that offers little or no opportunity to quietly pay attention, we wonder why we are not hearing from God when we most need Him. Driven on by adrenaline and a hunger for action, we think perhaps God will speak to us dramatically, through some emotional high, or spectacular miracle, or radical change in our circumstances. Of course, He may, but He usually prefers to speak to us in a gentle whisper. When He speaks in a still, small voice, it's not like a booming command or a thunderous proclamation.

Quiet. Elijah had become so accustomed to the electrifying clash of light with darkness, he'd forgotten that his relationship with God happened on a different frequency. We're told, "then came a gentle whisper" and "then a voice." Our negative thoughts and feelings may be loud, and we may be addicted to excitement, but it's in the quiet place where we become attentive to the still whisper we so desperately need to hear.

He calls us by name. Then a voice said to him, "...Elijah." We may shout to a crowd, but we whisper to an individual. God calls us by name; He did the same for Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Mary. Jesus our

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Shepherd "calls His own sheep by name" (John 10:3). We detect God's fatherly love in His dealings with Elijah. How important it is for us to experience once again God's fatherly affirmation and tenderness, to know that we "are His sons and daughters" in whom dwells "the Spirit of His Son... who calls out, 'Abba, Father'" (Galatians 4:6).

It's crucial to know again in our deepest core that we are loved regardless of what we do or fail to do for God—this alone relieves the performance anxiety that we too often instill into our ministry to others. We get to do our best for God not because we are trying to earn His love, but because we already have it.

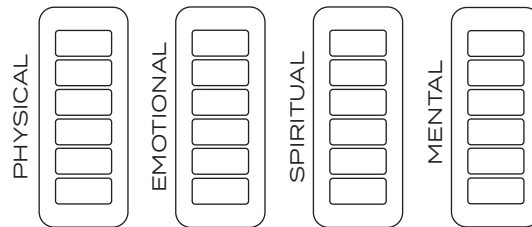
Being settled in God's unconditional, lavish love also frees us from trying to find all of our joy in our work for God. As wonderful as it is to serve God, doing things for God will never satisfy a part of our souls that only God can. Our Father knows us intimately, and cares about us deeply. Though we turn our backs on Him and hide in a cave or run to the other side of the world—yet He pursues us, coming so close that we can hear Him whisper.

Have you recently experienced God coming close to you and speaking to you intimately?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

SIT

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Jesus ... came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" Jesus answered, "Martha, Martha, you are concerned and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:38–42).

Elijah lost touch with his calling because he lost touch with his Caller. This story about Martha and Mary gives us a vivid lesson about the priority of staying in touch with our Caller. Martha, a gracious host, was "distracted" (literally "pulled about" or "spun in a circle") by "many things". Jesus acknowledged these distractions, highlighting that we easily get spun out by expectations and duties.

However, Jesus goes on to emphasise the importance of focusing on "few things"—essential things that truly matter. He doesn't just stop there; He says, "indeed only one" thing is crucial. So, let's break it down:

The "Many Things": Life bombards us with countless demands and distractions. We become "worried" and "anxious" by the busyness of our daily lives, just as Martha was.

The "Few Things": Jesus invites us to discern what truly matters, what is worth our time and attention. These are the few things that align with our purpose and values—for example, personal health, attending to our closest relationships, church involvement, bringing in an income, etc.

The "One Thing": Among these "few things," there is one paramount priority—sitting at Jesus' feet. It's about spending time in His presence, opening our hearts to His love and our lives to His leadership. That's what Mary did. And that's what we can do. We should keep this as the basic, permanent orientation of our lives no matter what else we do.

By doing so, we are more able to discern and remain true to our calling. God renews our sense of call, gives us greater clarity about what He wants us to focus on, and imparts in us the conviction and

courage to do it. The self-commissioned life so easily loses its strength because we end up chasing the latest thing that grabs our attention. The God-commissioned life, however, is able to focus on the unique callings Jesus places on our lives.

Mary was granted the gift of contentment. We can have it, too. One of the indicators that we are no longer sitting at Jesus' feet is the runaway compulsions we begin to feel for more, more, more—more experiences, more possessions, more achievements, more praise. The whole world is not enough to give our hearts rest and satisfaction. Only Christ and His love for you and His acceptance of you can do that.

How do we sit at the feet of Jesus? There are two ways you can show that He is your "One Thing"—they both involve making Him the "first thing":

Daily: Begin each day by dedicating some time to Jesus and His teachings. Ideally, make this a morning routine, as it signifies your commitment to prioritise Him as your foremost focus. However, other times of the day can also be suitable.

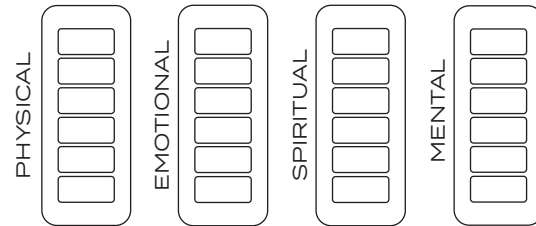
Weekly: Throughout history, Christians have gathered each week to worship Jesus, invite His presence, and study His teachings. Few realise that historically the first day of the week is not Monday. It's Sunday. Commencing your week in this manner signifies that you recognise Jesus as the supreme priority, deserving of the primary position in your life.

What are your "Few Things"? How can you make sitting at Jesus' feet your "One Thing"?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

SEARCH

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:23–24)

God often poses searching questions to individuals: "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9), "Why are you angry?" (Genesis 4:6), "What is that in your hand?" (Exodus 4:2), "Is it right for you to be angry?" (Jonah 4:4), "But what about you? Who do you say I am?" (Matthew 16:15), and "Do you love me?" (John 21:15). He does the same when meeting with Elijah: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:9). In the cave, God shines His searching light on Elijah's deeper motives and ways. Likewise, God's Spirit may lead us to reflect on where we have erred, allowing us to repent of ungodly motives, unwise ways, or, as in Elijah's case, the exaggerated pressure that accompanies a saviour complex (see 1 Kings 19:14, 18).

If we are to spiritually thrive, we need to invite God's searching light to shine upon what may be broken, distorted, or sinful in our minds, hearts, and lives. This practice enables us to identify areas where we need to change or improve and seek God's guidance in making those changes. This self-examination is crucial for spiritual maturity and for repairing the leaks in our spiritual tank.

At times, our faults and darker tendencies may manifest in our public lives, and others might notice them before we do—perhaps we act out unhealed wounds, competitiveness, jealousy, anger, or a tendency to control others. We might have thought we concealed these issues well or could address them privately, but suddenly, they create problems even when we are trying to do good. In such instances, we should not ignore them; we should address them. We may require the assistance of others, but most importantly, we need to enter into solitude with God and allow Him to address what lies within us, beneath the surface.

It is especially important for us to cultivate the ability to "discern the spirits" or "test the spirits" to see whether they are from God" (1 Corinthians 12:10; 1 John 4:1). God's Spirit can assist us in distinguishing the genuine from the counterfeit and the true from the false, not only in external circumstances but also within our inner world of

thoughts and motives. The Spirit can reveal when we are acting out of pride (seeking recognition and approval) or out of fear of others' opinions (fearing disapproval).

The most significant transformations that occur in our hearts when we are alone may remain hidden, known only to God. Others may not immediately notice the impact this has on our lives, but the primary objective is not external recognition—it is finding joy in and pleasing God.

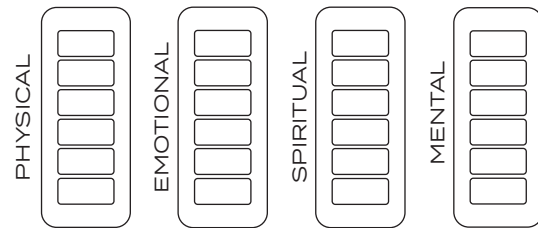
For centuries, people have practiced the Ignatian Self-Examen, a spiritual reflection method originally developed by St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. This practice involves setting aside a quiet moment once a day (though it can also be done weekly or monthly) to invite God's presence and searching light. During this time, you use your memory to walk through your experiences from the previous day, week, or month, guided by a series of questions: where was God present? what can I be grateful for? Where did I fall short? Then we can ask for forgiveness, strength and wisdom for the next day (or week or month).

Would you be willing to find some solitude, then pray David's prayer: "Search me, ... See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"? Spend a few minutes praying today's verse (Psalm 139:23-24)

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

SPIRIT

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



The power of the Lord came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel. ... The Lord said to him, anoint Elisha ... to succeed you as prophet ... So, ... Elijah went up to Elisha and threw his cloak around him. (1 Kings 18:46, 19:15–16,19)

The evangelist, DL Moody, was scheduled to hold a campaign in England. An elderly pastor protested, "Why do we need this Moody? He's uneducated, inexperienced, etc. Who does he think he is anyway? Does he think he has a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?" A younger, wiser pastor rose and responded, "No, but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on Mr. Moody."

Where did Elijah derive his spiritual passion? It wasn't self-generated; it resulted from the empowering of the Spirit. We, too, need to be filled with and clothed with the Spirit.

Be full of the Spirit. The way to have our spiritual tanks filled is to be full with the Spirit! Luke, in his Gospel and in Acts, speaks of thrilling, mountaintop experiences of the Spirit. However, he also suggests that our experience of the Spirit may become continuous to the extent that we are consistently described as being "full of the Spirit." The prime example of this is Jesus (Luke 4:1), but after Pentecost, the wording is applied to believers as well: the Seven in Acts 6 are described as "full of wisdom and the Holy Spirit", and Barnabas is portrayed as "full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24).

What does "full of" mean? We read of a man "full of leprosy" (Luke 5:12)—completely consumed by the disease. Elymas was "full of all deceit and villainy" (Acts 13:10)—utterly controlled by these evil inclinations. To be "full of the Holy Spirit", then, implies that we are habitually governed and directed by the Spirit to such an extent that over time, observers notice that the Spirit's presence and power define our lives.

Be clothed with the Spirit. As mentioned earlier, Elijah's cloak is associated with the "power of the Lord" that descends upon him, as well as the anointing of the Spirit—both upon him and his servant Elisha. Also, later in 2 Kings 2, Elijah uses his cloak to miraculously part a river (v8). His servant,

Elisha, asks for a double portion of Elijah's "spirit" (v9). Elijah replies that he will receive it if Elisha sees him being taken away (v10). Shortly thereafter, Elisha witnesses his master ascending to heaven until "he saw him no more" (v11–12). Elijah's cloak falls from him as he ascends. Elisha takes it and immediately uses it to part a river (v14). Astonished onlookers observe that "the spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha" (v15).

Even more intriguing is when Jesus, about to ascend, instructs His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they are "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Luke appears to use this language to evoke the parallel event described in 2 Kings 2. In both accounts, the master promises the servant(s) their own "S/spirit." In both, the master "was taken up into heaven" (Luke 24:51) "before their very eyes" until He was "hidden... from their sight" (Acts 1:9). In both, the master ascends, and the cloak of power descends. In both, the servant(s) are clothed with their master's power to continue their master's ministry as their successor.

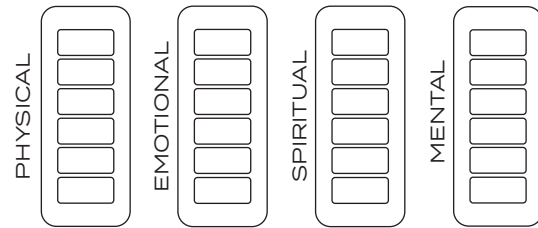
If Jesus' earthly ministry in the Gospel of Luke resembles Elijah's, the church's ministry in Acts resembles Elisha's. Acts 1–2 is the moment of succession when the risen Jesus ascends and then gives His promised cloak of power upon the church. It is a cloak that He offers to you, too.

Are you full of and clothed with the Spirit? How desperately do you want to be? Take a few minutes to invite the Holy Spirit to fill you in a deeper way today.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

FIRE

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. (1 Kings 18:38)

Yesterday, we learnt that to attain and maintain spiritual passion, we must be clothed with and filled by the Spirit. Along the same lines, today we learn that we need the fire of the Spirit.

When Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, God responded with fire. Interestingly, there are three other instances where fire descended upon sacrifices. During the consecration of the desert tabernacle to God, "fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown" (Leviticus 9:24). Centuries later, when the Jerusalem temple was dedicated, "fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple" (2 Chronicles 7:1).

A millennium later, heavenly fire once again descended upon sacrifices in Jerusalem, but this time they were ... alive! Acts 2:1–4 recounts the story: "When the day of Pentecost came, they [the 120] were all together in one place. Suddenly ... they saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit."

Note that the fire is God's gift. We don't ignite the fire of the Holy Spirit within ourselves; that's a divine act. Like the members of the early church, we should recognise our need for the Spirit's power and claim God's promise that He desires to abundantly give His presence to us. Additionally, we learn that God is particularly inclined to do this when we are gathered together and we offer ourselves to Him as living sacrifices. What else does the New Testament teach us about the Spirit's fire?

Do not extinguish the Spirit's flame

(1 Thessalonians 5:19). The Greek word for "extinguish" means "quench." We cannot kindle the fire, but we can remove the things that extinguish it. We must not take God's presence for granted. Instead, we should remain open and receptive to the guidance and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, refraining from the disobedience or neglect that might suppress or stifle the Spirit.

Stir up the gift of God (2 Timothy 1:6). We cannot ignite the fire, but we can provide the fire with something to burn. We give God opportunities to bless us. We spend time in conversation with Him and request His illumination of His Word in our hearts. Paul tells Timothy, "For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands." The laying on of hands was one method of imparting spiritual gifts in the early church. We possess the Spirit of love, power, and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:6–7), and it is our duty not to let our fire dwindle but to stir it up and employ it in the service of God's kingdom.

A renowned 18th-century revivalist shares his approach to seeking God's fire: "Mighty infillings of the Holy Spirit went through me, body and soul. Newly endued with such power from on high, my words cut like a sword, broke the heart like a hammer. But then, over time I would find myself empty of this power. I would preach, only to make no saving impression. I would exhort and pray with few results. I would then set apart a day for private fasting and prayer, humbling myself and crying out for help. Then power would return upon me with all its freshness. This has been the experience of my life."

Are you on fire with the Spirit? Do you want to be? Ask the Holy Spirit for fresh fire today.

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

WEEK FIVE

MENTAL RENEWAL

*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 2:5, NKJV)*

NEURAL

Be made new in the attitude of your minds; and ... put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:23-24)

We tend to be interested in changing our circumstances—less pain, less trouble, less hardship—but sometimes God is more interested in changing our minds than our circumstances.

Our thoughts create neural pathways. In the fascinating realm of neuroscience, a ground-breaking revelation has emerged: our thoughts are the architects of our brains. The very thoughts we entertain carve neural pathways within our brains, shaping our mental landscape and influencing our daily lives in profound ways.

Imagine your brain as a vast network of interconnected roads, each representing a different thought or belief. With approximately 100 billion neurons at its disposal, your brain has the capacity to construct intricate highways and byways. These neural pathways are the physical manifestation of our habitual thinking patterns, forming the basis for our perceptions, behaviours, and emotional responses.

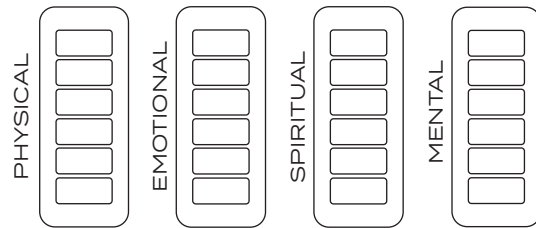
Think of our ingrained thought patterns as real estate within your brain; the more you contemplate a particular thought, the more it evolves from a narrow, seldom-used path into a well-trodden highway. Take, for instance, the act of learning a new skill. Initially, it might feel challenging as you navigate through a newly formed neural pathway. However, with consistent practice and thought, that path gradually transforms into a well-established route, making the task easier and more automatic.

Our thoughts shape our perception of reality.

Transformation begins within our minds. By consciously redirecting our thoughts and establishing new neural pathways, we embark on a journey of mind renewal.

Our thoughts carry an emotional charge. Cognitive therapy has unveiled another profound insight into the human psyche: the intricate connection between our thoughts and emotions. Behind the veil of our feelings and emotions lie the intricate thought patterns that serve as their foundation. In essence, our thoughts carry an emotional charge, dictating the way we feel.

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Consider, for a moment, the interplay between anger and angry thoughts. When we harbour thoughts of anger, irritation, or resentment, we ignite a chain reaction within our brains. These thoughts stimulate the release of stress hormones and activate the amygdala, the brain's emotional centre, leading to a surge of intense emotions. It's a thought-feeling connection, and it's not limited to negative emotions: positive thoughts, such as gratitude, hope, and compassion, can evoke corresponding positive emotions, enhancing our overall well-being.

Replace your thoughts. Craig Groeschel writes, "If we never identify the lies and replace them with the truth, we'll forever crave a healthy life on a diet of poison and always wonder why we are sick." Start by identifying thought patterns that no longer serve you well. Are you frequently plagued by anxious or bitter thoughts, for example? After acknowledging them, consciously replace them with more positive and constructive alternatives—this is where Scripture is so important. Want more hopeful feelings? Try out more hopeful thoughts.

For example, replace the thought, "I'll never find a job" with "Job hunting can be challenging, but I have skills and experience to offer, and I can improve my job search strategies. Besides, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!" Replace "I'll never get over this" with "Recovery takes time, and healing is possible. I can take small steps toward feeling better. Besides, 'The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.'" It may help to keep a journal where you record recurring unhelpful thoughts and their replacements. This can help you track your progress over time.

These intentional shifts will create new neural pathways and ultimately lead to a more positive emotional landscape.

What are your untrue or unhelpful recurring thoughts? What can you replace each of them with?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

RETHINK

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:2)

If you think it, it must be true, right?

Not necessarily. A significant portion of our thoughts may be inaccurate or misleading. Take religion, for example. Ideas about God are universal, but these ideas clash and contradict. Without God's self-revelation, we have lost the true knowledge of God. This is because, ever since Satan darkened the minds of our first parents in Eden, our minds have become a battleground.

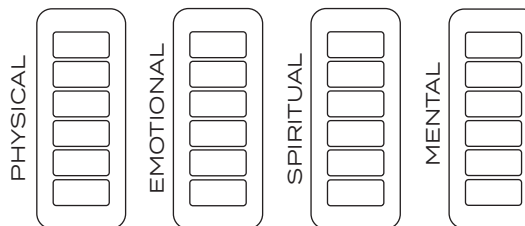
The battle in our minds is a battle for our minds. In our thoughts, we wrestle with temptations, and we battle against lies. The battle is a multifaceted conflict. The destructive or untrue things people say; the toxic stream of messages in the media we consume; and the dark thoughts Satan tries to plant in our minds—these all collaborate to sabotage our thought life. Add to this that as fallen beings, our thinking has become "futile" and our foolish hearts have become "darkened" (Romans 1:21).

The Greek word used in the New Testament for mind renewal is "metanoieo." It means to change your mind and is usually translated as "repent." We tend to think that repentance means to feel sorry—and that may be an aspect of it—but essentially it means to gain clarity about reality. We're told that "Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:14–15). The dynamic, gracious reign of God has broken in—now, rethink everything in light of it, says Jesus.

Paul's words in Romans 12:2 offer two pieces of guidance on how to emerge victorious in this battle for your own mind:

Do not conform to the pattern of this world. In other words, reject the world's way of thinking. What does the world typically think about? It focuses on pleasure, power, success, wealth, entertainment, and the glorification of self. It moves between extreme religiosity and outright rejection of God, all in an effort to maintain its self-centeredness. When we commit our lives to Christ, it marks the beginning of a profound

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



transformation. However, this transformation doesn't happen until we start to change how we think. This shift in thinking is monumental. It involves disentangling ourselves from the world's influence.

Don't believe everything you think. We have the choice not to accept everything our minds conjure up, whether it concerns our beliefs about God, our perceptions of our loved ones, or our assessment of a given situation. Repentance should become a way of life, allowing us to align our thinking with God's light.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. The command to renew our minds suggests that humanity once possessed clear and sound thinking. The term "renew" indicates that humanity's original state of mind has been lost and requires restoration to align with God's intent.

Daily, we must seek God's renewal of our minds. It means yielding to God's guidance instead of dictating our desires to Him. It entails choosing love over vengeance, assisting others rather than taking advantage, practicing patience instead of complaining, and finding joy when God receives the glory instead of ourselves.

CS Lewis, in "Mere Christianity" writes, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." Repentance starts with the right thoughts about God; then, in light of who God is, it leads to right thoughts about every aspect of our lives and the world.

What of the world's thinking do you need to reject? What truths about God, the world and life do you need to align your thoughts to?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

STORY

Then a voice said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." (1 Kings 19:13–14)

Mind renewal involves telling yourself a better story. We use stories as a means of making sense of the world around us. They allow us to organise and convey our experiences, beliefs, and emotions. They are not just about recounting facts but often involve interpretation and meaning.

Let's briefly revisit Elijah in the cave. In his response to God, we uncover two stories he had been recounting—a hero's tale and a victim's tale.

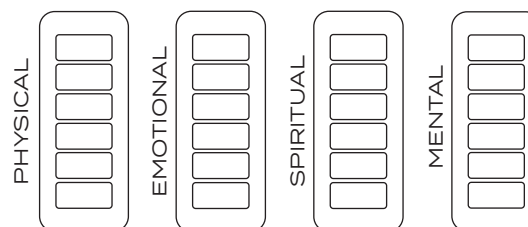
"I am a hero." He recounts his accomplishments, believing he alone has remained faithful to God, with the spiritual state of Israel depending on him. When we adopt the hero narrative, we may also see ourselves as saviours, believing that the future primarily hinges on our determination and efforts, placing ourselves at the story's centre. We tend to believe that all obstacles can be surmounted, often associated with feelings like confidence and ambition.

"I am a victim." Elijah's brief summary of his ministry reveals that when Jezebel threatened him, he shifted from the hero's narrative to the victim's narrative, lamenting, "I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." In this story, we perceive ourselves as victims of circumstances, other people, or external forces. The focus lies on what has been done to us or the challenges we face, leading to emotions like self-pity, anger, resentment, or hopelessness.

"I am saved and sent." Replace your victim and hero stories with the gospel story. Carefully examine how God retells Elijah's story in 1 Kings 19:15–18—this time offering him a gospel story that challenges the hero narrative. God, not Elijah, is the one who saves. In reality, there are powerful forces of evil at work greater than Elijah, and only God can overcome them.

God even speaks to Elijah about raising up a successor, Elisha, implying that Elijah's contribution is limited.

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



The gospel story also corrects the victim narrative. Elijah believed he was the last true believer, but God reveals that there are actually seven thousand faithful people in Israel. Elijah may not be the hero of the story, but empowered by the Spirit, he still has supernaturally empowered agency. God strategically directs him to anoint new kings in various regions.

Remind yourself that you are not the hero; Jesus is the true Hero who accomplishes what we cannot do on our own. Our impact is limited—eventually, our time will come to an end. While important to God, our personal narrative is but a small tributary in the vast river of God's people, where not only seven thousand but billions of saved sinners flow.

Tell yourself that you are not a victim. The powers of sin, death, and Satan may seem greater than us, but Jesus, through His death and resurrection, has conquered them all. Empowered and sent by the Spirit, we possess agency. Each of us is equipped and directed by God to minister to specific individuals. Past painful experiences do not hinder our future usefulness; in fact, they make us wiser.

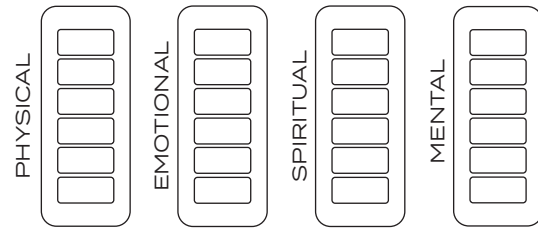
The victim story renders us humble—but without confidence, it leaves us embittered and immobilised. The hero story provides confidence—but not humility. It fosters pride and exhaustion. However, the gospel story grants us both humility and confidence—we may be saved by God's grace, but we are sent on a mission to fill the world with that same grace.

Which story do you most often tell yourself?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

SCRIPTURE

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. (Psalm 19:7-8)

Reading and reflecting on Scripture greatly contributes to our mental well-being by illuminating and nourishing our minds and hearts.

Firstly, Scripture serves as a guiding light. It reveals the path to living authentically and wisely, preventing us from stumbling in the dark. As Psalm 119:105 declares, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." It not only lights our current journey but also brightens the path that lies ahead. The apostle Peter likened the Old Testament prophetic scriptures about Jesus to "a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19). To uncover the hopeful radiance of God's wisdom, we need only open the pages of His Word.

Scripture also imparts profound insights into the meaning of life. In its first chapter, we encounter the revelation of a God who is not silent, but rather speaks into existence the very first element: "light" (Genesis 1:3). As we read through the Bible, we witness God continually speaking, consistently driving away confusion and turmoil.

Throughout history, God's Word has not only influenced individuals but entire societies. Time Magazine recognised the most pivotal moment of the second millennium as the printing of the Bible at Gutenberg's Press. This event catalysed more societal changes than any other, introducing the idea that morality revolves around considering the well-being of all, especially the marginalised. It emphasised the equal worth of every human being. As we allow God's Word to illuminate our lives, we, too, become bearers of light to those around us.

Secondly, Scripture feeds our souls. For true spiritual and mental health and vitality, daily consumption of God's Word is as indispensable as physical food and drink. Job eloquently expressed this truth: "I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily food" (Job 23:12). The Bible is soul-sustaining bread, substantial, fulfilling, and essential for fulfilling our life's purpose. It is likened

to milk, meat, and honey in various verses, offering the perfect nourishment for every stage of our spiritual growth.

In the 8th century BC, the prophet Amos foretold "a famine not for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). The Israelites had rejected the prophets who delivered God's Word to them. Tragically, even with an abundance of Bibles in print and on screens today, both the world and many Christians suffer from spiritual malnutrition. Instead of turning to God's words, which are readily accessible, we often seek enlightenment in the wrong places, relying on so-called experts, recent philosophical trends, or the social media feed an Internet algorithm offers us. However interesting these new insights may be, they are inadequate substitutes for God's own words.

In the Exodus narrative, God led the rescued Israelites through a desert and miraculously provided sustenance. Each morning, He supplied a sweet, bread-like substance known as manna, which every family gathered daily. After years of consuming manna, Moses explained its significance to the desert survivors: "God fed you on manna so that you might know that man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from God's mouth" (Deuteronomy 8:3).

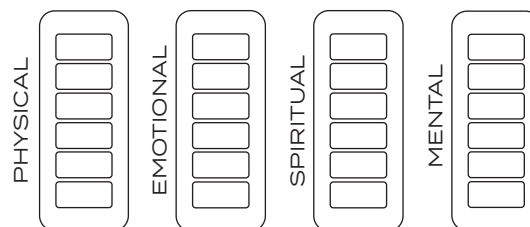
God continues to provide manna today. Like the ancient Israelites, we must recognise that His manna does not automatically fall into our mouths; we must actively seek and gather it each day. As we do so, we can expect the Word to transform into the energy needed to live a life empowered by God.

Do you read and meditate on scripture daily?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

FREE

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:6-7)

Much of our suffering occurs within our minds. Two prevalent, and for some, incessant forms of mental anguish are worry and negativity. Some individuals may experience these due to chemical imbalances or certain personality traits that incline them towards excessive fretting or persistent gloom. Nevertheless, the renewal of our thoughts can mitigate these two mental drainers.

Free from worry: Worry often revolves around situations or events that are uncertain or beyond our control, such as our health, finances, relationships, work, or personal safety. Mentally fixating on negative possibilities or anticipated difficulties can trigger emotions like unease, fear, or anxiety, as well as physical symptoms like restlessness, tension, or a racing heart. The issue with worry is that it robs us of our joy and peace but cannot alter the outcome. When we invest our mental energy in envisioning tomorrow's problems, it depletes the resources we need today to confront our actual challenges.

Philippians 4:6-7 encourages us not to let our worries overwhelm us. It offers both a practice and a promise to apply in our thought life. First, the practice: transform your worries into prayers. "In every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." The fact that God cares for us means we can trust Him in areas beyond our control but firmly within His.

Next, there's a promise: "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." This is a profound, spiritual peace that transcends logical or worldly explanations, capable of soothing the turmoil of our anxious thoughts and emotions.

Free from negativity: It's impossible to lead a positive life with a negative mindset. The passage in Philippians 4 continues, addressing the negativity that tends to dominate our thoughts: "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever

is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things... And the God of Peace will be with you" (v 8–9). This passage doesn't call us to embrace exaggerated positivity or pretend that negative aspects don't exist. Paul's advice is to acknowledge these negative factors without fixating on them.

Negativity operates much like gravity, causing our minds to gravitate towards the downside of a situation rather than the opportunities within it. How easily we fall into the habit of replaying thoughts like: "People always let me down. I'm no good at anything. My life will never amount to anything significant. I will never find someone to love. I am unlovable. I'm the worst parent in the world. If I were a better person, my children would be happy and successful. I will never be as good as my sibling. He's only saying that because he wants something from me. These people are against me. This country is going down."

The more we search for something, the more of it we find. So, focus on God's blessings and promises. Rather than yearning for more friends, money, or health, express gratitude to God for the friends, money, and health you already possess. And memorise and recite verses that counter negativity. "My life is going nowhere"—not true, "for He knows the plans He has for us" (Jeremiah 29:11). "God has left me"—not true, "no one will snatch me from His hand" (John 10:29). "I won't have enough"—not true, "my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

What of today's insights can you apply in your battle against worry and negativity?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

FOCUS

The very moment you wake up each morning. All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in. And so on, all day. (CS Lewis)

In 2005, the National Science Foundation released a report that concluded that we entertain about 12,000 to 60,000 thoughts daily. Of these, a striking 80% were pessimistic in nature, and a staggering 95% consisted of the same repetitive thoughts as the previous day—a replaying of the same tired song list! To renew our minds, we need to change our song list. What content should we play? The New Testament provides four directives:

Focus on good things. "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Philippians 4:8). What lovely things may you ponder? A sunset? The unrehearsed smile of a friend? A delicious beverage? Memories of growing up? Dreaming of what could be? As for excellent things, what vast beauty or intricate design there is in creation to contemplate. "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1). Nature and travel TV programs may especially transport us to places wild and wonderful, and creatures great and small.

Focus on others. The apostle Paul advised us, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3-4). He put into practice his own advice. He so steeped his mind in the well-being of other people that he could write, "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5). Interestingly, when Elijah's life imploded, his thought-life turned inwards to his own problems. God restored him by re-awakening him to the many individuals that he had the opportunity to serve (1 Kings 19:15-18).

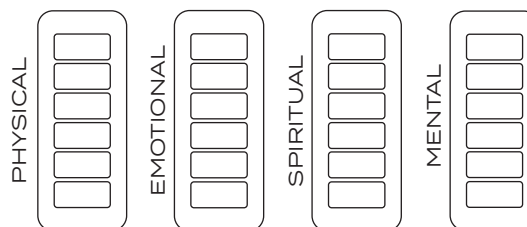
Focus on things above. There is an old expression that states, "Don't be so heavenly minded that you are of no earthly good." Clever and catchy cliché,

isn't it? The only problem is that these words are unbiblical. The Bible says, "Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Colossians 3:2). Lewis writes, "A continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this."

Focus on Jesus. "Fix your thoughts on Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1). Charles Spurgeon, a 19th-century preacher, used to say, "The Holy Spirit turns our eyes away from self to Jesus; but Satan is constantly trying to make us regard ourselves instead of Christ ... We shall never find happiness by looking at our prayers, our doings, or our feelings; it is what Jesus is, not what we are, that gives rest to the soul. If we would at once overcome Satan and have peace with God, it must be by 'looking unto Jesus!'"

Good things, others, things above, Jesus—how can you direct your thoughts towards these today?

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



TODAY'S BIBLE READING

WEEK SIX

PRACTISING RENEWAL

Defined in physics as the capacity to work, energy comes from four main wellsprings in human beings: the body, emotions, mind, and spirit. In each, energy can be ... expanded and regularly renewed. (Catherine McCarthy, "Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time", Harvard Business Review)

INTEGRATED

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'
(Matthew 22:37)

We have been thinking of ourselves as four tanks that each contain a different type of vital "fuel" which represents our well-being and vitality—physical, emotional, spiritual and mental. This is a helpful picture because it allows us to evaluate and revitalise each aspect of our lives.

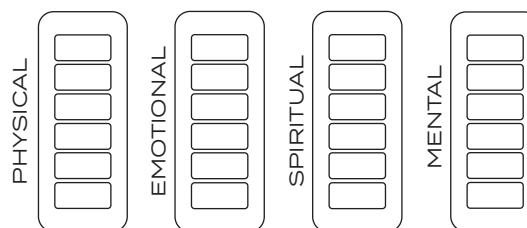
There is one limitation to this model: it doesn't do justice to the fact that we are only one person, so that each of these tanks are not a separate part (think of parts of a car) as much as they are an aspect of one dynamic whole (think of four selfies of the same face, each from a different direction). Although in Western thinking we enjoy breaking things down to reducible parts, the Hebrew view of the world prefers to think of the human as one integrated system: It is not so much that I have a body, I am a body. I don't have a mind, I am a mind. Nor do I have a spirit, I am a spirit. That is why we are to love God not just with our soul, but also our strength. Not just with our heart, but also our mind.

Let us then adapt the picture of the four tanks, by bolting them on the same wall, and by putting interconnecting pipes between each one and the other three. This means that fuel can flow between them. When we do that, we realise that if we are filled up in one tank, it can provide some energy to other tanks that are not doing as well. Conversely, if one tank is dangerously empty, it can sap from the vitality of the others. Let's think this through:

Physical to mental: A healthy body supports a healthy mind. Regular exercise releases endorphins, reducing stress and improving mental well-being. Proper nutrition provides the brain with the nutrients it needs for optimal function, enhancing cognitive abilities.

Physical to emotional: When you're physically tired or unwell, you're more prone to emotional volatility. For someone who is struggling with depression or anxiety, regular exercise has been shown for many people to be as effective a treatment as taking medicine for our mental health.

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Mental to physical: A sharp mind can motivate you to take better care of your body. Mental clarity allows you to make informed decisions about diet, exercise, and overall health.

Mental to emotional: Mental health affects emotional well-being. Mental stress or exhaustion multiplies the force of a negative emotion. Practices like telling yourself a better story—the gospel story rather than a victim story, for example—can help manage these issues.

Emotional to spiritual: Emotional balance can create a conducive environment for spiritual growth. When your emotions are stable, you can better explore your inner self and connect with God's presence in the quiet place.

Mental and emotional to physical: We are "psychosomatic" creatures—in other words, when terrible things take root in our minds and emotions (Greek: psyche), they commonly manifest in our bodies (Greek: soma) in the form of "dis-ease." The trauma specialist Dr. Bessel van der Kolk documents examples of this in his book, "The Body Keeps the Score".

Spiritual to physical: One biblical author noted that as their body aged, becoming weaker, the renewing presence of the Spirit in their mind, emotions and spirit compensated: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16).

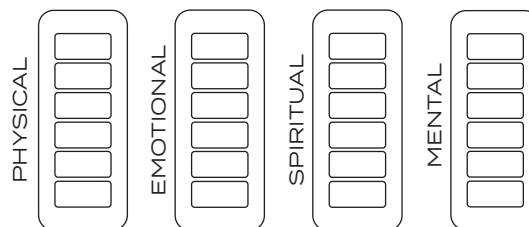
Spiritual to emotional: When our spiritual tank is full, we're more resilient in the face of life's challenges: "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

Which of your four tanks is presently emptiest? How does it impact on the other three?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

SABBATH

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for the people, not people for the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27)

"The Sabbath is my gift to you," says Jesus in effect. "This day was made for you, for your strengthening and your replenishment." Although Jewish communities traditionally gathered for worship on Saturdays, the earliest churches shifted to Sundays (Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:1–2), as Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week. The Judeo-Christian Sabbath principle has proven to be a valuable gift to nations that have embraced it, introducing a day of rest or a weekend, a combination of the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Lord's Day.

Gathering with fellow believers in the presence of Jesus once a week is a practice that binds us all (Hebrews 10:25). However, the commands to adhere to the stringent Sabbath regulations of the Old Testament, are not obligatory for everyone (Colossians 2:16–17). Nevertheless, it would be unwise not to incorporate the principle of weekly rest into our lives.

Our best efforts require rest. Without rest, we cannot live or work effectively. Rest not only aids in recovery from the previous week but also prepares us for the week ahead. Taking a few hours off here and there in an otherwise continuous workweek is not nearly as effective as dedicating a full 24-hour period each week to complete rest. We naively think that a few hours of this kind of rest every week will do the job. A full 24 hours may seem excessive to neglect the demands of work. In fact, we are like batteries—we do not quickly recharge. We trickle-charge. If Sunday is not the ideal day for this rest, consider finding and safeguarding your own 24-hour period.

When you practice it, call it "Sabbath" or "my day of rest," rather than just "a day off," which can easily become filled with errands and activities. Properly observed, rest benefits every aspect of your life, allowing each of our four "tanks" to be refuelled:

Repose your body. "Repose" means enjoying inactivity. While some exercise may be welcome on this day, it is crucial to provide your body with downtime.

Re-align your mind. Dedicate time in the day to reflect on your life and envision the upcoming week as an opportunity to live out your deepest values and sense of purpose.

Recharge your emotions. Seek out quiet, which makes it easier to calm our internal noise. That said, a day of rest might still involve some activity—as long as it's not work. When God initially rested on the Sabbath, He did so to delight in His creation. A helpful question to guide your practice might be: what activities could I engage in that would bring profound, exhilarating joy to my soul? What would ignite within me a sense of wonder, awe, gratitude, and praise?

Refresh your spirit. The original Sabbath joined together two things: rest and worship. So, make sure your day indexes your heart toward grateful recognition of God's reality and goodness. As important as the other three kinds of rest are, they hold little value unless our inner selves also discover solace in God's acceptance. This type of rest provides us with a safe haven impervious to harm. Embracing the Sabbath allows us to release our relentless efforts and opt for trust instead. As John Mark Comer suggests, "The Sabbath is to a spirit of restfulness what a soccer practice is to a match or band practice is to a show. It's how we practice, how we prepare our minds and bodies for the moments that matter most." A day of rest enables us to work with a more restful spirit during the rest of the week,

Do you keep a weekly Sabbath? If not, when would be best?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

REST

Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed (Exodus 23:12)

Some documentary makers once hired Khoisan individuals as their trackers during their journey through the Kalahari desert. They spent 8-10 hours a day travelling for several days. However, one morning, the film crew prepared to continue their journey, but the bushmen chose to stay still, explaining, "We have been moving so fast for so many days. Today, we stay still and wait for our souls to catch up to our bodies." The Khoisan teach us the importance of taking a day off each week to allow our "souls" to synchronise with our actual lives.

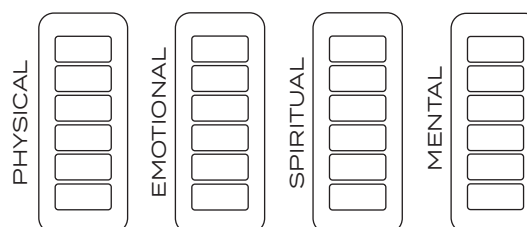
In our contemporary society, we often feel guilty if we are not constantly productive, but we were not designed for the relentless pace characteristic of our age. When we are not constantly active, we may feel lazy. Therefore, rest becomes an act of defiance. As the renowned Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann famously stated, observing the Sabbath can be seen as "an act of defiance." It represents a form of rebellion against the dominant forces of the Western world, including productivism, globalism, capitalism, and materialism.

Rest allows us to reclaim margin in our lives. It provides us with time to catch our breath, think, pray, rediscover our sense of purpose, engage in personal development, simply be, heal, re-centre, and be present to our loved ones. Without margin in our time, we are constantly breathless, frenzied, disorganised, and frustrated.

There are four strategies for achieving rest: yesterday, we explored first how to **withdraw weekly** (i.e. Sabbath). There are three more:

Divert daily. A secular wellness coach suggests, "Leave your phone on airplane mode for the first hour of the day. Try it. It's magical. Use this time to nurture your body and mind into a positive state through activities like exercise, hydration, or reading an uplifting book. Set the tone for your day before diving into emails, social media, and news headlines that can push us into a fearful and negative state right after waking up." In an age dominated by instant messaging, it becomes challenging to

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



disconnect from work. For the sake of our souls, it's essential to set clear boundaries between work and non-work hours. Decide in advance when your workday will end—and mark the moment with a small ritual. For example, one family switches off all phones and computers at 5.30 pm and engages in enjoyable and relaxing activities together, such as walking the dog in the park or making music. The parents reserve time for checking messages and emails only after their kids' bedtime.

Abandon annually. If you have the privilege of taking a vacation, avoid filling it with a hectic schedule of visits, outings, and events that leave you more exhausted by the end of your holiday. Instead, commit to slowing down and reducing the number of activities. Create space to deeply recharge your emotional batteries, enabling you to reconnect with loved ones and reflect on the life you want to lead. Planning your leave well in advance has an added benefit: the anticipation of a holiday often provides more energy than reminiscing about it afterward, so plan ahead and share the excitement with those who will experience it with you.

Sabbatical every seven. Particularly if your vocation or career demands constant spiritual, creative, intellectual, or emotional output, consider taking a three-month sabbatical every six or seven years. This extended break allows you to reinvest in yourself spiritually, creatively, intellectually, and emotionally. To use a mobile phone metaphor, while weekly and annual rest acts as an overnight charge for your life, a well-planned sabbatical provides you with an entirely new battery.

Divert daily, withdraw weekly, abandon annually, sabbatical every seven—which of these practices do you need to get better at?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

SLOWER

Jesus said, "Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (Matthew 11:29–30, The Message)

In *The Me I Want To Be*, the author reflects on a conversation with his spiritual mentor, Dallas Willard. Feeling overwhelmed by life's demands, he sought wisdom from Willard, who responded after a significant pause with a profound statement: "You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life." Unsatisfied with this simplicity, the author pressed for more guidance, only to receive the same message once more: "There is nothing else. Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life."

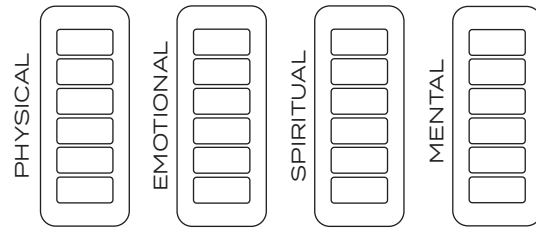
Our modern Western culture is trapped in a perpetual rush. The progression from the sundial to the clock marked the introduction of artificial time into our lives. In our relentless pursuit of mechanical efficiency, we have forsaken our natural, innate rhythms. Whereas the sun once guided our cycles of work and rest, now the clock subjects us to the dominion of our employers, a more demanding authority. In contrast to a century ago, when less work was seen as a sign of status, today's prestige is associated with a jam-packed life filled with important tasks and deadline-driven commitments.

While it's true that we have responsibilities and callings that demand hard work (as God commands, "six days you shall work"), these tasks should be approached from a place of inner rest. What we truly need is to counter the chronic hurry with intentional slowing down, seeking the "unforced rhythms of grace."

Slowing down can enhance our effectiveness.

There's a story of a husband driving a car, looking for his destination. Not finding it, he drives faster and faster. When his wife asks him why he doesn't stop and call for directions, he answers that he might not know where he's going, but at least he's getting there fast. Attempting to accomplish too much can paradoxically result in achieving less.

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Extensive research supports the notion that pacing ourselves rather than sprinting and focusing on one task at a time instead of multitasking can lead to greater productivity.

Slowing down can increase our joy and capacity for love.

When we move at a breakneck pace and stretch ourselves thin, we miss the beauty of life's simple pleasures, such as sunsets, fragrant flowers, delicious meals, and the subtle messages people convey to us. Rushing and genuine love cannot coexist harmoniously. Many of our most regrettable moments, whether as parents, spouses, colleagues, or simply as human beings, tend to occur when we are in a hurry.

Moreover, slowing down has the power to expand our souls.

As novelist Andre Gide aptly puts it, "I am becoming the ugliest of all things: a busy man." Both sin and busyness yield similar outcomes—they reduce our connections with God, fellow humans, and even our inner selves. It becomes a battle between speed and soul, and an excessively busy life is often a barren one. If the devil can't make you bad, he will make you busy. Our modern challenges come in the form of phone notifications interrupting our Bible readings, endless Netflix binges, dopamine addictions to social media, or commitments that dominate our lives.

To intentionally slow down, John Mark Comer offers practical advice: Stick to the speed limit, come to a full stop at stop signs, avoid texting while driving, arrive ten minutes early for appointments without your phone, remove social media and email from your phone, establish boundaries for your phone usage, and postpone checking emails until designated times. Embrace single-tasking, maintain a journal, walk at a leisurely pace.

Do you need to slow down? How will you attempt to do that?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

STRESS

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced ... We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure ... But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.
(2 Corinthians 1:8–9)

We have learned the importance of knowing our limits, safeguarding our margin, intentionally slowing down, and rhythmically resting. Nonetheless, there will still be times when the calling of God, the pressures of life, the complexities of relationships, and the responsibilities of work may overwhelm us. Moreover, stress is at an all-time high: Increased violence and crime have heightened our fear levels. Lack of jobs and rapidly changing job markets have left us feeling more uncertain about our economic stability. The breakdown of traditional family structures has contributed to an increased sense of isolation and loneliness.

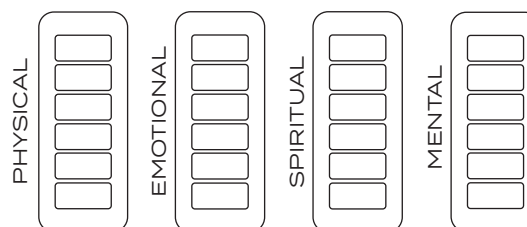
Heavy situations like these can "stress us out," causing emotional tension, anxiety, or strain. When stressed out, physically, we experience an increased heart rate, muscle tension, irritability, and difficulty concentrating. Emotionally, we may feel overwhelmed, aggravated, or reactive. When this occurs, it's not productive to feel guilty. Instead, it is wiser to make sense of our situation and take the necessary prudent steps.

It's important to note that a life entirely devoid of stress isn't necessarily superior! Of course, chronic or long-term stress can cause a state of "distress" and should be avoided. However, research indicates that moderate levels of daily, manageable stress (called "eu-stress") can bring about several beneficial effects on our well-being. One benefit is that a little stress can protect us against oxidative damage, which is connected to aging and illness. Another one is that personal growth and achievement tends to happen on the edge of our limits.

What should we do when we're stressed? Here are seven pieces of biblical wisdom:

Use it for good: The Bible recognises that stress, when harnessed positively, can be a motivating force. It can increase your focus, cultivate character, and enhance resilience. Romans 5:3-4 says, "We also glory in our sufferings because we know that

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."

Set realistic goals: Proverbs 16:9 advises, "In their hearts, humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps." Setting achievable goals and acknowledging that God ultimately guides our paths can prevent burnout and disappointment.

Prioritise: Matthew 6:33 teaches us to "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Identify your top priorities and focus on them. Avoid spreading yourself too thin by narrowing your focus to what truly matters.

Learn to say no: In Matthew 5:37, Jesus says, "All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No.'" Though He speaks about integrity there, it also implies a decisive answer. Setting boundaries and politely declining commitments that exceed your limits is essential for managing stress effectively.

Ask for help or delegate: Engaging in a supportive community can alleviate stress. Galatians 6:2 encourages us to "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfil the law of Christ." Don't hesitate to ask for help or delegate tasks to others when appropriate.

Plan: Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us that "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." Effective time management begins with using tools like calendars to allocate in advance the most important activities to the upcoming day, week, month, or year, ensuring that they are not squeezed out by urgent demands.

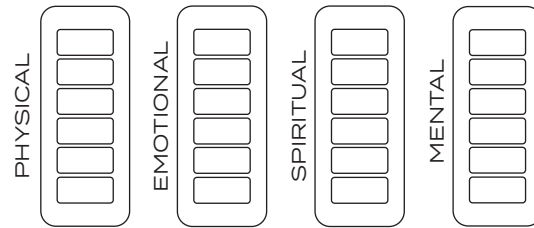
Call on God: In times of overwhelming stress, turn to God for strength and guidance. As 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 illustrates, God may purposely bring stress into our lives so that we learn to depend on His presence for our comfort and overcoming power for our resilience. After all, Jesus' most stressful experience—His crucifixion—was followed by resurrection power.

How well do you manage stress? How might you manage it better?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

PRESENT

MY TANK LEVELS TODAY:



Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16)

Our minds often wander in a multitude of directions. Not only do we contend with the pressures of our busy lives, but we also receive a dopamine boost whenever we open a message, an email, or engage with social media. A recent study discovered that the average iPhone user touches their phone 2,617 times a day. This has made it challenging to remain fully engaged in the present moment. Moreover, we fret about the uncertainties of the future, ruminate over past regrets, and all too frequently, overlook what's right before us.

CS Lewis, in his insightful work, "The Screwtape Letters," writes (from the imaginary perspective of one demon speaking to another): "Humans live in time, but God destines them for eternity. He, therefore, I believe, desires them to focus primarily on two things: eternity itself and that moment they call the Present. For the Present is the point where time intersects with eternity... He would, therefore, have them consistently concerned either with eternity (which means being concerned with Him) or with the Present... or else obeying the present voice of conscience, bearing the present cross, receiving the present grace, giving thanks for the present pleasure."

These words highlight two critical aspects of the "present"—the present moment and the Presence of God.

Enter the present moment. Our world is often a whirlwind of activity, filled with constant distractions vying for our attention. We often find ourselves consumed by worries about the future, haunted by regrets from the past, and frequently oblivious to the beauty and significance of the present moment. It's as if we are constantly racing ahead or looking over our shoulders, never truly settling into the here and now.

Yet, the present moment is where life unfolds, where we encounter God, and where we find the strength and joy we so desperately seek. The Bible reminds us in Psalm 118:24, "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Every day is a gift from God, an opportunity to experience His presence and His blessings.

It takes much practice to learn how to calm the mind and become attentive to this present moment, but we can learn to do it now and then throughout our day—start with your breath, feel it coming in, then going out, now again, but slow your breath down. Become aware of the sensations in your limbs—shoulders, knees, fingers. Hear the sounds. See the colours. Tell yourself to be here now. But don't settle only for the present moment...

Enter the presence of God. In addition to living in the present moment, enter into the Presence of God. The Bible repeatedly emphasises the importance of seeking God's presence as a source of strength, guidance, and spiritual nourishment. Psalm 16:11 declares, "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

In prayer, express your longing for God's closeness. Use David's words: "One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple." (Psalm 27:4)

One of the most beautiful aspects of our faith is the assurance that we can approach God's throne of grace with confidence (Hebrews 4:16). We don't need to wait for a special occasion or a particular location. We can do so right now, in this very moment—we will find that two of God's revitalizing gifts (or "presents") to us are within reach right now: the present moment and the Presence of God.

How can you better enter the present moment? And the presence of God?

TODAY'S BIBLE READING

SALVATION PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,

I'm sorry for doing things my own way.

I'm sorry for living a life away from You.

Please forgive my sin.

I acknowledge that You are the Son of God.

I acknowledge that You died on the cross for me.

Please adopt me into Your family.

I want to live as a child of God from today for the rest of my

life and be with You for all eternity.

AMEN

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THE BIG STORY IN 40 DAYS

Day 1	Genesis 1-2	The Creation Account	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Day 3	Genesis 15	God's Covenant With Abraham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 4	Genesis 21	Abraham's Faith	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 5	Exodus 3-4	God calls Moses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 6	Exodus 20	The Ten Commandments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 7	Joshua 1	Conquering The Promised Land	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 8	1 Samuel 16-17	David & Goliath	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 9	1 Kings 3	David & Solomon's Wisdom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 10	1 Kings 18	The Prophet Elijah	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 11	2 Kings 25	The Siege of Jerusalem	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 12	Daniel 2-3	Daniel & Israel in Babylon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 13	Ezra 3	Rebuilding The Temple	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 14	Isaiah 9, 53, 61	Isaiah's Prophecy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 15	Luke 1-2	The Birth Of Jesus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 16	Genesis 1-2	Who Jesus Is	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 17	John 1	Jesus Begins His Ministry	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Day 22	John 11	The Christian Life Defined	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 23	John 15	Jesus' High Priestly Prayer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 24	John 17	The Arrest & Crucifixion of Jesus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 25	Matthew 26-27	The Resurrection of Jesus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 26	John 20	The Ascension of Jesus	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Day 32	Romans 3-6	Alive in Christ	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 33	1 Corinthians 13	Battle with Sin & Life in the Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 34	1 Corinthians 15	The Way of Love	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 35	Galatians 5	Freedom in Christ	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 36	Ephesians 4-6	Living Biblically	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 37	Philippians 1-2	Christ's Example	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 38	Colossians 3:1-17	Putting On The New Self	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 39	James 1	Pure Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 40	Revelation 21-22	The New Heavens & New Earth	<input type="checkbox"/>

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THE GOSPELS IN 40 DAYS

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Day 2	Matthew 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 3	Matthew 5-7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 4	Matthew 8-9	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 5	Matthew 10-12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 6	Matthew 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 7	Matthew 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 8	Matthew 17-18	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 9	Matthew 19-21	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Day 11	Matthew 24-25	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Day 13	Mark 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 14	Mark 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 15	Mark 6-7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 16	Mark 8-10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 17	Mark 11-13	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 18	Mark 14-16	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 19	Luke 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 20	Luke 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Day 22	Luke 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 23	Luke 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 24	Luke 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 25	Luke 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 26	Luke 15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 27	Luke 16-17	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 28	Luke 18-19	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 29	Luke 20-21	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 30	Luke 22-24	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 31	John 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 32	John 3-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 33	John 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 34	John 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 35	John 9-11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 36	John 12-14	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 37	John 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 38	John 17	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 39	John 18-19	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 40	John 20-21	<input type="checkbox"/>