

# Running on Empty

The Difficulties associated with soul work and the  
delight of Remaining Full of God's Spirit

# Running on Empty



A photograph of a snowy mountain range under a dark night sky. The sky is filled with a vibrant green aurora borealis, with several bright green bands of light stretching across the horizon. The mountains are covered in snow and are silhouetted against the dark sky. The overall scene is serene and majestic.

Running on empty as a way of life.

Jackson Browne



# The Problem with our age

**It is not difficult to get a person interested in the message of the Gospel: it is terrifically difficult to sustain the interest.**

Eugene Peterson: A long Obedience in the same Direction

**The essential thing in heaven and earth is...  
that there should be a long obedience in the  
same direction**

Friedrich Nietzsche

**When empty makes us unhappy**

Unhappy Christians are, to say the least, a poor recommendation for the Christian faith; and there can be little doubt but that the exuberant joy of the early Christians was one of the most potent factors in the spread of Christianity.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones— Spiritual Depression



# **The Habits Associated with an empty tank**



**What's it like?**

J.P Moreland



Depression

Anxiety

Fear

Desensitized to sin

What's it like

Fatigue

Lack of purpose

Hunger



Where do we see it?



# The Disciples of Jesus

**Mark's Gospel**

## Mark 14:32-42

They \*came to a place named Gethsemane; and He \*said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed." And He \*took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. And He \*said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch." And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."



**And He \*came and \*found them sleeping, and \*said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again He went away and prayed, saying the same words.**

**And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. And He \*came the third time, and \*said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"**

**They could not rise to the crisis because they  
were not prepared for the crisis**



# A diary of emptiness

I Samuel 19

**“There is but one step between me and death...”**

**David, Son of Jesse, I Samuel 20**



# The David before the Kingdom

## The Fugitive Years

- The ease of normal life is interrupted
- The chaos of the hunt becomes the norm
- The fear of the unknown is elevated
- The anxiety in the face of death threats is real
- Relational supports diminished
- His decisions become irrational and ill conceived
- The bread and the Priests at Nob
- The feigned insanity
- Principle is replaced by expediency

**And then, there's Daniel**



# A Man for the Times

## The Life Story of Daniel

\* Early life

\* Consecration

\* Education

\* Training

\* Purpose

\* Fitness

\* Service

**A break from my problems**

**A new start to my day**

# **The Habits associated with a Full Tank**

**Require a new playbook**



# Have you considered the Psalms?

**“The simplest description of the five books of Psalms is that they were the inspired prayer-and-praise book of Israel. They are revelations of truth, not abstractly, but in the terms of human experience. The truth revealed is wrought into the emotions, desires, and sufferings of the people of God by the circumstances through which they pass”.**

**D. Martyn Lloyd Jones (9)**

# The playbook: Psalm 42-43

# Analyzing our condition

- Understanding our temperament: Knowing ourselves well
- Recognizing our physical condition
- A reaction to an event(s); an unusual or exceptional experience- a really great blessing, etc.



# Analyzing our condition...

- The Devil: either directly or indirectly, the adversary of our souls is active, weakening our emotions and closing our testimonies
- Our propensity toward unbelief: (I do believe but...)

# Taking yourself in Hand

**We must talk to ourselves, rather than  
allowing ourselves to talk to us...**

**Psalm 42-43**



# Do you know how to “Handle yourself?”

**“The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. You must say to your soul: ‘why art thou cast down’—what business do you have to be disquieted?**

**D. Martyn Lloyd Jones (9)**

# Handling ourselves? (Continued)

**“...You must turn on yourself, upbraid yourself, condemn yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself: ‘hope thou in God’ — instead of muttering in this depressed, unhappy way.”**

**D. Martyn Lloyd Jones (9)**

# Reminding ourselves of...

- Who is this God I know?
- What do I know to be true of Him?
- What has He done in the past?
- What has He pledged to do going forward?



# The Habits we're building toward



# The Disciplines

## Where the **relief** lies

- Contemplating the Greatness of God
- Meditating upon his attributes
- Forging a better way: practice: 2 Peter 1:4-11; 2Tim4:7
- Examining ourselves in light of God's Word: Edwards
- Confessing, repenting, and renewing the mind





# The Disciplines

Where the **practice** lies

- The power of physical exercise : Ps. 120-134: The Song of Ascents:
- Walking and thinking: a powerful combination: The Road to Emmaus
- Waking early, praying intentionally and fasting regularly— a powerful combination
- The thoughts toward God- away from ourselves





# Questions



# Resources

For more helpful articles and other materials

<http://www.markcongrove.com>

Or

Instagram: mcongrove