



# Burnout

By Waldo Malan

The end of a year somehow always catches one unprepared. It is not as if we are totally unaware of the progress of the year but rather that when we seriously start preparing for the festivities surrounding our Lord's birthday, we somehow find it hard to believe that December is here yet again. Sometimes it feels like the older one gets the faster a year speeds by.

In the throes of preparing for Christmas celebrations we are sometimes assuaged by times of self-reflecting. Thoughts about what had or hadn't been accomplished sporadically flash through one's mind (well, at least my mind - are there other people like that out there?) This time of introspection and (could I call it self-evaluation), is a positive time to reflect on the missed opportunities and future hopes and goals. I think it is important to reflect like this, not alone but with the Lord.

Sadly, this is also the time of the year where 'burnout' victims increase - these are they that come to the end of all their strength: mental, emotional and physical. The human being (spirit, soul and body) comes to a point where everything collapses and crashes. Of course "burnout" is not restricted to this time of year only, but there is some connection between the end of the year to

the end of one's tether.

Reflecting upon all this reminded me again of the two sisters who were special friends of Jesus: Mary and Martha. We've often heard and read about them. They have often been the subject of a teaching or sermon. We know that, according to Jesus, Mary chose the "better thing" to do as opposed to Martha. Now Martha did not do a BAD thing as such, what with working herself to the bone in serving the Lord, but she neglected the important thing of "waiting" upon the Lord. In a sense she was waitressing too much and waiting too little. I think that in time Martha would probably have experienced a burnout of some kind!

Thinking about these extraordinary two women made me reflect on another scripture verse found in Paul's letter to the Romans: "However, the Most High does not dwell in houses and temples made with hands..." (Romans 7:48).

The question today is a simple one: are you a candidate for burnout? One of the most important factors that will select you as a prime candidate is when you try to do all things in your own strength. Another is when the quantity of things you do for the Lord outweighs the quality. You can build hundreds of houses and hundreds of churches, you can establish thousands of min-

istries, but if you neglect your time with the Lord (your time of waiting upon the Lord) you stand a fairly good chance of burning yourself out.

If the Most High does not dwell in houses and temples made with hands, then where does He dwell? God dwells in the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3). If God dwells with us, then we can dwell in HIS HOUSE. If God dwells in us then we are HIS TEMPLE. Let us never forget to set time apart for the One Who deserves all our praise. God is not really interested in how much we do for Him, but rather how much time we spend with Him. Yes, we can talk to God while we are physically labouring, and we talk less to Him when we are mentally labouring. What God really appreciates is when we STOP EVERYTHING for Him - all the work, effort, labour, good intentions, motivations and attitudes - and simply sit at His feet having fellowship.

The cure for burnout is praise. May this thought be with you during this time of festivity and reflection. I also wish you a blessed time from God during this season of celebration and may God's will be fulfilled in every way in the New Year.