

## Fried, Frazzled & Fatigued

### The Problem

*Stop this train,  
I want to get off and go home again,  
I can't take this speed that it's moving in  
I know I can't, but honestly won't someone stop this train?*

Can you relate to these words of singer songwriter John Mayer, lamenting the pace of modern day life, how quickly we are forced to grow up and all the challenges that we are never quite prepared to face? We live in a crazy world that leaves many of us overwhelmed, distracted and fatigued.

A recent BT survey found that 1 in 3 adults feel overwhelmed by technology. During our life time, we will partially learn how to operate 20,000 gadgets, we are likely to be exposed to 3500 marketing messages every 24 hours, we will spend up to 10 hours a day interacting with various forms of media. 3.4 billion people on the planet now have a mobile phone, meaning they can be constantly connected, and constantly distracted.

Although there have been great gains in medicine, technology, education and living standards, we face more interruptions, more choices, more stress, and more time pressure than ever before. We are often drained, stressed, angry, isolated and unfulfilled. And worst of all, we are spiritually weakened by the pace of life, by our lack of community, our lack of time and our lack of energy to cultivate our relationship with God.

### The Solution

John Ortberg tells the story of a time he called up his friend Dallas Willard for some advice about maintaining spiritual health in the busyness of a new position of leadership. Dallas paused for some time and then came back with the following comment: 'You must do all you can to ruthlessly eliminate hurry.' John quickly jotted the comment down and said 'Yep, what else have you got?' and Dallas replied: 'Nothing, that's it.'

Slowing down may take ruthless effort; it will involve running counter to our culture's expectations of what it means to be productive, useful and valuable; it will mean we have to choose not to do certain things to make space.

Here are two things we might want to put in that space:

**01 Sleep.** James Bryan Smith, author of *The Good and Beautiful God*, recommends sleep as a vital spiritual exercise: If our bodies are not sufficiently rested, *our energies will be diminished and our ability to pray, read the Bible, enter solitude or memorize Scripture will be minimized... Sleep is an act of surrender. It is a declaration of trust. It is admitting that we are not God.*"

**02 Going on retreat.** Getting away for a day or two, or more if it can be arranged, has an amazingly restorative effect on our spiritual, physical and emotional health. Ruth Hayley Barton writes, "*On retreat we are rescued from the treadmill of relentless human striving so that we can touch the life and energy of the Spirit moving deep within us. In this set-apart time and place, we listen for the still, small voice of God telling us who we really are...*"

So how are you feeling? Are you fried, frazzled and fatigued? If so, what can you do to find the rest for your soul that our loving father God longs to give you? How are you going to redress the balance and make space for quietness, stillness and listening?