



Naming and Taming Compassion Fatigue:

Let us go to a quiet place and rest awhile (Mark 6:31)

Jesus knows compassion fatigue and asks us today to come, find quiet, and receive rest and renewal. Compassion fatigue is the residual negativity that ministers can experience when certain conditions are met.

It can negatively change the brain and body!

It has been studied for decades and has many definitions.

For this course, we will use the following definition from Beth Hudnall Stamm and the “Professional Quality of Life Elements Theory and Measurement,” which defines compassion fatigue as:

Low C_____

And moderate or high

B_____ and S_____

This is not a math equation; it is rather a continuum.

Compassion Satisfaction is as it sounds:

Let's look at "burnout." According to the National Library of Medicine there are three main areas of symptoms that are signs of burnout syndrome (which contributes to compassion fatigue):

1. E _____
2. A _____
3. R _____

There is one more component to compassion fatigue: secondary traumatization ("S.T."), which is: _____

Taming Compassion Fatigue Through Developing New Habits:

When I had compassion fatigue, I needed to re-invest my time into healthy activities. In order to do this, I had to name and re-claim my personal "time-i-cides." **Some people don't have time-i-cides; if that is your case you may not need this part.** "Time-i-cides" are: _____ (mostly with screens).

Unproductive screen time is _____

Productive screen time is _____

We need to _____ time and develop new, healing habits.

The good news is that 30 minutes a day helps! Pray about and fill in the following question and have another trusted person look it over to confirm it:

- 1) This is how much unproductive screen time I have per day: _____
- 2) Now commit to re-investing 30 minutes a day of this unproductive screen time in developing new habits which can help compassion fatigue.

The Quick Science of Habits and Willpower:

The human brain only has a little willpower every day, and about 40 – 50% of what we do is habitual (meaning we don't use willpower to do it and we don't think about it). If we use our limited willpower to create a healthy habit, then we will eventually (within 30 – 45 days) do that new habit nearly automatically and not use our limited willpower for that behavior. We can then invest our limited willpower into creating another new habit and repeat the whole cycle. This is a powerful way to change any behavior for the better.



Assignments for this week:

When you are ready, read and sign the following commitment:

Through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the presence of the Holy Spirit, I now commit to investing _____ minutes per day to developing new healthy habits in my life. I will try hard to keep this commitment throughout these online classes and will devote time and attention to completing all the PDFs, assignments, attitudes, and actions that are recommended in these classes. May Abba grant success to this endeavor (Ps. 90:17).

Date

Signature

Watch your self-talk, it will help or hinder compassion fatigue.

Is your self-talk garbage-based or Gospel-based?

Examples of garbage-based self-talk: "how could you be so stupid," "see, you can never change," "you just messed up again," etc.

An example of Gospel-based self-talk: "I am a child of God and I just made a mistake, that doesn't make me a mistake. I need to confess that mistake, and let Christ redeem it, then I need to forgive myself."

Through our Baptism we are sons and daughters of God! That is a forever reality! In fact, I believe that the greatest pain in hell could very well be the realization of who we are (our great identity as a son or daughter of God through baptism) and now we can do nothing about it! Baptism is a forever reality; we can't lose it.

Of course, we don't always live our great reality out, that is called sin. But even when we sin it doesn't mean we have lost our Baptism; it means we are not living according to it.

The way we view ourselves will impact our self-talk, and our self-talk impacts the power of compassion fatigue. If our self-talk is garbage-based (as mine was when I had compassion fatigue) it will strengthen the hold of compassion fatigue.



Assignments for this week (continued):

If our self-talk is mostly garbage-based, we are doing Satan's work. We need to make sure our self-talk is Gospel-based by telling ourselves every hour who we are in Christ.

Fill in the following questions please:

Here are how many times per hour I have garbage-based self-talk: _____

Here are how many times per hour I have Gospel-based self-talk: _____

Which one is larger?

Here are some ideas to reduce the garbage and increase the Gospel:

Set your alarm on your smart phone to ring hourly or set your watch to chime every hour. When that alarm goes off, ask yourself how that hour was regarding self-talk and remind yourself that you are not doing any more garbage-based self-talk.

Moreover, when the alarm goes off tell yourself three (3) Scriptural-based Truths about who you are in Christ because of your great baptism. If you don't have three Scriptural-based Truths about who you are, please fill in the last section:

Here are my three positive Scriptural-based Truths I will tell myself every hour:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Start a habit of "Intentional Christian Breathing" (ICB). Breath is holy. In Genesis, God breathed over the water. Jesus sent His Holy Spirit by breathing on the apostles. We will talk more about this in future classes, but for now start it.

Start by breathing in 3 seconds and out 3 seconds (3 x 3 ICB); don't hold it, just breathe. As you inhale, focus on breathing in the Holy Spirit's warmth. Feel the Spirit's love warming your heart area in your chest. Once you can do 3 x 3 comfortably, go to 4 x 4 (4 seconds in, 4 seconds out). Once you can do 4 x 4 comfortably, go to 5 x 5 and stay at 5 x 5's. That is your goal! 5 x 5 ICB for 10 minutes twice a day.

Take this last assignment seriously and you will notice the peace that surpasses understanding flowing through your Temple.



Last assignment:

Make sure your major wounds are healed. We all have major and minor psychological wounds in life, and they are like physical wounds. Remember that the default setting for most physical wounds is that they get worse without help. For example, if you have a larger cut on your finger and you ignore it because you believe you don't need any help, that can easily lead to an infection. If you choose to ignore that infection, that can lead to a more serious blood infection. Without treatment of antibiotics, cleansing agents, and careful tending of the wound, the wound will get bigger and eventually you might have to cut your finger off to save your body. If you ignored that advice, that which started as a cut on your finger (which could have been relatively easy to heal) could lead to your death through a serious blood infection.

Psychological wounds are similar. We all have major and minor psychological wounds. The Holy Spirit wants us to tend to them and get them healed. If we don't, the default setting is that they will get worse (like the physical wound example above).

In America it is very easy to numb our wounds and not heal them. This is not good because then we might have a serious infection and not even know about it! I have worked with many Church workers (and others) whose numbing has led to addictions. The numbing could be through pornography, drinking, gambling, eating too much, working too much, cutting, or other behaviors.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), "20.2 million adults in the U.S. had a substance use disorder and 7.9 million had both a substance use disorder and another mental illness." Many more Americans are addicted to pornography and gambling. If you think you have been caught by addiction, or you have a mental illness, you are not alone. Licensed therapy can help. I have been licensed as a therapist since 1996 and have seen the Lord bring tremendous healing from many disorders! If you think you can benefit from therapy, please talk to your pastor, deacon, deaconess, or other trusted minister about therapists they trust. Or, call your District office and ask for therapists that they trust. You can still possibly do these classes along with therapy; that is up to you and your therapist to determine. If you believe you are not numbing and do not need therapy, we can continue with these classes.

