

# Feeling like you never do enough and just want to quit?

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**Q: I serve at my parish all of the time. Whenever my pastor (or really anyone) asks me to help, I usually say yes. On top of that, I feel like I am never doing enough, praying enough, or serving enough. I just want to quit. What do I do?**

A: First, let me thank you so much for reaching out. There are times when we are simply at the end of our rope and we can feel like we have tried everything. These are the times when we are most tempted to flip the table, give up, and just be done with all of it. It sounds like this is exactly the kind of moment you find yourself in right now. So, before you abandon ship, let me thank you for asking for help.

Asking for help is always a good sign. In asking for help, you are acknowledging that things aren't "fine." In asking for help, you are giving yourself permission to be struggling and to not have all the answers. In asking for help, you are admitting that you are not perfect. And this is precisely what is necessary.

It can be absolutely exhausting when a person feels like they have to do it all, when they feel like they have to do it perfectly, and when they feel like it is never enough. The fact that you have acknowledged and admitted this means that you are open to hearing the truth. And the truth is: You don't have to do it all. You don't have to be everything for everyone. And you do not have to be perfect.

But before you do anything, there is one thing you need to do. You need to be reminded who you are.

In our culture, our worth is often based on our work. Our value is based on what we can offer. And this is partly true. When it comes to sports or work, those who bring greater benefit to the team or to the company have a more highly valued place. But when it comes to life, this is decidedly untrue. Your worth is not predicated on your output, even when it comes to "church work." There are so many Christians who will buy into the lie that their place in the Father's heart rises and falls depending on how much they do or how well they perform. That is contrary to the Gospel, and yet so many of us believe it.

We can be tempted to put our mission first. After all, the mission is important, isn't it? If you don't do it, who will? And yet, over the centuries, Christians have discovered that this is a recipe for burn out and disaster. The great saints of the church have discovered another way of thinking. And this has recently been formulated in three letters (representing three words): R-I-M.

Relationship. Identity. Mission.

If you remember (and keep in order) these three reminders, you will be saved from what you described in your letter.

Relationship comes first. Always. When we remember that we have been brought into relationship with God the Father, everything changes. We can let go of the endless working for approval. We can abandon the temptation to believe that we are obligated to continuously prove our worth. In baptism, you were given access to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. You have been brought into relationship with the most Holy Trinity; God himself! This relationship is a pure gift; none of us has ever done anything to deserve it. It simply flows from the fact that God has loved you first.

This relationship gives you your Identity. Too often, we take our identity from our mission. But that is a lie. If it were true, what would happen when our mission changes? What would happen when we no longer have anything to offer? What would happen when the mission is over? No. Our identity is a direct result of having been brought into relationship with God. When you were baptized, you were given a new identity; you were made into a child of God. This is what and who you are. And it is not based off your performance. It is based off the relationship you have been brought into with God himself.

Lastly comes Mission. Our mission (the tasks God has entrusted to us) come only as a consequence of having been brought into relationship with the Father and having been given our identity by that relationship. When the mission changes (or when we fail at our mission), we experience sadness but not devastation, because our mission or our success does not determine our identity or worth.

When you and I live out of this truth, we become free. In your case, you will become free to say “no” when you are invited to serve. You will become free to not pray all of the prayers or all of the devotions that other people might be doing. You will be free, not to quit everything, but to quit some things.

In fact, I wonder if that isn’t what God is asking you to do in your exhaustion: remember who’s you are, remember who you are, and to simply do less as a beloved child of the Father.