



## **BURNOUT AND PERSONALITY TYPE**

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It is a proven medical and psychological fact that too many unresolved stressors can lead to burnout. What is stressful to one person may not be stressful to another person. For one it is normal for another it is not normal. The difference revolves in our perceptions of the events that occur in our lives.

The term *personality type* has been coined in an attempt to identify a person's susceptibility to stress; then to burnout. In 1959 two cardiologists, Drs Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman, summarized decades of research to come up with the much used and publicized **Type A Personality**. Some of the Type A personality characteristics are:

- ✓ Has a chronic sense of time urgency. Rushed and hurried, the person is always "on edge" about something.
- ✓ Has quick and abrupt speech, often interrupting others.
- ✓ Is very competitive – even in noncompetitive situations.
- ✓ Is a hard-driving, achievement-oriented, and status-conscious person.
- ✓ Frequently becomes hostile and aggressive.

On the other side of the scale is the **Type B Personality**. This person takes a more relaxed and easier-going approach to life. He is able to go "with the flow". A fact research has revealed about the differences between type A and B is that Type A men are 2 to 3 times more likely to suffer angina, heart attacks, or sudden death than Type B men.

In Robert Heller's book ***Achieving Excellence***; he makes the following observations about Type A personalities:

"Do you:

- Feel a constant pressure to get things done?
- Often compete against the clock?
- Always hurry?
- Make decisions quickly?
- Get restless and impatient with being idle?



- Speak fast?
- Always arrive on time?
- Think about and do several things at the same time?
- Move, walk, and eat rapidly?
- Often get impatient?
- See yourself as very ambitious?
- In conversations, display brisk and impatient body movements, taut facial muscles, fist-clenching, explosive and hurried speech patterns; or a lack of bodily relaxation? (p.49, 1999, DK Publishing, N.Y., N.Y.)”

Type A persons in ministry usually find themselves creating stressful activities that cause stress, which if not handled properly, leads to burnout. Enough is never enough; more is better; after all, we are judged by the fruit we bear (more quantity than quality).

In going back over the above list, how does it describe you and your personality? Take a few minutes and honestly reflect on each question and how it applies to you.

Do you know your personality type? I encourage you to go to [www.personalitybook.com](http://www.personalitybook.com) and take the “*Your Personality Profile*.” It has been taken by millions of people and is a good tool to help you manage your stressors.

While stress is a normal part of everyday life, we must guard against too many too frequently. This is where stress management comes in and helps us recognize and reduce stressors we all experience.

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