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Getting Life Back In Balance
“Getting My Schedule Back in Balance”
(Part 2)

Intro: Show video “Then and Now”. Life has definitely changed over the years. We tend to fill our schedules from sun up to sun down. We are a society constantly on the run. Yet, is this the way God intended us to live? There is no way for us to experience a life in balance until we let God bring our schedules back in balance.

HOW? Let me give you 4 Biblical truths to help bring balance to our schedules.

I. Define Your Values

- Everyone has values. They may never have been articulated / or written down, but everyone has them. A value is simply what you define as most important to you. You could call them your priorities.
 - A. Know what they are
 - Prov. 14:15-16 “...the prudent carefully consider their steps...fools plunge ahead with great confidence.” (NLT)*
 - 1. The only way to carefully consider your steps (the way you’re living) is to identify your values. Our values / our priorities become the rudder that steers the course of our lives. (no values = no rudder!)
 - 2. A lot of emotional turmoil people feel in life is because they live in a way that conflicts with their internal value system. They live in a way that cuts across the grain of what they believe is most important. This is why some people are so miserable. (Time at work Vs time with family)
 - 3. The Bible says wise people consider how they are living. So let me give you some practical ways to do this.
 - 4. First, you must begin by identifying your values / your priorities. What are the most important things in your life. I gave this to you about 2 years ago and it is worth looking at it again. It’s called the Wheel of Balance
 - 5. Explain Wheel of Balance (slide) The wheel represents my life and every spoke of the wheel represents a priority in your life. (explain - exercise)
 - 6. Our values need to be consistent with the truth of the word of God. (I knew one young man years ago who had the goal to be a millionaire by 35)

B. Know where you're at

Haggai 1:5 "This is what the Lord Almighty says: Consider how things are going for you!" (NLT) I love this verse. Here's God saying to us..."Hey, how's that working for you?" (What God says to us when we're miserable!)

1. The problem with our culture today is that we rarely slow down long enough to do some personal evaluation. You just can't evaluate on the run.
2. Now look at the wheel, and evaluate your priorities by how you're doing. Be brutally honest! On a scale of 1-10 (explain). Rate your satisfaction level with each value. 1 is by the hub / a 10 is by the rim.
3. Another fun exercise is to have your spouse or close friend do this for you.
4. Now, connect the dots. (slide) This will help to illustrate to you just how out of balance life may be for you. It may reveal to you why the ride feels so bumpy.

C. Know you have a choice

Josh. 24:15 "...then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served...or will it be the gods...in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord." (NLT)

1. We always have a choice who we will serve / how we are going to live our lives / how we are going to invest our time. We are not victims of our culture.
2. If we serve the gods of busyness, that's our choice. We can't blame our jobs / our boss / our culture / or the circumstances of life. We only have ourselves to blame. We are choosing to live this way.
3. As believers in Christ, we are commanded to live counter culturally. God has more for us than this unfulfilling / unsatisfying / existence of busyness. In Rom. 12:2, the Bible tells us to not "let the world squeeze you into it's mold."... But unfortunately, we have.
 - What are we to do?

II. Decide To Say No

Ecc. 2:22-23 "So what do people get for all their hard work? Their days of labor are filled with pain and grief; even at night they cannot rest..." (NLT)

- This is how I feel when my life is out of balance. There's been too many nights when I can't sleep / I have a knot in my stomach / there's a tightness across my chest / you feel the weight / you know the feeling!

A. Reorganize your life around your values

Phil. 1:10 "...that you may approve the things that are excellent..." (NASB)

1. We only have time in a typical day to do what is best. This means that we have to learn to say NO to a lot of GOOD things in order to have time to say YES to the BEST things.

2. We face a myriad of choices every day. Not every choice is between good and evil. Most of our choices are between things that are good – better – or best.
3. Once you determine your values, you know what is best. Now, you can say NO to even good things without guilt knowing that you are saying YES to the best things. (This is how to deal with the guilt of saying no)
4. If you don't learn to say no, you will increase your guilt and emotional turmoil because you know you have violated a value.
5. How does your weekly schedule reflect your values? Remember time reflects values. If you say your marriage / children / God are values...consider the time spent.
6. Understand that in order to manage time you must get organized. Living your values requires planning. Stop allowing life to create your schedule. It won't "just happen".
7. **Assignment:** Go home / look at your weekly calendar / and write in activities that reflect your values. Say no to things that are keeping you from living the way God intends you to live. Plan in the excellent things!

B. Realize the consequences

1. "What do you mean by this?" I mean there are results for living this way. There are positive and negative results. The positive results are many.
 - You will feel great that you are living consistently with what you believe
 - You will feel in control of your life instead of it feeling out of control
 - Your relationships will be transformed (God and others)
 - Your joy will be restored
2. But, I need to tell you about the negative consequences for living this way. When we choose to live counter-cultural, not everyone is happy about it. *I Peter 4:4 "Now your former friends wonder why you have stopped running around with them, and they curse you for it." (CEV)*
3. Not everyone is going to be happy about your new freedom in saying NO. People / friends / co-workers / family members may be quite frustrated with you.
4. There is a cost in living this way. You cannot be a people pleaser and live your godly values at the same time. We have to live our values and accept the consequences.
5. This may mean you even have to eventually change jobs. If you have a job that forces you to violate a core value, it's the wrong job no matter how much money you make! It makes no sense to throw away your marriage / your children / for the sake of a job!
 - Will we learn to say NO?

III. Dedicate Your Life To God

A. God wants to be at the center of your life

Mark 12:28-30 “Of all the commandments, which is the most important? Jesus replied, ‘The most important is this...you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ (NLT)

1. In other words, God needs to be at the center of our lives. He is the most important value we have. In fact, He’s not one of the spokes, He is the hub.
2. We have 2 choices for our lives. We can be at the hub or Christ can be at the hub. (Slide) Too many people make their relationship with Jesus just one of the spokes in the wheel. Their relationship with Him is one of the pieces they’re trying to manage; instead of letting Jesus manage them.
3. Why does Jesus need to be at the center? Because we do a lousy job of trying to balance all the parts. We don’t have the resources to do this well. Once I get one piece in balance, another part gets out of balance. It’s exhausting / discouraging / and unending.

Matt. 11:28 “...Come to Me all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” (NLT) Let Me be the center! I’ll balance it! Carry it!

4. Who’s at the center of your life? Are you wearing yourself out trying to maintain balance? Ready to try something new? Placing God at the center of your life is giving Him control. It is giving Him ownership. It is taking your hands off of the steering wheel of your life and letting someone else drive.
5. You and I were never designed to be the centerpiece of our existence. Some of you have been Christians for years and Jesus is still only a part of your life you are trying to manage and balance.
6. Some of you are stressed out trying to find time to read your Bible and pray. You are trying to manage your spiritual life. You’ve made your relationship with God into a “to do” list instead of something natural and relational.
7. Who’s at the center of your life this morning? Are you ready to start making that choice daily?

B. God desires to bring balance to your life

Col. 1:17 “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” (NASB)

1. I love this verse! If Jesus can hold all things together (the universe / stars / planets / atoms), then I think He can hold me together too. Sometimes, I can feel as if I’m coming apart at the seams. I need someone to hold me together!
2. Balance is one of the key things Jesus brings to our experience when we allow Him to be the center of our lives. He literally holds me together and all the pieces of my life.
3. When I allow Jesus to be the center of my life, I hear His voice telling me when my schedule is getting out of balance. I don’t have to wait until a disaster to change. He graciously – gently - lovingly tells me.
4. A life dedicated to God is a life that is balanced by God.

IV. Determine To Live With Eternity In View

Living life with an eternal perspective will have a dramatic impact on our time and schedules. 2 keys to this perspective.

A. Live your life knowing how brief it is

Ps. 39:4-5 “Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered, and that my life is fleeing away. My life is no longer than the width of my hand. My entire life is just a moment to You; human existence is but a breath.” (NLT)

1. Now, I don't share this to discourage any of you, but the reality is that this life is brief. In light of eternity, I am a speck of dust on the eternal time line. My physical existence on this planet is limited.
2. Most people tend to live in the denial of the fact that everyone is going to die! Death is something that is ahead for every one of us. Nobody gets to cheat it. There is a 100% chance of this happening to you.
3. This fact should influence our time / our schedules / our values. Too often we live in a way as if to think we'll live here forever. That I have all kinds of time. That's simply not true!
4. If you died today, do you ever wonder what people would say of your life? What would you want them to say about your life? Is this the way you're living?
5. I have a strange habit, I read the obituaries. I know this sounds rather morbid, but I like to see what people write that is a summary of a person's life. What was this person all about? What did they value? How did they invest the few years they had? (I read shaking my head many times)
6. At the end of your life are you going to have regrets? As a Pastor I have heard plenty of regrets at the end of a person's life or regrets from family members who always thought they had more time.
7. Knowing that your days are numbered / limited / brief helps us get with the program. It creates an urgency to change. I may not have tomorrow to get it together. To live my values / to put Christ at the center / But I have right now!
 - Some of you need to be motivated by this fact!

B. Live your life knowing you are accountable for it

II Cor. 5:10 “For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done...” (NLT)

1. I need to live this life in preparation for eternity not living in denial of it. Knowing that I will be held accountable for how I lived this gift of life God gave me impacts how I schedule my time. Accountability is powerful!
2. Accountability makes me a better person. I need accountability. If I know that my work will be evaluated, I take that work more seriously / I invest more

effort. I can't imagine going to school trying to be motivated if they didn't correct your work or give grades.

3. God wants us to live in a way so that we understand we're accountable to Him for how we live. Every Christian will stand before Jesus someday to experience rewards for living consistently / faithfully to God's values on this earth.
4. This has nothing to do with where we spend eternity. That is decided in this life. This has nothing to do with punishment. Jesus took our punishment. This has everything to do with faithfulness and the rewards that wait for those who choose to live this way.
5. If I lose this eternal perspective, I'll never get my schedule in balance because I don't think it matters. We forget that it matters in this life and the next!