



Life Blueprints

Overcoming Imbalance
When Life Is Spinning Out of Control
Dr. Jay Dennis

Luke 2:52 NASV

And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Time Spent

It actually takes a lot of energy to live. If we are not careful, we will use it all up living.

A man may be allotted threescore and ten years. If he is, he will spend twenty-three years and four months of it asleep. He will work nineteen years and eight months. He will spend ten years and two months in religion and recreation. He will spend six years and ten months eating and drinking. Six years will be spent in traveling. Four years are spent in illness. In this time he will spend two years dressing.

Come to think of it, no wonder we are tired.

God's Not in a Hurry!

A friend of the great preacher Phillip Brooks, called on him and found him impatiently pacing the floor. His friend asked what the trouble was. Dr. Brooks exclaimed, "The trouble is that I am in a hurry, and God is not!"

Have you ever felt that life has gotten out of balance? Do you feel like the plate spinner, always having to keep five or six plates spinning? At the same time? "A balanced life is characterized by order, peace, and wholeness."

Webster's New World Dictionary

1. Balance – Mental or emotional stability.

2. Imbalance – A lack of mental or emotional stability.

Jesus is the perfect example of a completely balanced life.

Luke 2:52 NASV

And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

1. Mentally/Emotionally.

"in wisdom..."

Wisdom is knowing what to do with what you know. Jesus never stopped learning, never stopped growing mentally and emotionally. He learned about the world around Him, not just the Old Testament. He probably read the *Jerusalem Morning News*, the *Nazarene Newsweek*, the *Galilean Gazette*. He also took time to be alone, emotionally to refuel.

2. Physically.

“and stature...”

Jesus took care of Himself physically. I do not believe for a minute that Jesus was some weak, anemic, pale figure. He was a carpenter. He used His muscles. He walked, not at the mall or the track, but He walked. He kept His shape. He slept. He ate right (not over weight). Did Jesus smoke or drink or let stress tear up His body? No way.

3. Spiritually.

“and in favor with God...”

Jesus spent daily time with the Father. He got apart, alone to be with the Father. He developed spiritually. That’s the hub. This must come first. Are you living a well-balanced spiritual life? Are you growing? Are you more like Jesus today than you were yesterday?

4. Socially/Relationally.

“And in favor with...men.”

He developed relationships. He spent time with people. He wasn’t some monk in a cave, isolated from the “real world.” Jesus was on a mission to save the world, the greatest mission in the history of mankind. Yet He took time to attend a wedding and participate in its festivities. We may be tempted to think we should not take time out from our “important” work for social occasions. But maybe these social occasions are part of our mission. Jesus valued these wedding festivities because they involved people, and Jesus came to be with people. Our mission can often be accomplished in joyous times of celebration with others. “Handbook of Bible Application.”

I. IDENTIFY WHAT IS OUT OF BALANCE AND WHY.

What area of your life is out of balance? It's one of these four areas, no doubt, but it can manifest itself in a number of ways. Priorities can get out of order.

1. Spiritually Things Can Get Out of Balance.

How? You can neglect to grow, to spend time before God. To put Him first. That gets everything else out of balance. This is the hub.

Matthew 6:33 NASV

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

Spiritually you must not only be right with God, but do the right things to exercise your spiritual muscles. Now God doesn't intend for you to stay on your knees 24 hours a day or read the Bible all the time. Doing that makes Johnny so heavenly minded he's no earthly good. (By the way, I don't see that happen very often.)

2. Relationally Things Can Get Out of Balance.

You can neglect relationships, fail to spend time with your husband, wife, children. There may be a broken relationship that's causing life to get out of balance. You may be in a wrong relationship. If there is unforgiveness, unresolved conflicts, your whole life can get out of order. If you aren't developing relationships, making new friends, doing fun things together – Imbalance.

3. Mentally/Emotionally Things Can Get Out of Balance.

Your thoughts can get out of balance. Your emotions can get imbalanced. Discouragement, loneliness, depression, sorrow, anger can begin to take control.

4. Physically Things Can Get Out of Balance.

Out of shape, overweight, not getting enough rest, not exercising, not eating right all can lead to an imbalance. However, some go to an opposite extreme and concentrate only on their bodies. The body can easily get addicted to something whenever these other three areas are out of balance.

II. MAKE WISE DECISIONS.

The decisions you make now will determine your tomorrow, your future, even your destiny. Do you think Jesus decided to die on the cross the day before? No way. He determined that a long time before. It was settled. He would do the will of God no matter what.

You see the messes you are facing now are due to bad, wrong, or premature decisions sometime in the past. When making a decision you have to live by:

James 1:5 NASV

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

One writer puts decision making into perspective:

Let me share how I handle not knowing what God wants. First, I know that I've been available to hear, and I know that God hasn't spoken. That assurance grows out of the habit I've formed of spending at least an hour a day in Bible reading and prayer. Part of that prayer time is devoted to listening. After I've told God that I need direction for a particular decision, I spend enough time waiting for an answer so that if I don't get one, I can rest in the knowledge that he didn't give me one.

If I don't receive God's direction, I won't make a decision unless it is imperative. Until then I permit the status quo to be maintained. Very often it turns out that I don't have to make any decision at all. Time and circumstances take care of the matter without my having to decide or do anything.

I also take the position that God will direct my steps. If I've been available and heard nothing, and if the situation has developed to the point that I must take the initiative, I make the best decision I can. I don't decide more than I need to decide to take care of the situation; but rather than let my indecision become my decision, I take the initiative.

Following that, I await the results. It may be that one decision leads to another. But each time I repeat the process.

Over the years I've learned to wait and to exercise patience. That combination of listening and being patient has produced within me the freedom from anxiety that escaped me for so long.

III. BREAK FREE FROM OVER COMMITMENT.

There is nothing that can get your life imbalanced like over commitment – saying ‘yes’ to so many things that you run yourself crazy trying to fulfill all you have committed to. You get tired, irritable, and ineffective. I mean, have you ever thought about all the things you have said you would do and think, “How did I get myself into this mess?” It can become a pattern. It’s easy to say, “Yes, I’ll do it” at the time to appease someone, then you have to pay up or lose your credibility. Then there is anxiety. Stress. Rat race track. You can do more than God expects you to.

"Or what king would ever dream of going to war without first sitting down with his counselors and discussing whether his army of 10,000 is strong enough to defeat the 20,000 men who are marching against him?"

Quote: “It’s About Time” – Ken Smith

Jesus was saying, “Before you say you’ll do something sit down and count the cost.” Failure to do that will lead to a number of serious problems for you, including over commitment.

But what can you do now when you realize you’ve already said ‘yes’ to far too many projects and other time consumers?

Certainly there may be some projects you feel unable to extricate yourself from. It may be that God didn’t want you to say ‘yes’ to something, but you did, and now other things have occurred that require you to follow through on the commitment. You may not have the option of saying ‘no’ now although that’s what God wanted you to do originally.

But there are things you’ve said ‘yes’ to that you must now go back and say ‘no’ to, even though the cost may be high. It’s difficult to break commitments, and it takes courage to go back and say, “I know I said I’d do this, but I really can’t.” But if that’s what God wants you to do, then of course you’d better be willing – not necessarily tickled pink, but at least willing. Ask forgiveness for failing to keep your commitment and make restitution where appropriate. Make up your mind to say ‘no’ to begin with the next time and save yourself some pain and embarrassment.

One help is for husbands and wives to always consult each other before saying, ‘Yes’.

IV. ADOPT A SCHEDULE.

Have a daily map as to the things that have to be accomplished that day. Make lists. Write it down or you can easily forget it. Your schedule should include eight areas. Time for sleep. Time for God. Time for self. Time for family. Time for planning and organization. Time for physical exercise. Time for job. Times for areas of procrastination.

V. LEARN TO ORDER YOUR LIFE BY YOUR PRIORITIES.

Everything can't have the top spots in your life. Jesus ordered His life by His priorities. His mission purpose. What are your priorities supposed to be as a Christian? What are your priorities? The two may be different. Picture these as concentric circles.

Circle One: Christian Person

Circle Two: Married Person

Circle Three: Parent Person

Circle Four: Church Member Person

Circle Five: Employed Person

Circle Six: Community Person

There are four principles that must be noted:

1. The control or constraints in priorities must always be from the inside out. No outside circle must take priority.
2. Whenever an inside circle is weak, the potential in the circles outside is limited.
3. Whenever an outside circle takes priority over an inside circle, look out for trouble.
4. Then the order of priorities is maintained, greater satisfaction is experienced in your life, and greater effectiveness in your work.

(From Ernest Mosley, "Priorities in Ministry")

VI. ACCEPT THE FACT THAT YOU ARE HUMAN.

That's a real blow isn't it? It really gets in the way. Face it folks, you can't do it all. You get in trouble when you try to put your shirt with a big "S" on and your cape. Go ahead and try to leap tall buildings with a single bound. You'll get hurt. Try to outrun a bullet. You'll look stupid, plus you'll have a bullet in your...well...backside area.

You will never get finished, so there has to be a time each day when you simply quit, unplug, chill. It will be waiting for you tomorrow, granted, it's probably had babies by morning!

"NO."

You must learn the art of saying 'NO'. But hold on. There's a difference between saying 'No' because you genuinely can't do it or feel God is not leading you to do it, than in just saying 'No' because you want to avoid commitment. That's not the right motive for saying 'No'. Don't you wish there was a book on "How to Say 'No' So People Will Like It?" To say 'No' requires discipline, your priorities in order and organization. Quote: "It's About Time" – Ken Smith

The first problem here is that most of us aren't organized enough to know when we should say 'no'. Secondly, most of us don't want to say 'no'. Thirdly, most of us don't know how to say 'no'. And lastly, most of us don't understand what it is we should say 'no' to.

The answer is to practice saying 'no' when you need to say 'no', and do it in a firm but gracious manner

A 'no' doesn't have to be impolite or rude, and you certainly don't have to feel guilty about using the word more often. Quote: "Ministry On the Cutting Edge" – El

E. Stanley Jones said, "Your capacity to say no determines your capacity to say yes to greater things." Or as one management consultant writes, "You have to decide what your highest priorities are and have the courage---pleasantly, smilingly, nonapologetically---to say 'no' to other things. And the way you do that is by having a bigger 'yes' burning inside."

Webster's New World Dictionary:

1. Not
2. Not in any degree; not at all
3. Nay; not so, the opposite of yes, used to deny, refuse, or disagree.

Nada, Nuh Uh, Huh uh, No Way, the act of turning your head from side to side.
“Which part of ‘No’ do you not understand, the N or the O?”

VII. CHANGE.

You don't have to keep running in the rat race. Things can change. Priorities can be reestablished. You may not necessarily make a new beginning, but you can start now and make a new ending. Change will mean taking responsibility, choosing to do the right thing, getting your priorities in order. It will be inconvenient, maybe painful, but well worth it.

Some people continue to live in a cycle of imbalance. They will live their whole lives that way. What a waste.

Christians have been Easterized. We are resurrection people. We can rise above it. God didn't intend for you to live an imbalanced life. Illustration: "Speaker's Library of Business Stories, Anecdotes, and Humor" – Griffith

Sometimes it's easier to ask others to change than to change ourselves. One night at sea, a ship's captain saw what he thought were the lights of another ship heading towards him. He had his signalman blink to the other ship, "Change your course 10 degrees south."

The reply came back, "Change your course 10 degrees north."

The ship's captain answered, "I'm a seaman First Class. Change your course south." The captain was mad now. "I said change your course south. I'm on a battleship."

To which the reply came back, "And I say change your course north. I'm in a lighthouse."

Change your course or you will crash and burn.

VIII. EVERYDAY BE CONTROLLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Ephesians 5:18 NASV

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, This is the key to keeping everything in balance, to letting Christ live through you. Listen to what Chuck Swindoll says about this (“Beyond the Rat Race”, Martin): We become Christians because we receive Christ Jesus the Lord. We become empowered and filled with the Spirit as we “walk in Him.” Both are essential if we hope to enjoy all the benefits of the Christian life, for it is possible to be converted and yet not live on a spiritual plane. It is one thing to become a Christian. It is another thing entirely to become a spirit-filled Christian. The tragedy is that so many are converted and so few Spirit-filled. When this happens, a person misses the best God has to offer us on earth.

What fuel is to a car, the Holy Spirit is to the believer. He energizes us to stay the course. He motivates us in spite of the obstacles. He keeps us going when the road gets rough. It is the Spirit who comforts us in our distress, who claims us in times of calamity, who becomes our companion in loneliness and grief, who spurs our “intuition” into action, who fills our minds with discernment when we are uneasy about a certain decision. In short, He is our spiritual fuel. When we attempt to operate without Him or to use some substitute fuel, all systems grind to a halt.

He goes on to emphasize the key missing ingredient for those caught in the Rat Race:

Even though every believer has the Holy Spirit it is possible to operate our lives apart from His control. But when that happens—which it does with many Christians every day—what is missed is nothing short of tragic. When we operate under His control, the potential for peace and joy, calm and comfort, guidance and insight, confidence and courage know no bounds. That is not an exaggeration; it is fact. This is why an understanding of the filling of the Spirit is absolutely crucial.

Keep Centered on Christ.