

Work - Life – Balance

A Better Way to Live and a Better Way to Love in 2019

Introduction

Luke 6 :47-49

“Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

[Work-life balance]

A term commonly used to describe the **balance** that a working individual needs between time allocated for **work** and other aspects of **life**. Areas of **life** other than **work–life** can include, but it is not limited to personal interests, family, faith, social and recreational/leisure activities.

I am going to add a definition for the term **balance** in order to fully expand **work-life-balance** to a three-fold concept. Here is why. I believe that **balance** is not simply what is needed between work-life, but that both work and life need to be significantly applied to balance. Significant in the sense that work and life have no real meaning or purpose without **balance**.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is about to reveal a truth to us regarding **balance** - a truth we have either forgotten, or perhaps never fully understood or known. We live in a "pop tech-culture" world filled with clips, tips, blogs, texts, memes, tweets and posts. Every moment, of every minute, of every day there is a new one! Nothing seems stable or balanced because frankly, it isn't. Our health, wealth, and spiritual well-being are caught up in the socio-political rapids of our times - the current is so strong and violent we can't find balance or the solid ground needed for work-life-balance. However, if you and I will hear and heed this revelation - the balance we seek and need **will be** the outcome. **Work-Life** can't be found or successfully done without **balance**. But more accurately, work-life can't be done without **biblical balance**. Here is a progression of definitions for balance that we will refer to during this series. Each one will find a place of connection and context in the teaching, but ultimately we will settle on the foundation of biblical balance in order to find what we are looking for.

[Balance]

1. An even distribution of weight enabling someone or something to remain upright and steady.
2. A harmonious blend of occupational, familial, social, and leisure pursuits.
3. A state of being at peace, living life with purpose and meaning.

Being in balance may mean something different to each individual.

[Biblical Balance]

Isaiah 26:3-4

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.

Psalms 37:23-24

The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way; though he stumbles, he will not fall on his face, for the Lord upholds his hand.

Matthew 6:31-33

So, do not be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Work, life, and balance! By now, you and I have discovered the constant tension existing between the three. If it is too loose - things fall apart. If it is too tight - things are torn apart. Finding the healthy and positive tension is the key. The key to that tension is found within **our passions, our preferences, and our responsibilities**. Let's take a moment to understand what that looks like.

Passions are those things we love and enjoy so much that we find yourself doing them with our last bit of energy, in the last minute of our day, when no one cares, without the promise of ever getting paid. Without the time or opportunity to fulfill our passions life gets boring and starts to lose meaning.

Preferences are similar, yet distinctly different. Preferences are those personal likes and dislikes – routines and behaviors that we would choose or do when there are no other demands or expectations on your time or thoughts. Without access or the ability to choose and experience some of our preferences we start to become resentful and bitter about the life we are living and sometimes the people we are living it with.

Responsibilities are first and most importantly the loved and necessary people in our life. Secondly, they are the many and much needed jobs, tasks, and obligations to which we commit to and allow others to have expectations in. Without meeting our responsibilities and obligations, or fulfilling those expectations our world caves in on top of us and all hell breaks loose.

When there is not a good and biblical approach or spiritually healthy tension to these three it impossible to live successfully or love fully. Reunion's **Work-Life-Balance** Series is a pursuit of those biblical truths and insights that will bring a good approach and healthy tension into our lives and the lives of those we love.

5.5.19

Work - Life – Balance

A Better Way to Live and a Better Way to Love in 2019

Biblical Balance Memorization:

Isaiah 26:3-4

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.

Psalm 37:23-24

The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way; though he stumbles, he will not fall on his face, for the Lord upholds his hand.

Matthew 6:31-33

So, do not be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Work - Responsibilities, Remuneration, and Retirement

The practical essentials of work are; responsibilities - remuneration - retirement. It can be, and is often said that there is always work to be done, but not always jobs to do. In a narrower context, **work** and a **job** are distinctly different. But in a broader one they can be seen or defined as either the same or closely related. For our teaching on **Work-Life Balance** we will try to narrow our context regarding **work** every chance we get because it will help us identify and clarify our direction and purpose. For example, we will not define **work** as employment, contract or service agreement - in this more narrow and biblical context that is considered a job. We would not define **work** as a shift, part-time, full-time, work-week or career - that too is more language related to a job. You might be surprised to understand today that the value, meaning and outlook of **work** is drastically more complex, yet profoundly more simple than just having a job. I hope we can learn from this teaching that from a biblical and philosophical viewpoint having work or working is much more meaningful and fulfilling than simply having a job, assignment or task. WE must process the idea of "work" through the balance of a biblical viewpoint. As we look at some of those complexities and simplicities, that biblical viewpoint of **work** become very clear.

[Practical] Within most men and women there is a need, desire or drive within them to accomplish and achieve - There is a genuine sense of fulfillment and personal pride we all have in our good and hard work - Not all work is equal, there is difficult, hard and dirty work, and other times

there is monotonous, menial and busy work - Depending on one's outlook and attitude there is such a thing then as meaningful or meaningless work - do meaningful work - Some people are motivated by the encouragement of reward or recognition for good work, others are not - Some people are motivated by the fear deductions and lay-offs for poor and unacceptable work, others are not - The psychological and emotional impacts of having work and not having work are real and significant - Personal security, identity and self-worth are attached to the achievement and fulfillment of our work - For the person who has their work, remuneration isn't always about money - For the person who has only their job, the only remuneration that matters is money - Work will always lead us to a job, but a job will not always lead us to our work - We should work our job, but our job should never work us.

[Biblical]

Psalm 90:17

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands.

Proverbs 12:1

Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense.

Proverbs 16:3

Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.

Proverbs 22:29

Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.

John 6:27

Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.

John 9:4

We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.

Romans 15:17

In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God.

Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 4:6

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

The Conclusion of our Work - Achievement and Enjoyment

The two conclusive concepts **Achievement and Enjoyment** always go together (like peas and carrots). By that I mean you cannot find fulfillment out of achieving something if you did not enjoy it, and you cannot enjoy doing something if you do not accomplish anything. These two, together, help an individual realize and experience the full value and meaning of WORK - this is biblical balance.

Biblical balance is what we seek. Biblical balance provides meaning and value to our work that even time management cannot. When our work has this kind of meaning then we know we have achieved something of great value, allowing us to enjoy the achievements of our work.

Work Evaluation

Can you distinguish between your job and your work?

What is your work?

Am I passionate and caring about my work?

Does my work bring myself or others enjoyment?

If not, what can I do to change it?

Is my work biblically balanced?

Is this the work I should be doing?

If not, what work would you do if you could work at anything you wanted?

Are you satisfied with the remuneration for your work?

Do you see yourself ever retiring from your work?

What work will you do then?

May 12th 2019

Work - Life - Balance

Life - Health, Home, and Happiness

Biblical Balance Memorization:

Isaiah 26:3-4

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.

Psalm 37:23-24

The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way; though he stumbles, he will not fall on his face, for the Lord upholds his hand.

Matthew 6:31-33

So, do not be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Life - Health, Home, and Happiness

Good life, long life, healthy life, peaceful life, quality of life, wonderful life, love life, easy life, happy life, purpose-driven life, best life, best version life,

generous life abundant life, big life, quiet life, desired life, charmed life, lucky life, carpe-diem life, courageous life, prayer life, holy life and Godly life! That is a lot of life! In the western culture the essentials for quality of life are generally health, home, and happiness. In order to see ourselves as having a good life we would have to be in good health, have a good home and good life in it, and then for the most part be happy with all that.

Everything seems to be focused on those three essentials. By that I mean, planning, preparing, committing emotional and physical energy, and not being satisfied or content unless we do. For the most part and for most people that is how it is and that is how we are.

In the context of our faith and biblical beliefs this is certainly not a wrong desire or pursuit - and it is certainly (at some level or degree) achievable. However, more than likely not in the ways we might be thinking or have gone about it. We are going to look at the concept of life with health, home, and happiness through an interactive and comparative process. In this process we will use a filter of biblical truth to see how closely it compares with our own ideas of health, home, and happiness as well as the patterns and behaviors in our own life. I also think it is important to look at what happens to our ideas and behavior when we find ourselves without health, home, and happiness in our life. We can start with God's idea of life for us. I am going to pray over these words of life, then while I read them to you please look for comparisons and conflicts in your personal life. Mark them down on the worksheet provided for you. Use this

worksheet in your prayer and devotion time as a guide to moving forward in work-life-balance efforts and planning.

Proclamation Prayer over God's Word to Become Active Words of Life

[Job 2:4]

Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life.

[Psalm 23:6]

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

[Ps 63:3-4]

Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.

[Psalm 119:37]

Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.

[Proverbs 8:35-36]

For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord, but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death.

[Proverbs 9:10-11]

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. For by me your days will be multiplied, and years will be added to your life.

[Proverbs 13:3]

Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.

[Mark 8:35-38]

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life?

[John 3:36]

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

[John 6:63-64]

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe.

[John 10:10]

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

[Rom 8:6]

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

[1 Corinthians 7:17]

Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him.

[Galatians 2:20]

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

[James 1:12-13]

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

[James 4:14-15]

Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and we will do this or that."

[1 Peter 3:10-12]

Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

Conclusion

Are you more compatible or conflicted with God's truth for your life? Where are you most compatible with God's word? Where are you most conflicted? Do you need change in your life? If so, where? Do you think these scriptures will help motivate you to bring about change in your personal thoughts about health, home and happiness and in your life? Which ones?

So let's begin!

5.19.19

Work – Life - Balance

Finding Balance in Community

Romans 12:4-21

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if

**your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”
Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God

has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Biblical Balance of Community Life

Communities can produce things. They can make events, gatherings and mobilize for protests, rallies, and causes. They can also make cheese and wine, beer and pretzels, t-shirts, chat groups or wristbands. They can show new and better methods in hobbies, habits, human interests, culture or agriculture. Communities together can build hospitals, service centers or schools, they can further and introduce culture through their music, media, books, or creative arts. So, it is true that communities can produce things, make things and share things. However, it is also true that these things do not necessarily give life and meaning; and the mission of a Christian community is to give life and meaning to all who attempt to connect to it, that is to say, to welcome - to love. This welcome and love

transmit new hope and new meaning to them. In the context of the work-life-balance series, communities can produce this most important thing - biblical balance. The mission then of the Christian community is to produce life and reveal meaning. Mission is revealing to others their fundamental beauty, value and importance in the universe, their capacity to love, to grow and to do beautiful things and to meet God. Mission is transmitting to people a new inner freedom and hope; it is unlocking the doors of their being so that new energies can flow; it is taking away from their shoulders the terrible yoke of fear and guilt. To give life to people is to reveal to them that they are loved just as they are by God, with the mixture of good and evil, light and darkness that is in them: that the stone in front of the tomb in which all the dirt of their lives has been hidden, can be rolled away. They are forgiven; they can live in freedom.

Jesus wants each one of us individually to bear fruit, but he also wants us to bear much fruit in community, and then we become his disciples (John 15).

All living beings give life. Thus, from generation to generation we have bird, fish, animals, trees, flowers and fruit – the incredible fecundity of creation as life flows from one being to another. Man, and woman together give life, conceiving and giving birth to a child. And that is just the physical and biological part aspect of procreation. Once the baby is born, and even before birth, the parents give life to the child, and reveal to him/her its beauty by the way welcome and love it. Or else they may bring inner death to the child, making it feel ugly and worthless through the way they reject

or over-protect it. Through love and tenderness, through welcome and the gift of attention, we can give life to people and life to community. That is biblical balance.

Jesus whole message is one of life-giving and giving-life. He came to give life and to give it abundantly. He came to take away all the obstacles that prevent the flow of life. The glory of God, wrote Irenaeus in the second century, **is people fully alive, fully living**. Jesus came to announce good news to the poor, freedom to the oppressed and imprisoned, and sight to the blind. He came to liberate, to open up new doors and avenues; he came to take away guilt, to heal, make whole and to save. And He asks His disciples to continue this mission of life-giving, of abundant new growth and of liberation. That is the true mission of every Christian community.

Biblical Balance of Covenant with the Community

People enter a community to be happy. They stay in that community when they figure out that real happiness comes in making others happy. At the beginning, almost everyone finds their early days in community ideal. It all seems perfect and everyone seems awesome. Because of the good will and good feelings they seem unable to see the drawbacks and difficulties of genuine community; they only see what is good. Everything is marvelous; everything is beautiful; they feel that they are surrounded by saints, heroes or, at least, exceptional people who are everything they want to be themselves. And then comes the period of letdown – generally linked to a time of tiredness, a sense of loneliness or stressfulness, some

type of personal setback, disappointment or conflict. During this time of "disillusion", everything becomes dark and distant; people now only see the faults of others and the community; everything and everyone gets on their nerves and is frustrating. They feel they are surrounded by hypocrites who either think only of rules, regulations and structure, or who are completely disorganized and incompetent. Negativity and criticism sets in and life in community becomes intolerable.

The greater their idealism of the community at the start, the more they put people on pedestals, the greater the disenchantment. It's from a height that you fall down into a pit. If people manage to get this second period they come to a third phase – that of realism and a true commitment, of covenant. Members of the community are no longer saints or devil, but people – each a mixture of good and bad, each growing and each with their own hope. It is at this time of reality and clarity that people put their roots down. The community is neither heaven nor hell, but planted firmly on earth, and they are ready make the journey and to walk with you and walk with me. They accept the other members and the community as they are; they are confident that together they can grow towards being and doing something more beautiful and more wonderful than they had ever believed. To Love beyond Love.

Biblical Balance of Community in Unity

A community is not simply a group of people who live together and love each other. It is a place of resurrection; and a fluid current of life giving

movement: one heart, one soul, one spirit. It is people, very different from one another, who love each other and who are all reaching towards the same hope and celebrating the same love. This is what brings the special atmosphere of joy and welcome which characterizes true community.

Loving is not a voluntary act which involves controlling and overcoming our own sensibilities – that is just the beginning. It also demands a purified heart and feelings which go out spontaneously to the other. These deep processes can only come through a gift of God, a grace which springs up from the deepest part of ourselves, where the Holy Spirit lives.

Ezekiel 11:19

I will give them a new heart, and put a spirit within them; I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh.

Jesus has promised to send us the Holy Spirit, to indwell us with this new energy, this strength, this quality of heart which will make it possible for us to truly welcome the other – even our enemy – as he or she is, possible for us to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things. Learning to love takes a lifetime, because the Holy Spirit must penetrate even the smallest corners of our being, all the place where there are fears, defenses, and envy.

In His last conversation with the disciples/apostles, Jesus prayed three times that they should be one as He and Father were one, **'that they should be consumed by unity.'** These words are sometimes applied to

unity between Christians and different churches, but they apply first and above all to unity between people and within communities. All communities should be working towards this unity – ‘one heart, one soul, one spirit’. It seems to me that we should ask a special gift of the Holy Spirit – the gift of unity and communion in the deepest sense, and with all implications. This is truly a gift of God to which we have the right and duty to aspire.

Jesus' prayer is astonishing. (John 17) His vision goes much further than our imagination or wishes. The union of the Father and the Son is total. Each community should be working toward this union. But it can only reach it in and through the Holy Spirit. As long as we live, all we can do is get up each day and walk humbly towards it.

Biblical Balance in the Journey of the Community

Beginning

The Community for Myself

Committing

Myself for the Community

Worshipping, Leading and Serving

The Community for God and Ministry to others