

This devotional was given during Women's Awareness Week 2007 at the General Conference Morning Worship in Silver Spring, MD. The devotional may have some portions specific to the writer. If you use the material, please edit to be sure it is understood that these are the writer's personal experiences.

**The Balanced Life
Spiritual Balance**
By Marti Schneider

Speak on living a balanced life? No way! I don't know how to live a balanced life! Just stand me up on the platform, like a scarecrow in a field—the perfect example of how *not* to be in balance!

You see, I have so many hats to wear, so many responsibilities! You know what I mean! You experience it too. But my hats are so dilapidated! Because I'm always grabbing off one hat . . . clumping on another.

But you say I could speak on Spiritual Balance? Really? Oh! I get excited about that! Yes! I'll do it! I'll do it!

When I think of balance, I see the old-fashioned scales with a pedestal and the two plates on either end of a beam. Each of the plates could represent a role in a life. But that is not the picture of MY life.

My life picture has the foundation, the pedestal, and it has arms like that balance scales. But it is more like the ride at the fair . . . with *many* arms like a spider and a bucket seating at the end of each arm. I climb into a bucket and go whirling through the air, circling, spinning, rising and falling, all at the same time . . . and vow never to get on such a ride again. Yet I'm unable to get off until someone finally, mercifully, shuts down the motor.

What happens next? Compulsively, I jump out of one bucket and into the next bucket for another ride . . . repeating the same vow! *Never again!* And so I go through life!

But my question is, How can I talk about *Spiritual Balance* as merely one component of a balanced life? How? . . . when God says, *Love Me with all of your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.* (Mark 12:30) When God says, *Without Me you can do nothing!* (John 15: 5) . . . and, *With God nothing shall be impossible!* (Luke 1:37)

In my picture of balance, spiritual balance is *not* one bucket. Spirituality is the foundation, the pedestal upon which all of the buckets of life hang. It is the support for every other role. God cannot be relegated to a corner of my life, to one day a week, to one hour of the day. Love Me with all of your heart, and soul (body), and mind, and strength!

Psalm 145:20 says, *The Lord preserves all of them that love Him: . . .*

But I must ask questions: What does it mean to *love Him*? How do you *love Him*?

If God preserves those that love Him, I don't want to pass over that text quickly or lightly! So I asked God to explain it to me Himself! *What do You mean?* I asked.

Well . . . to love God is—

- ? To know Him in your **mind**, with **understanding**. This knowledge is built on principles that you have discovered and studied in God's Word.
- ? To know Him **experientially** by being with Him in friendship and fellowship . . . in fun . . . and in trials.
- ? To have the **heart** filled with love for Him.

I used to think, when I read *love Him with all your heart* that the Bible was referring to the mind. But Scriptures speak of heart AND mind. . . . The heart, I am coming to believe, has a power to remember, to understand in a different way from the mind. It has a mind of its own. And the love of the heart is a deep, powerful, motivating, driving emotion.

- ? Our **actions** are driven by that deep love.
- ? That love is built on a **relationship** with the loved One, with God.
- ? Which requires **time** devoted to Him,
- ? **Energy** spent,
- ? **Mental focus**, pondering, and
- ? Conversation with Him in **prayer**. Pray with a pencil in your hand to record what He says to you. He *will* speak to you.

The principles of spiritual balance are not sequential or linear. You cannot check them off your list— Did that! Did that! The principles of spiritual balance are cyclical. They are part of our lives daily, continually.

A cycle of devotions simply means that we devote ourselves completely to God— Being in God's Word and thinking deeply about it; talking to God, asking questions and listening to His answers; opening our mind and heart to receive from Him; telling Him about our needs and watching for His answers; then sharing our testimony with someone else . . . giving glory to God.

How can we make this practical in our daily lives?

I have made a list of ideas to which you can add. It is available to you at the end of worship this morning—Ideas to Create Spiritual Balance in Your Life

These ideas center around three major activities—

- ? Experience God in His Word daily
- ? Pray daily
- ? Share a testimony daily

Ideas to Create Spiritual Balance in Your Life

A. Experience God in His Word daily

1. Read the Bible through in one year
2. Speed read a book of the Bible
3. **Write scripture . . . and interact with God on the paper—My favorite!**
4. Repeat read a portion of scripture, every day for a week, slowly, thoughtfully
5. **Read a chapter expressively, i.e., Isaiah 53—Another of my favorites!**
6. Memorize meaningful chapters
7. Sing scripture songs
8. Carry with you Bible promise cards on a ring, read while waiting
9. Search the scriptures for the top 10 values by which to live
10. Search Jesus' life to learn how to minister to others

B. Pray daily

1. At home, alone . . . and with your family
2. Pray at work . . . in the halls, in the offices
3. Find a prayer partner, pray often together
4. Feel free to ask a co-worker for prayer
5. When someone asks for prayer, pray right then
6. Pray over your To Do List, for God's priorities
7. Pray over your project of the moment
8. Pray scriptures
9. Invite the Holy Spirit to dwell in your heart and to pray **FOR** you

C. Share a testimony daily

WHEN YOU SPEND TIME IN GOD'S WORD AND IN PRAYER, YOU WILL HAVE A TESTIMONY. IT JUST HAPPENS.

1. What God gave you in His Word today
2. How God is changing you through His Word and His Spirit
3. How God answered your prayer
4. A need for which you would like prayer support, expressing trust and thanksgiving for God's answer that *will* come
5. Share with your family/kids, work associates, neighbors, seatmate on the airplane, anyone you spend time with
6. Organize sharing partnerships, triads, small groups that meet during lunch to share your testimonies

But how can I do it? How can you do it? That's the question!

We must ask ourselves, *If I don't go into my day without a shower or breakfast, why would I try to live life without the most important part—time spent with God!* I want NO part of my life to be lived without God's direction and power.

Ask God! Beg God!

Ask Him when to spend time with Him. Ask Him how to make time for it. Ask Him what to do in your worship time. Ask Him to wake you up—like Donna Willey asked, “Wake me up for just five minutes with You each morning!”

God did . . . and she went from five to ten to fifteen minutes until God was filling her day. She and her husband are now church planters-lay pastors near Peoria, Illinois. God changed them through her newly developing devotional life.

Pray with Moses, *Who is going with me today? If You don't go with me, God, I'm not going! Reveal Yourself to me.*

Get into conversation with Jesus, like the woman at the well in Samaria. He will reveal to you not only all about yourself, He will reveal Himself to you: *I that speak to you am He. . . . the Messiah.* (John 4:26)

So many things can interrupt our devotional life, our focus on God, our spiritual balance: Things like busy-ness, travel, sickness, anger, and cherished sin. Do you know what to do when you get stopped from your daily time with God—ask God for help and simply start again! It's like exercise. How many times do we have to start exercising again? Don't beat yourself up. Just start again!

So . . . if like Jonah you find yourself running away from God or you are simply drifting away or sinking in a sea of busy-ness, call out to God. Ask Him to bring you back to Him . . . back to where you will find true balance for your life!