



## THE BALANCED LIFE

### The Gift of Work

Work is important. The very first command that God gives humans is to “be fruitful and multiply.” Does this mean we are to be workaholics? In a word, no.

#### Matthew 11:25-30

At that time Jesus said, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

### For Personal Study

Consider these questions from the book [A Passionate Life](#) :

- Do you regularly work six or seven days a week?
- Do you regularly work ten or more hours a day?
- Do you often work through lunch?
- Do you take work on your vacation?
- Do you answer work-related email or voice mail after you get home at night? On the weekend?
- Have you ever canceled a vacation because you had too much work to do?
- Do you think through work activities while eating with your family?
- Do you talk about your work more than your family while on a date with your spouse?

Any of these indicators could point to being out of balance with work.

Do you ever feel as though you have nothing to give? That so many demands are made of you

that you’ve become depleted... empty...exhausted?

If you’ve ever felt this way, I have great news. There is rest for us – a rest more rejuvenating than a long and leisurely nap, and more soothing than a long, hot bath. This rest reaches into the depths of our souls and claims us from within.

This special promise of rest comes from Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:29; “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” The yoke spoken of in this passage is fashioned of discipline and discipleship; its lining is love. Rather than bringing restriction, it brings refreshment. Through this yoke, He calls us to learn of Him and find quietness and blessed rest.

Rest for the soul is the most desirable rest. It affects not only our spiritual health, but our emotional and physical health as well. The only way to receive this rest is to sit at Christ’s feet and hear his word, to take the time to learn

more about who he is and what he is like.

This weekend, twenty-one women from our church family are investing their time for a spiritual retreat in Pennsylvania. I’m sure it was difficult for each of them to leave their families and all their obligations, but I pray that they will return from the weekend rested and refreshed spiritually, emotionally, and physically. It’s not possible for everyone to retreat for a weekend, but try to retreat for 30 or even 15 minutes a day. Just take a few minutes to read a chapter in the Bible or a devotional, reflect on what you’ve read, and pray. Let this week’s daily readings get you started.

#### Resources:

[A Passionate Life](#), Mike Breen & Walt Kallestad, © 2005.

[Stress & Your Child](#), Dr. Archibald Hart, © 2005.

[Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives](#), Richard Swenson, © 2004.

## Readings & Questions

Monday, October 9th

Genesis 2:2, 15

Mark 1:35-39

Which side of the pendulum do you struggle to keep in balance – work or play?

Tuesday, October 10th

Galatians 5:1

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

Look over the questions listed in the Personal Reflection. How does this impact your life? How does it impact your family?

Wednesday, October 11th

Mark 6:30-32

“Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” If you were one of the disciples, what would you expect from this statement from Jesus?

Thursday, October 12th

Exodus 20:8-11

How do you build *Sabbath* (God’s design of rest) into your days, weeks, months, and seasons? How would you like to improve this?

Friday, October 13th

Philippians 3:4-9

Ephesians 2:8-10

What difference will all you work, or all your play, really make? What is of true value and how do you put it first in your life?

### Prayer for the Week

Heavenly Father, you understand both work and rest. Renew my enthusiasm for both. Let my work be good in your eyes. Renew me with balance in my life and let that balance help those who are around me. In Jesus name, Amen.

# The Balanced Life ...for Families

## Discussion Starters

- Write down all of the activities you participate in each week. Should you be doing more, less, or is it just right?
- If “less,” which activities do you like best and least. How could you scale back now or in the next season? What would happen?
- If “more,” what would you like to do? How would it benefit you? Do you have the time and energy for it?
- Where does God fit into your schedule? You can fit in more time for God just by remembering to talk to him throughout your day.

## Parents

**YOUNG KIDS** love fun activities, but make sure there’s a balance between planned activity, free play, and rest. At dinner or bedtime, find out what they liked and didn’t like about their day. Consider why each activity is important, how it affects the family, and if there’s really time for it.

**KIDS OF ALL AGES** are vulnerable to stress. One cause can be too much pressure to do or succeed at everything. This can come from parents, but kids may also be trying to meet *perceived* expectations. Keep talking with your kids and watch for signs of stress (depression, anger, anxiety, low self esteem, fatigue, aches & pains).

## TEENS...

What burdens are you carrying? Struggling in school? Trouble with a friend? Wishing you could get along better at home? Jesus tells us to find rest in him but what does that *really* mean? Maybe the starting place is in knowing that God loves you no matter what. If you’ve done something wrong, face up to it and talk to God about it. Then accept his forgiveness and move on! When your life is built on the foundation of God’s love — when you know Jesus and use what you know about him to guide your decisions — you can have real peace.

## Balancing Work & Play

- Start a calendar for school deadlines, social events, and activities. Keep it up to date.
- Plan ahead – don’t put things off.
- Set up a great study spot with everything you need.
- Keep your school work organized. What would help?
- Before joining something, review your calendar and family commitments. Is there time? Will adding this make life better or more stressful?
- If you’ve joined something and are stressed over it, consider stepping back from it. It’s important to balance family life, friends, school, job, and other activities. Talk to the coach or advisor and explain your situation. Maybe you can scale back your time or re-join later. Sometimes, saying “no” is the most mature thing you can do.

“...My yoke is easy, my burden is light”

Matt. 11:28-30