

## A Balanced Life

Some years ago, I read in a newspaper that the police ordered a car to stop because it was dragging a dog through the streets. The owner of the dog thought he had got out of the car, but because the leash was stuck in the door the poor animal had to run along with the car. He would fall and get up, but he knew he couldn't give up. Finally, the police made the car stop and the torture ended for the dog. Many people feel that their life is like this. They are being dragged and have no control over their life, but it is their life that controls them.

In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus promises a different life when he said: **Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, 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.** In these verses Jesus promises to give his children a life of rest! If this is true, then why is that very few seemed to be living it?

Our bodies, church, marriages, businesses, etc., all these things need balance not only to function well but also to have a positive impact. How is it possible to achieve this balance, the rest, that we need so much in our lives?

If we look at the life of Jesus we observe that, despite the many requests, the opposition, the little privacy, his life was not stressed. He had balance. What can we learn with His example? What was His secret to have a balanced life?

If you want a balanced life you must **1. Know who you are!** Juan 8:12 Jesus said, **"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"**. On 18 occasions Jesus publicly defined himself. There was no doubt in his mind who he was. And you, who are you? If you are undecided of your own identity, you will become everything that others want you to be. A **Chameleon** adjusting to the environment ... Trying to be someone you are not, is stressful!

For example, I do not intend to imitate other pastors because I am not them. I can follow their example, but I do not want to imitate them. It is dangerous trying to imitate other people because usually what you see is not necessarily the reality. People learn to present their best on the outside, even though inside they are suffering. (Pastors made me feel that I should be doing more, but after I looked at their ministry I discovered that they were not doing what they said I should be doing.

I do not want to be a mediocre copy of anyone else, but to be the best pastor Campos that God helps me to be. Maybe very imperfect, but trying not to deceive anyone, to be genuine.

Trying to be someone we are not will rob us from God's rest! Do not let others determine who you are, or what was said about you in the past determine what you are today. Christ gives you a new identity.

If you want a balanced life you must **2. Know who you want to please.** John 5:30 **I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will.** No one likes to be rejected, but Jesus did not allow the fear of being rejected by people to manipulate him. Christ pleased very few people and that wasn't because he was rude or was seeking his own interests. It was because it is not possible to please everyone. Just when you manage to please some, others get upset with you.

I read some statistics that say that 70% of pastors are so stressed that they often consider leaving the ministry. Every year about 3,000 pastors left the ministry. Why? There are many reasons, but one of them is that it is very difficult to please everyone. It is expected that the pastor gives his best in everything while many Christians only give what they have left and this is complicated. In Matthew 6.24 Christ says that **no one can serve two masters at the same time**. To please Christ many times we must be willing to displease friends and family. How many are not following Christ because they don't want to displease friends and family?

In Galatians 1.10 Paul says: **I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant**. Paul's desire was to please Christ alone! And us, who are we trying to please?

If you want a balanced life you must **3. Set clear goals** John 8:14 **Jesus said: for I know where I came from and where I am going**. Can you say the same? Without clear goals we are like a ship in the middle of the sea, without direction. Either we are in control, or we are being controlled. If we do not plan our life someone will do it for us. Don't let others establish goals for your life.

God sets some goals for all of us. He created you to do 5 things:

**a. You were created for God's Pleasure.** Revelation 4:11 says that God created all things and they were created to please Him. We were created for His pleasure. To worship Him with our words and deeds.

**b. You were created for God's family.** He created you to be part of His family. You are called to belong, not just to believe. The cross unites you with other Christians. Everything you need is in Christ and everything of Christ is in the Church. The degree of commitment you have with the church reflects your love and commitment to God. It is not possible to love God and exclude His Church. **(if you love me you'll OBEY my commands)**

**c. You were created to become like Christ.** Who are you becoming? When people listen to what you say and observe what you do, can they see Christ?

**d. You were created to make a difference.** God created you to contribute with something, so that you can make a difference with your life. You were created to serve others, to have a ministry in the Church.

**e. You were created for a mission.** God is working in the world, in our cities and wants you to join Him. God wants you to serve Him in the Church, but also that you have a mission in the world around you.

If you want a balanced life you must: **4. Focus on one thing at a time**. Luke 4:43 **I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns, too, because that is why I was sent**. You can't catch two turkeys at the same time! Jesus knew how to handle interruptions without distracting himself from the main objective. Do you know how to do something? Then do it well and be faithful in that so that you can be a blessing to others.

If you want a balanced life, **5. Don't try to do everything yourself**. Mark 3:14 **He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach**. We get stressed when we think that everything depends on us and we are alone. Jesus recruited twelve disciples.

Get connected, seek help, give support to others, get involved. Romans 12:5 **so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.**

If you want a balanced life you must **6. Make a habit of prayer.** Mark 1:35 **Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.** No matter how tired he was, Jesus always found time to be alone and pray. If Christ needed to pray, we need it even more. Christ didn't teach his disciples to preach, but he taught them to pray. Why?

A daily "quiet time" reduces stress and adds balance to your life. Use that time to talk to God about your problems and struggles, evaluate your priorities, discover the Bible.

If you want a balanced life you must **7. Take time to enjoy life.** Mark 6:31 **Jesus said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.** Christ recognized the need to stop doing what he was normally doing and rest.

God wants us to enjoy his creation, family, etc. We have to be balanced in the way we spend our time and resources.

Balance is the key to controlling stress and living a more pleasant and impactful life. Work must be balanced with effort, discipline, worship and fun.

One day we will all die. In your celebration of life service what do you want to be said about you?

1. Do you know who you are?
2. Who are you trying to please?
3. Do you have clear goals in your life, or did you forget why you are here?
4. Are you trying to do too many things at the same time? What he did, did it well.
5. Have you become isolated from God and from his body, the Church?
6. Have you forgotten to seek God in prayer?
7. Are you making time to enjoy life?

What is going to be said about you in the future is written with the decisions you make today. Make your children, your spouse, your church proud of you. Leave a legacy worthy of being spoken about!

What are the main causes of stress in your daily life, at work, at home, marriage? You may have to evaluate some of these areas in your life so that you can receive the rest that Christ wants to give you.