

November 19, 2017

ONE STEP: Balance

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; Luke 2:52

Balance... how balanced do you feel? Do you sometimes feel out of balance? Like your ducks are not in a row... all your I's are not dotted... your T's are not all crossed... Squirrels are at a rave... things are out of whack...

As a pastor it is important for me to help you pray, worship, and praise the Lord. But I also understand that you are more than just your devotion to God. You are a whole person.

If one part of you is in disorder, the rest of you will not function properly.

Balance.

It is so difficult to find balance. Overdoing in one area means underdoing in another area.

(2) An imbalance has consequence.

If I play all day with my babies it will result in less or no time to clean.

If I succeed in business it might mean I fail in my marriage or family.

If I ignore time with God, I will miss the purpose of life.

If I don't exercise or eat right... (Tap belly)... well, you get the point.

The only way to obey all of God's commands is through balance.

(3) We are closing in on the Advent season. This is the time of year we think about God coming into the world as a baby. We think about the manger, the animals, the Wisemen and the star.

Do you remember the rest of the story though?

(4) The Gospel of Luke tells us that King Herod, afraid of losing power, had all the baby boys in the region who were two and under killed. An angel warned Joseph and Mary and they fled to Egypt with Jesus.

Then we see the baby Jesus in the temple, 8 days old as he is being dedicated to God. Following that, the scripture is silent about his childhood so we do not see anything until the time when he is 12 and he is at the temple amazing the teachers. Again the scripture is silent until he enters his public ministry at the age of 30. So we have an 18 year period of silence where the Bible only gives us one verse to tell us what it was like. It is a summary of what happened during that 18 year period.

If you had to sum up the last 18 years, what would you say? Could you even do it?? Jesus' life, up until the age of 30, is summed up in one sentence.

(5) "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (NIV)

Jesus taught us how to live a balanced life... Jesus spent his 18 years... his life... doing 4 things. David Henderson says...

"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (NIV)

(6) One. Jesus grew in wisdom. The book of James tells us that if we want wisdom all we need to do is ask. So there are apparently a lot of people who never ask. Because I don't see a lot of wisdom in this world. Do you? James tells us that the source of all wisdom is heaven. 2nd Timothy 3:15 says that "the Holy Scriptures are able to give you wisdom." The world will tell you do this or do that and you will have success. And 2000 years later we still have not learned to listen to God instead of listening to the world.

One. Jesus grew in wisdom. He grew wiser.

(7) Two. Jesus grew in stature. He grew physically. He was fit. The scripture tells us that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. So we need to take care of them. The key is balance. So don't spend your entire life at the gym... oh yeah... I've got that covered. In fact, I love the joke that says that you should rename the bathroom... instead of calling it the John, call it the Jim... that way I can honestly tell everyone that this

morning I woke up, hit the Jim, and then came here to church! Ok... but seriously, we do need to take care of ourselves. Think about the lifestyle of Jesus.

- He worked in the carpenter's shop with His father. It was hard physical work. Different tools then.
- He walked constantly. From town to town teaching and doing ministry.
- He stopped to rest. He got away.

Jesus stopped to rest. Why? To center himself and make sure he was emotionally put together. When was the last time you stopped to rest? When was the last time you spent time working on your emotional state?

One. Jesus grew in wisdom. He grew wiser.

Two. Jesus grew in stature. He grew physically and emotionally.

(8) Three. Jesus grew in favor with God. Jesus grew spiritually. He prayed, he read and memorized scripture, he went to the temple every week, he taught, he learned all he could by asking questions of the teachers in the temple. It was his purpose every day to do the will of God and nothing else. So he was constantly growing in favor with God.

One. Jesus grew in wisdom. He grew wiser.

Two. Jesus grew in stature. He grew physically and emotionally.

Three. Jesus grew in favor with God. He grew spiritually.

(9) Four. Jesus grew in favor with man. He grew in relationships. Until the final week of his life Jesus was very popular. People followed him and many loved him. Everyone wanted to be friends with him. He healed the sick and performed miracles. He is described as the friend of sinners. The tax collectors and sinners were in a class all by themselves and they were not well thought of. But Jesus was their friend. He never overlooked anyone. What about you? Who do you overlook? Jesus brought people to God... everyone, anyone. Who are you bringing to God? Who will not come to God because you have overlooked them?

(10) "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (NIV)

This is what God wants us to know about those 18 years. Jesus grew. Henry Blackaby says "You cannot stay where you are and go with God. We must grow."

(11) For me I have found that one of the most important things in life is balance.

Balance. All of us know what it feels like when life gets out of balance. There are times when life feels like a balancing act. Have you ever been to the circus and seen a plate spinner? They spin 8-10 plates at one time. They get started here and move down the line... but as they keep moving, the plates that were being spun at first are now slowing down. So to keep them going as soon as you get 3 or 4 started you have to start running back to the first one. And it's non-stop. And if you take a break they will begin to fall until all of them crash.

We do that. And the "hurrier" we go the "behinder" we get and the faster and harder we work the more out of balance our lives become. Ever feel that way? Life and success are about balancing our time between work and rest, ministry and family, labor and play, others and self. We need each side if we want the scale to balance.

Let me ask you something. What do you plan to do with the next 18 years of your life? No matter who you are, your life will change. What will be the summary statement for you for the next 18 years? I want the next 18 years of my life to count for something. And the time to start is today. Right now.

Don't waste another moment.

Now is the time to...grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

(12) Learn something... pick up a book... hey, the Bible is a good read!

If you need to eat better... sleep better... exercise better... start now.

Feeling lost, depressed, or alone? Talk to someone? Come and pray with me.

Got a grudge? Give forgiveness.

Done something wrong? Ask forgiveness.

Don't know Christ? Come to Him today.

Need a church home? Join this one.

Whatever God tells you to do, don't put it off. Start today.

Your only one step away from better balance in your life. Amen.