

Balancing Work, Family, and Church

Color Key:

- What to ask class
- Important Point
- Scripture reference
- Quoting from a source

In building on Michael's lesson last week on the Theology of Work, I would like to spend some time on thoughts and scriptures for Balancing Work, Family, and Church.

Which one is more important? In the hierarchy of significance, which one takes supremacy? Growing up, I remember trying to determine if the hierarchy was God, then Family, then work, then church, or some other arrangement of the order of priority. But it ultimately doesn't work, and there needed to be a better understanding of how God intends us to balance what seem to be competing areas of our life.

Importance

I'd like to have us begin to focus our minds on these areas of our lives, and the importance of them.

Can there really be a "balance"? For our theme for this session, I would like us to focus on walking through this life keeping our primary responsibilities intact, and doing all the things that God has assigned us to do, in faithfulness and fruitfulness, bringing Him honor and glory in all that we do.

Family, Work, and Church are all **assignments from God**. **God has directed us to do all of them, yet they seem at times to be in conflict or competition for our time, attention, and energy.**

Our Primary Assignment- our primary responsibility

But before we further discuss these assignments, I would like us to consider our **Primary Assignment, or better put, our responsibility**. We do have a primary responsibility. One that transcends the others, helps us gain perspective, and allows us to do the others.

Matt 6:33 Seek...

Our one primary assignment is to follow Jesus. **Oz Guinness said- following Jesus IS our primary responsibility. It is first because as believers, our lives are by him, to him, for him**

By Him:

2 Thess 2:14-

Called to salvation...

To Him:

John 17:6-

God gave us to Christ.

For Him:

Eph 2:10-

To do good works...

Our primary calling is to follow Jesus and bring Him honor and glory

"We may at times be unemployed, but no one ever becomes uncalled."

~ Os Guinness

Now that we have determined our one primary responsibility of following Christ, we can be clearer-minded to determine how to manage the other assignments God has given us to do, and how they can better blend in harmony, and not as much in competition with each other. There still will be competition for our time, attention, and energy, but here are some guiding principles that can help us manage them:

How should I spend an unexpected free morning, afternoon, or evening?

How can I justify doing one and not another at any given time?

I'd like us now to discuss Faithfulness-Fruitfulness-Idleness-Idolatry

A very helpful quote from "The Gospel at work"

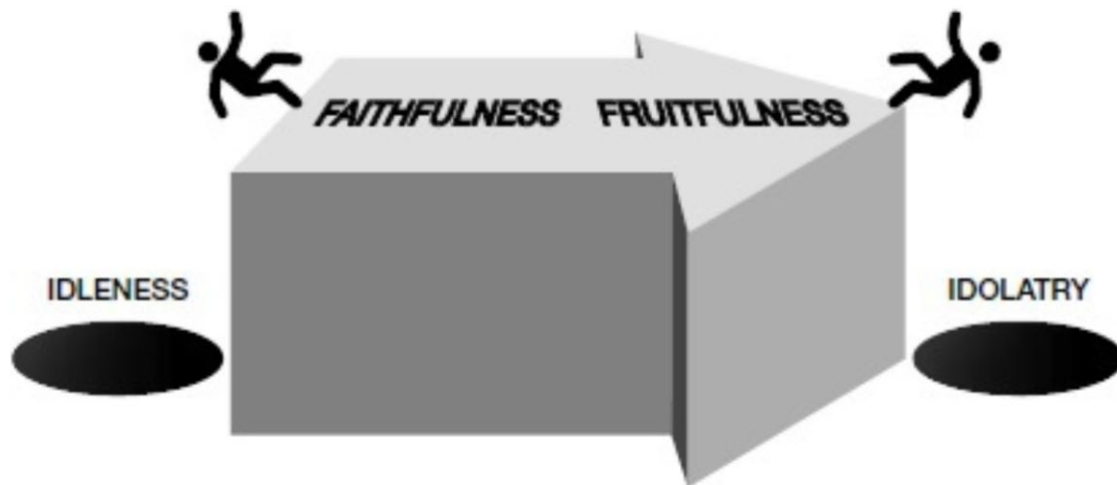
"For every assignment in your life, you will find in the Bible both a minimum standard for faithfulness and principles for pursuing further fruitfulness. By a minimum standard for faithfulness, we mean the basic requirements Scripture gives in an area of our calling. If you are failing to live up to these basic standards in one of your assignments, then you are not being faithful in that area. Most of the time, this means you need to double-down on your attention there before looking anywhere else.

By principles for pursuing further fruitfulness, we mean those ways in which we can grow beyond this minimum expectation of faithfulness. Once you think you're meeting the Bible's standard of faithfulness in all your assignments, you are free to dream and consider how you can best invest your extra time and energy."

"On either side of faithfulness and fruitfulness we will find the two pitfalls that tend to define the sinful patterns associated with our work — idolatry and idleness. Fail to meet the minimum requirement of

faithfulness, and you fall into idleness. Push beyond fruitfulness, and you fall into idolatry.”

THE GOSPEL AT WORK



So here's the guiding principle: pursue faithfulness, then fruitfulness, but not idolatry. You might want to memorize that! It's a simple way to think about how to best manage the complex assignments God has given you.

1. Determine if you're being faithful in your assignments.
2. Consider where you might be able to invest for greater fruitfulness.
3. Avoid the trap of idolatry, where you are mastered by your work instead of serving the Lord.

Faithfulness. Then fruitfulness. But not idolatry.

We're going to spend some time on thinking through how our "assignments" can play out in our lives

1. Think about your life, or brainstorm on ideas for each category
2. **Do not determine faithfulness or fruitfulness by comparing yourselves to others-

Family

1. Faithfulness

- a. Eph 5:22- ²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her
- b. Eph 6:4- ⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

2. Fruitfulness

- a. What would be practical examples of fruitfulness in family?
- b. Investing time in them- husband/wife retreats, date nights
- c. One-on-one with children- Prov 13:20 projects, bringing to work or other activity that you do
- d. Family days
- e. FaceTime on Thursday evenings at 7:30 PM
- f. Church activities
- g. Involve sports- make it a family affair-
 - i. For us: we often did just one sport per child at a time so all were supportive.
 - ii. We also did Christian drama, music

- h. Formative teaching that we discussed earlier-
informal/formal family worship
- i. Most anything we do with our family in providing for them,
nurturing them, pointing them to Christ

3. Idolatry

- a. Loving Family more than loving Jesus
- b. If elevation of family causes you to fall below the biblical standards of faithfulness in one of the other areas of your life
- c. Not going to get a job as it interferes with spending time with family
- d. Or not adequately providing for family because you are _____
- e. Missing church frequently to play with kids
- f. **Matt 10:37**- Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

4. Idleness

- a. **1 Tim 5:7,8**- ⁷ Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. ⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Church

1. Faithfulness

- a. **1 Corinthians 12:27**- ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and **individually members** of it.

- b. Hebrews 10:24,25-²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.
- c. Ephesians 4:15 ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.
- d. Commitment to the local church- Members of it: Eph 2:19, 20- ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,^[a] but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone

2. Fruitfulness

- a. Work of ministry- Eph 4: 12 ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ
- b. Serving- Mark 10:43-45 ⁴³ But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,^[d] ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave^[e] of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
 - i. Grabbing an oar, and rowing
- c. Serving the saints- Heb 6:10-12 ¹⁰ For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. ¹¹ And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹² so that you

may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

- d. Give of your time and treasure
- e. Involve your family
- f. We are all different parts of the body. Not each will perform the same functions or have same role.

3. Idolatry

- a. Not caring for your family- **I Tim 5:7,8** ⁷ Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. ⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
- b. Thinking too highly of any particular member, perhaps even an Elder- **1 Cor 3:5-9**- ⁵ What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷ **So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.** ⁸ He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. ⁹ For **we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.**
- c. **Avoid the danger of thinking your work is indispensable.** Many very Godly saints in whom we greatly relied are with Christ, and the work, the ministry, and the fruitfulness goes on.

4. Idleness

- a. **Not finding your gift and using it**
- b. **Forsaking the assembling-** Heb 10:25 from above
- c. Avoid the **danger of thinking of yourself as not needed** in the body of Christ- We are ALL many members.

- i. **1 Cor 12:14,15**- ¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ 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.

Work

1. Faithfulness

- a. **1 Thess 4:10b-12**- But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, ¹¹ and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to **work with your hands**, as we instructed you, ¹² so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.
- b. **Eph 4:28**- ²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather **let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands**, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

2. Fruitfulness

- a. Working hard
- b. Doing as unto the Lord
- c. **Striving to make the owner prosper**
 - i. **Example with kids- “why do you have a job?”**

3. Idolatry

- a. When work encroaches on our other areas of responsibilities
 - i. I have always traveled for work- gone often, long hours
- b. Wearing yourself out and not fulfilling faithfulness in family, in church

4. Idleness

- a. **2 Thess 3:10-12**- ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: **If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.** ¹¹ For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. ¹² Now such persons we command and

encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.^[d]

Let me pull it all together with a quote from “The Gospel at Work”:

“It’s a little too easy to talk about our responsibilities clinically and neatly, as if each one fits tightly into its own custom-made carrying case. In the real world, things are never that neat. We live in a world where things come up and life happens — whether we want it to or not. We’re trying to be faithful at work, and a child gets sick. We’re trying to be faithful at home, and a church member calls with a crisis. The goalposts move; the target jumps around. And before we know it, we can find ourselves discouraged, distracted, and overwhelmed...”

“...All these assignments are given to us by God. Therefore, we can be sure he wants us to be faithful in them and, in increasing measure, to be fruitful as well.”

“...God has simply given us broad parameters of what too much looks like (idolatry) and what too little looks like (idleness). And he calls us to exercise godly wisdom to figure out when and where more investment will yield greater fruitfulness.

Thoughts in conclusion

1. **Don’t compare your life with another’s**- one may be traveling in business, or have more leadership responsibilities or longer hours, or may have more children or younger kids, or grown kids, or is now retired, or...
2. **Remember there are seasons**- it doesn’t all fit nicely into place like a puzzle. There are seasons when one overtakes other assignments for a period of time.

1. Certainly take care that the seasons don't last long, if they are to impact other areas of life.
2. Balance isn't necessarily the right way to think about it, as if a boat on the water is always level, regardless of the seas.
- 3.
3. Assess and reassess-
 1. Keep a watchful eye- write out, as a family, what it means to be faithful, fruitful, or idolatrous or idle.
 2. If you discover a negligence in any area, repent and ask for forgiveness if needed, and then move forward in new light given
 3. Song from Keith Green- my eyes are dry, my faith is old, my heart is hard, my prayers are cold, and I know how I ought to be, alive to you and dead to me. But what can be done with an old heart like mine? Soften it up with oil and wine. The oil is you, your spirit of love. Wash me anew with the wine of your blood.
4. Listen to the spirit's prompting and Walk by faith- as we learned last Sunday morning. - perhaps that still small voice
 1. Determine to follow Gods guidance in His word and in the Spirit's promptings, and pray for wisdom to determine what you should do
 2. Example- Phillips obedience to the spirit in Acts 8
 3. Perhaps as we are continually practicing walking by faith, we become more in tune to His guidance.

5. Look for gospel opportunities in every one of these assignments. This is doing Gods holy will- to draw all men to himself.
6. Remember our primary responsibility is to follow Christ!
 1. Remember how we started the lesson: "...walking through this life- keeping our primary responsibilities of following Christ intact and doing all the things that God has assigned us to do, in faithfulness and fruitfulness, bringing honor and glory to Him in all that we do."