

***Fanning it into Flame***  
**Sunday, December 05, 2010**  
**Living the Balanced Life**

There are many applications to the term balance but all centers around a state of equilibrium or an equal distribution of weight. When applying it to our emotions we would think of mental steadiness or stability; to walking: keeping your balance; in accounting: equality between the totals of the two sides of an account; in fine arts: the elements of design that produce an aesthetically pleasing or harmonious integrated whole; and the list could go on. However, I would like to key in on our personal lives and how we arrive at our own agendas.

We can think, "It's my life and I'm free to live it the way I please." While this is certainly true and in keeping with the way God created us: as living entities with our own unique personalities, there is more to it than that. God intended us to use the free will he gave us to choose to love him and be part of his family. It was always his ultimate plan. A relationship of genuine love necessitates that the parties entering into it are doing so because it's what they want. Anything other than that would be a serious hindrance to the relationship. One of my oft quoted verses is, "*We were created by him and for him.*" (Colossians 1:16) God said in Genesis, "*Let us make man in our image.*" God had perfectly in mind that he was building a family and wanted it made up of people that were like him, i.e. his very nature, which is a relationship that is seen in the love within his triune being. He wanted us to be part of the love that already existed in who he was, is, and always will be. Living life apart from him is actually a contradiction in terms, because he is life. "*In him was life, and that life was the light of men.*" (John 1:4) When man sinned against God it produced death, i.e. a separation from the one who is life. Mankind continued to live, however it was in a state of "death." So God's plan to rescue mankind could only be accomplished by taking our sin upon himself, satisfying his justice, yet exemplifying his love and mercy.

When a person has a revelation that God is real and that he has some specific requirements for living life and that they have done the contrary and are facing eternal consequences for their sin, but then hear the best news ever, they let out the greatest sigh of relief. Their heart is full of gratitude because they are forgiven and are given the privilege of becoming a child of God and will spend eternity with him. We should be living life with a permanent smile on our face. God is for us! The problem enters in when people get so caught up in their own lives that they don't stop to think that life did not begin with them. There is a grand scheme of things that centers on the one who made it all.

Paul gives Timothy a great teaching in his first letter to him: "*Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*" (1 Timothy 6:17-19) Take note of two things Paul is saying here. Firstly, God provides us with everything for our enjoyment. How awesome is that! Life is meant to be enjoyable. Then secondly, we are to take hold of the life that is truly life. You do not have real life unless you are united to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He is life and we have life when we have him. John 5:24 states: "*I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.*"

Read **Matthew 6:19-34**. It teaches us where to place our priorities and how to find a place of rest in a world where we have to provide for our food and clothes, etc. It ends with: *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.* The balanced life places Christ at the center of it all and releases God's creativity, love, and faithfulness into all that we do. If he is not at the center, then we are out of balance. Amen!