

Before the Lesson

Read the Scriptures and overview below before your LIFE Group meets next week.

Scripture passages: Matthew 6:33, 16:24-26, 1 John 2:15-17, and Luke 10:38-42

Loss of balance is of great consequence to you and your family. Yet busyness, not balance, is the signature experience of our day. The great misconception is that if I'm not busy, I'm not diligent, faithful, or fruitful. This is not so. On the contrary, busyness distracts us from faithfulness and limits our fruitfulness. Though we are commanded to serve God with excellence in all things by doing our very best, presenting ourselves as responsible, faithful servants, and honoring God by being willing and available to help to others, we must walk on the proverbial tight rope between faithfulness and fruitfulness. There is a delicate balance that lies between these two paradigms that we strive to keep, and God reveals the specifics to us individually. Both are important, but there is one thing that, when kept in check, makes the possibility for success limitless.

Better organization, though a good quality, is not the answer. More time in your day is not the answer. Cloning yourself won't do it either. The key to balance is better *life focus*. Why is this key? Because when we lose our focus, we often lose our way, making us ineffective in the Kingdom and at the office. Hebrews 12:1-2 says, *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.* This week we will look to Jesus and His example of being a faithful and fruitful servant.

Would you characterize your life as a busy life or a faithful and fruitful life?

Group Discussion

If we are to have a proper balance on the tight rope between faithfulness and fruitfulness, we must have better life focus. Focus in this context simply means that we:

- **Fixate** on the supremacy of Christ
 - **Operate** in the boundaries of our days
 - **Concentrate** the energies of our lives
 - **Underrate** the necessity of wealth
 - **Saturate** the activity of life with praise
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- Explain why focusing on the supremacy of Christ is important for those who want to have a balanced life. As you talk through this, do so as if you are attempting to explain this to a non-believer. Use these verses and others you may know to support your response. (Colossians 1:15-23, Ephesians 1:22-23, and Matthew 16:24-26)
 - Think about your daily activities and discuss practical ways you can put Christ first in your job, family life, social life, and thought life.

- If you truly began to make your life focus about Jesus, how would it affect your relationships with your co-workers, family, and neighbors? Would they see a dramatic change in you?
- Life is limited and your time each day is not limitless but there is much to do. How can you reconcile the need to be faithful and fruitful with the limitations of time? (Read Matthew 6:25-34)
- In the story of Mary and Martha from Luke 10:38-42, we see Mary being attentive and concentrating her energies on one thing – Jesus, while anxious Martha concentrated her energies on many things in order to get dinner on the table. Jesus commended Mary on her focus and scolded Martha for not choosing the better thing. Later, however, in John 11:17-27 we see that Martha has a much different encounter with Jesus. Compare these two passages. What has changed about Martha? What can we learn about Jesus in these passages? What can we learn about Mary and Martha? What can we learn about ourselves?
- Wealth and possessions are blessings, but when they become our focus we begin to lose our balance and can fall from the tight rope. What do the Scriptures say about our perspective on money? Use these verses and others you may know to gain truth and balance on this subject. (Luke 12:13-15, Proverbs 23:4-5, 2 Corinthians 8:9, and Matthew 6:10-24)
- Praise sparks victory; so when balancing on the tight rope of life, where better to place our focus than on who God is? Is your life saturated with praise to God? Discuss verses, attributes of God, and other tools that can help you learn to live a life of praise. (The Psalms are a wonderful place to begin.)

Further Study

The following verses on *focus* can help you gain forward motion as you continue your journey. Choose a few each day to meditate on in your quiet time with the Lord this week.

- Philippians 3:12-14
- Proverbs 16:3
- Romans 12:2
- Hebrews 12:1-2
- Philippians 4:13
- Proverbs 3:1-35
- Psalm 1:1-6

Pastor McKinley's message, *Your Time Matters*, is a wonderful complement to this message. To hear his message and download the Study Guide, go to: <http://www.warrenbaptist.org/time-matters/>

Another resource that may be helpful to you is an article by Charles E. Hummel titled, *The Tyranny of the Urgent*. It may be viewed here:

[http://www.navfusion.com/assets/Tyranny%20of%20the%20Urgent%20\[Hummel\].pdf](http://www.navfusion.com/assets/Tyranny%20of%20the%20Urgent%20[Hummel].pdf)