

Is Your Life Out of Balance?

Presented by Mary Lowman

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Day One

Have you ever tried to take more out of your bank account than you put in? If so, then you know the meaning of the term "overdrawn." Could it be you are living emotionally, physically, and spiritually in the overdrawn mode? Your life truly can be very out of balance when you don't deposit enough in your emotional, spiritual, and physical accounts to cover the checks you draw on them. When that happens, you live an overdrawn, out-of-balance life, and you fight fatigue, discouragement, and depression.

This type of out-of-balance living is often because we don't deposit the right things in our accounts, and at other times it's because we spend our energy very foolishly. We need to know what it is that feeds energy and strength to us and make certain we're pouring into our lives the right resources and the right amount. Then we need to determine what uses our resources and drains our strength so we can balance the two.

This calls for an accounting procedure, and that's something we need to do regularly. You have to check the balance in your bank account and make sure it's in good order. The same is true of your emotional, spiritual, and physical accounts.

Ask yourself: Am I spending more from my spiritual and physical account than I put in? Frankly, I continually have to face this problem because I often need to re-learn that I cannot be all things to all people, nor can I do all the things I want to do. I must set priorities, learn when to say no, and take time to replenish my accounts so I can keep doing the things God wants me to do.

Now, that doesn't mean I'm never tired, never feel stressed or rushed or stretched, but it does mean if I'm living in that out-of-balance mode all the time, something's wrong. My priorities are confused, or my discipline has broken down, or my calendar is too full, or I don't know how to say no—or some combination of all the above.

This week I'm going to try to give you some help in this process of bringing your emotional, physical, and spiritual accounts into balance. And I do this mostly because I need to re-learn it too. Wouldn't it be nice if we only had to learn our lessons once! But we're often in retraining mode.

Day Two

Is your energy account overdrawn? Are you living in a fatigued, burned-out, out-of-balance lifestyle? It could be because you don't deposit enough in your emotional, physical and spiritual energy accounts to cover the checks you draw on them. In order to stay in balance, you must first make certain you make the right deposits. Think with me about what is needed to ensure your account is continually replenished.

We know from Scripture our strength comes first of all from God's Word.

My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word (Psalm 119:28).

The Word of God is our resource to get us through times of weariness and stress. The Psalmist said it would strengthen us.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you (John 15:7).

This is an incredible blank check given to us by our Lord Jesus. How often do you draw on it? By allowing the Words of Jesus to abide in us, we are given this blank check of resources. Maybe the real problem is we don't want to, or don't know how, or for some reason just don't allow God's words to abide in us.

What does it mean to remain in Jesus and allow his words to remain in us? Well, it means time spent reading, meditating, and studying God's Word. Significant time. Do you do that regularly? As a child of God, your life will always be out of balance until you have a steady diet of the Bible in your life.

Our strength also comes from the joy of the Lord within us.

Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones (Proverbs 17:22).

Remember joy is not synonymous with happiness. Joy is that deeper, abiding sense of completeness which is present even when circumstances are not happy or enjoyable.

David prayed, "Restore to me the joy of my salvation." Harboring any known sin will keep you out of fellowship with the Lord; then you lose your joy and that drains your account. You need to pour that joy in by keeping a clean slate with the Lord. Also, if you think about the wrong things, your joy will be robbed. Negative thoughts, critical thoughts, judgmental thoughts, complaining thoughts—these will all rob you of joy, and joy is essential for a balanced life.

Day Three

Is your life out of balance? Are you spending more from your spiritual, emotional, and physical account than you're putting in? I'm examining what we can do to put energy into our reserves, so we don't live in an overdrawn, out-of-balance condition. We saw yesterday that one great source of energy is joy.

Another source of strength comes from fellowship with other believers and loving relationships with friends and family.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:42).

One of the great things about being a marketplace Christian the way your job forces you into daily interaction with non-believers. But living and working with those who do not share your faith and your love of Jesus can be a large drain on your inner resources. You need times of fellowship to give you strength; you need church every week; you need small support groups of Bible study and prayer.

I strongly encourage you to be involved in a small support group. You need a few people you regularly interact with, where you can be open and honest, where you are accountable, and where you are totally accepted. People you could call in the middle of the night, if necessary, for prayer support. If you have one or two people like that in your life, it will pour enormous strength into you, spiritually, emotionally and mentally.

If you don't, cultivate such a support group. Start it yourself. I'm sure you can find one or two others who feel like you do and need your support, as you do theirs. It will strengthen you immensely.

We also need those personal relationships from which we gain strength. You may be married to someone who truly strengthens you. Marriage was intended by God to be a source of strength.

We need close relationships with friends and family. You don't have to have a lot, but you need one or two. Do you have that person who really cares about the details of your life, where you can let your hair down and be understood and accepted even when you don't have it all together? If not, I encourage you to pray for that relationship and be that kind of support to someone else.

Day Four

Where do you get the strength you need to love others and to keep from being burned-out and frayed around the edges all too often? I've examined what you need to deposit into your energy bank account so you are not living an out-of-balance life.

A.W. Tozer once say, "Shakespeare said something to the effect that no man could be a philosopher when he had a toothache! While it is possible to be a weary saint, it is scarcely possible to be weary and feel saintly."¹

When your body is not in the best condition, either from sickness or fatigue, your strength can fail. That's why it's important to be a good steward of your body, doing everything you can to keep it strong and vital.

Now, let's talk about the things which drain our energy. First, there are the inescapable drains on our energy, such as getting up in the morning, children, mates, family, housework, jobs. But many times, we expend energy, even in these areas, unnecessarily. Let's identify a few of the foolish things that often drain our strength:

- Your strength is used up when you try to do more than you can do. God has not called you to be all things to all people.

Jesus was careful where he went to minister. He didn't try to go to every city; he didn't heal every sick person; he didn't preach to everyone on the face of the earth. Yet he could say at the end of a very short three-year ministry that he had accomplished what his father sent him to do.

Have you got too many irons in the fire? Are you trying to prove something to yourself by taking on too much? Or perhaps, like me, you just have so much you want to do you can't resist. Maybe you have a hard time saying "No." Whatever causes you to over-commit, you need to get this area under control.

- Your strength is used up when you have too much stuff. Did you know the more you have, the more energy it takes out of you?

Cleaned your closets out lately? Might be a good idea. A home or apartment full of valued "treasures" can be a real drainer of energy. Now I'm not suggesting we can't have things we enjoy, but the question is, do you enjoy them or are they just sapping your time and energy?

Day Five

¹ Tozer, A. W. (n.d.). Taking Time to Rest. SermonIndex.net.
<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=5278>

What is it that uses up your emotional, physical, and spiritual energy and leaves you living in "overdrawn" mode too much of the time? I conclude my thoughts today on living a balanced life. I mentioned you spend energy needlessly when you try to do more than you should, and when you surround yourself with too much stuff.

- Your strength is also used up when you have money problems. Credit cards can be our downfall. You might need to get on a budget and stop this drain on your life.
- Your strength is used up when you are not disciplined. Proverbs says we die from lack of discipline, and I believe with all my heart many of us are drained of energy because we refuse needed discipline in our lives.

I've started to think about it this way: Each day I start out with a certain amount in my emotional, physical and spiritual account—and they are very much interrelated. I must learn to spend that amount wisely. Let's say I start with \$100 in that account today.

Now, early in the day I get frustrated because of traffic problems and I foolishly spend \$20 of energy on it. As I arrive at work, I encounter a rude customer on the phone, and I spend \$25 of emotional energy on that. Then that co-worker irritates me again, and without realizing it, I've spent \$15 there. My boss puts another deadline on me, and that stress costs me \$30. Then I make a mistake and get mad at myself for that failure and spend \$20 on that, and before noon I'm broke! I'm overdrawn!

Now the rest of the day I'm living out of balance, so I'm much more likely to say things I shouldn't say, react poorly, have a bad attitude, feel fatigued, depressed, discouraged, etc. Tell the truth, did you ever have that kind of day when you foolishly spent your energy on things that didn't really matter?

We have to get better, by God's grace, at spending our energy. Pick your fights; don't let the little stuff beat you down. Pray at all those points of irritation—quick prayers asking God to give you perspective and put that energy back into your account so it's there for the important things.

Remember, to live in balanced mode, not overdrawing your emotional, physical, and spiritual accounts. You've got to make the right deposits and then spend your energy wisely on things that have some significance. This will help you make better choices about priorities and keep your perspective on what's important and what isn't. I encourage you to make it your goal, by God's grace, to live in a balanced way.