

The Myth of a Balanced Christian Life

By Michael Clark and George Davis

Warning! This may be the most unbalanced article we have written yet! Read it at your own risk!

How often have we heard the expression parroted in the church, "We must do all things in balance and moderation"? What does that mean to you when you hear it? It certainly sounds like the responsible thing to do! Surely we should "order our lives" in a way that pleases the Lord, right? Though this might sound prudent and wise, too often, beneath the facade of responsibility and good judgment lies an ancient and evil desire. We are not against order and balance. We thank God for the glorious balance that we see all around us in His creation--a balance that is beyond the power of mere men to effect. The problem with the balanced Christian life is that it also is beyond man's power.

In our hyper-humanistic society, which elevates the potential of man as the sole source of salvation and order, the church that lives in that society is affected by this blatant worship of man and has forgotten how to live as new creatures before their Creator. We seem to have forgotten that we, who believe in Christ, are His creation. From beginning to end, we are the workmanship or product of the Creator of all things, and that work is ongoing until we are brought into conformity to His Son. To be God's creature is to be made by God. It is to be authored and finished by God. Because of man's ambition to be self-made he tends to undermine this process by taking to himself the work and responsibility of the Creator. Whether he realizes it or not, his preoccupation with balance is rooted in a seminal desire to be like God--deciding for himself what is good and evil. His disdain for his creature-hood knows no bounds. Instead of relying on God and living by the life of the Son, religious man argues for personal responsibility, which gives him a forum in which to showcase his extraordinary talents, hence his obsession with balancing his universe. Man will do anything but admit the horrifying truth that he is but a small creature upon this earthly orb, spinning without his permission or control, among a countless number of stars and planets.



Where in the scriptures has God charged us with the responsibility of balancing our own lives as if we could tweak this and tune that and otherwise finely adjust our world, as if it were our duty to micro-manage every facet of our earthy sojourn? Of course we do it in the name of responsible Christian living. The great illusion is that we are in control, whereas we really don't have control over anything. We set out to "work out our own salvation," but do not have the mandated "fear and trembling" to do so.

Do we hear you asking, "What about self-control? Are we not charged with the responsibility of controlling ourselves? Is this not why it is called self-control?" If you examine the scripture closely you will discover that self-control is a portion of the fruit of the Spirit of God and does not originate with us at all. The state of man without the Spirit is slavery, not self-control.

God has given our bodies to us. They are created in His image. We know that Jesus is the Head of His church, His body. Did you know that in our heads, just below the brain, is found the pituitary gland and its job is to keep in balance all our bodily organs? Jesus is the Head of His body, the true church. He is the One that holds all things in delicate balance. In Him do all things consist (see Colossians 1:17). The word consist is from the Greek word *sunistao*.

sunistao {soon-is-tah'-o}

- 1) to place together, to set in the same place, to bring or band together
- 1a) to stand with (or near)
- 2) to set one with another
- 3) to put together by way of composition or combination
- 4) to put together, unite parts into one whole

As Lord of all, Jesus holds all things in delicate balance and places each member where He wants them, giving them, according to His will, abilities to do certain things well (see I Corinthians 12:7-11). In Him all members of His body are united into one whole and are perfectly interrelated for His kingdom purposes. We are members of His body and He, being the true Head, keeps all things in balance if we will but yield to Him. Let's consider Jesus our example. Jesus did not live by a checklist of priorities, balancing his time in prayer with His time in the scriptures, His recreation time with His family time, His time at work with His time at home--His secular time from His religious

time. But in reality, many of Jesus' words and actions would be considered dangerously unbalanced if spoken and done by Christians today.

He was not concerned with the orthodox or balanced opinions of the religious leaders of that day. He only did those things he saw the Father doing. His balance came from heaven and not from some earthly credo. He had no creeds or bylaws, nor did He accept the balanced traditions of the religious leaders of His day. He lived in the presence of His Father, working when He worked, speaking when He spoke. Because of this, He immediately came under fire by the orthodox religious establishment. They could not understand His seemingly willy-nilly lifestyle or his cavalier attitude toward the temple or His contempt for the traditions of their fathers. Let us never forget that it was orthodox voices that cried, "Crucify him. Crucify him!" The gearing crowd was filled with those who had dedicated their lives in an effort to balance Judaism. They had written volumes on the subject and had erected schools to aid in its achievement. They had masters to teach it. Such were they who crucified the Christ and such are they who crucify Him afresh today.

Oh, how we love to appear balanced in the eyes of the world. For here, with their approval, there is no cross, here there is no suffering, here we have perfect control of our lives and are loved by all men for our prudence. It is here that we try to find a more responsible and balanced way, one not so "negative," and avoid the talk of blood and suffering. We seek a broad and well-rounded politically-correct perspective, which will attract a broader base and offend fewer people. So we are given to speak of particulars in the vague language of consensus-politics.

Jesus said, "[Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.](#)" (Matthew 7:13-15, RSV).

Historically, the many have always been wrong and the few have been right and the many kill the few. We are aware of no exception to this fact. The consensus view has always resisted the present truth. Jesus did not come to bring balance but to bring truth, like a sword. He spoke in revolutionary tones of the division that truth brings.

Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword! For I came to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A person's enemies will be members of his own family. The one who loves his father or mother more than me isn't worthy of me, and the one who loves a son or daughter more than me isn't worthy of me. The one who doesn't take up his cross and follow me isn't worthy of me. The one who finds his life will lose it, and the one who loses his life because of me will find it. ([Matthew 10:33-39 ISV](#)).

There is no way to have peace with the many. The cross will separate you, taking you outside the camp of orthodoxy to bear His reproach. Jesus' balance is not about pleasing family, friends or those in power in this world system. That is not the gospel of the kingdom of God. No, by definition this man Jesus, the very Son of God, is not balanced in the eyes of today's proponents of political correctness who also have found their way into the church.

How Balanced Was Apostle Paul?

If Paul would have just caved-in to the demands of the Judaizers as those in the Jerusalem church had, he could have saved himself a lot of grief. Would it have been too much to ask for him to require the new Gentile believers to become circumcised and appease the religious leaders in Jerusalem, making peace? What harm was there in cutting off a little skin that they did not need anyway? To this line of reasoning Paul answered,

And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off! ([Galatians 5:11-12, NKJV](#)).

Now Paul, isn't that a bit vulgar? You really should be more careful not to offend.

Peter caved-in to the Jews who wanted him to be more balanced according to their laws and traditions and not eat with the new Gentile believers (See [Galatians 2:11-13](#)). But it seems that Paul did not accept the party-line. No with Jesus and Paul there was no place for "equality between opposing or contrasting forces." For them there was only one way - the Father's way.

The language of the Serpent is the language of compromise. He tempted Eve with the words, "Has God really said?" There is no compromise or "political correctness" among the saints of the Most High. This is not the way of those who put their trust in God. A study of the lives of the prophets should make this perfectly clear.

We have a great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 11:1-40) that have gone before us as our examples of what it means to make no compromise with the spirit of this world system. They walked by true faith. People who say they walk with God and talk with Him are not balanced. A man who builds a huge boat in the middle of dry land because God told him to is not balanced. A man who hears God telling him to kill his son is certainly not balanced. Men who cast off their places as princes in this world and choose slavery instead must be considered masochistic and therefore not balanced. Men who hide out with harlots and unclean Gentiles are not balanced in the eyes of orthodoxy. Those who seek a heavenly kingdom and not "a piece of the rock" here on earth are not balanced. Men, who will not compromise in the face of being tossed into blazing furnaces and dens full of hungry, wild beasts, are not balanced.

Where Is This Word "Balance" Found In the Scriptures?

As often as this word *balance* is use in Christian circles today, especially among its leaders, you would think it was found all through the scriptures. It is not. The word *balance* as a "scale" is mentioned nine times in the King James version, but using it the way Christians use it today, it is only found once. Here God is interrogating Job, "[Do you know how the clouds are balanced, Those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge?](#)" (Job 37:16, NKJV), speaking of the cycle of evaporation and rain falling from the heavens. As you can see in the context, it is not Job or his friends who are the ones who are balancing the clouds, but this biblical reference to balance is all in the hands of God. And that is where it belongs! Job argued that he had led a balanced, holy life, leaving nothing undone. In God's rebuke of Job we find the lesson that He wanted Job to learn. (See Job chapters 38, 39 and 40.)

"Where were you when I put the earth on its base?" What is the implied answer? You were not there Job, and you had nothing to do with it. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7 Webster), where were you Job? Implied answer: you were not there and you had nothing to do with it. "Have you, from your earliest days, given orders to the morning, or made the dawn conscious of its

place. . . Have the doors of death been open to you, or have the door-keepers of the dark ever seen you?" Say, if you have knowledge of it all. "Do you give strength to the horse? is it by your hand that his neck is clothed with power?" (39:19) Or is it by your orders that the eagle goes up, and makes his resting-place on high? (39:27).

At last the Lord gave Job the ultimate test of divinity. "Will you even make my right of no value? Will you say that I am wrong in order to make clear that you are right? Have you an arm like God? Have you a voice of thunder like his? Put on the ornaments of your pride; be clothed with glory and power: Let your wrath be overflowing; let your eyes see all the sons of pride, and make them low. Send destruction on all who are lifted up, pulling down the sinners from their places. Let them be covered together in the dust; let their faces be dark in the secret place of the underworld. Then I will give praise to you, saying that your right hand is able to give you salvation." (40:6-14 BBE).

Isn't this what religion attempts to do? Through its efforts to save itself it makes God's right hand of no value. It puts on the ointment of pride and is clothed with the glory of its own power--attempting to complete in the flesh what was started in the Spirit. It does indeed attempt to pull down the sinner from his place and claims to exalt God by doing it. It prefers a form of godliness without power and by its activities seeks God's validation and praise of the saving power of their own right hand. All the while it pretends to keep the great cosmic balance.

What about Priorities?

The popular teaching about "Christianity Priorities" lends weight to the deception that we can balance our own lives by putting those things that are most important in their proper place. Having accomplished this, we then may keep this world's fine Babylonian garments and wedges of gold, with no consequence. After all, we have "put God first" haven't we? We have set Him on a special niche. He is the chief God of our pantheon because we have given Him ten percent of our gross. Haven't we paid His ministers first and all others with what is left over?

We take a piece of paper and pen and write down the things we love--endeavoring to determine how much of our time and affection we should give to each. Having done so, we set out to live our lives in accordance to our new balanced world-view. This we do first, that we do second, and down the list we go. The question is, who is in control here? Who is doing the ordering? Who is doing the balancing and where is God in all

this? Is He one of many objects of affection that we assign their proper place or is He our all?

The typical "Christian priority list" reads, God first, family second, church third, job fourth and so on. The subtle deception in all of this is that we tend to segment our time seeking to give each their allotted and just due, like an idol worshiper careful not to offend any of the gods making offerings to each. To some this enterprise is a constant source of guilt and condemnation, for although it looks simple on paper, it is more difficult in real life. The greatest source of their consternation is due to the fact that the One at the top of their list, deserving the lion-share of their time, ends up with the meager leftovers of their day.

Please forgive us a moment of levity! We have the formula for your deliverance. In order to receive it though you must follow our instructions explicitly! 1) Go to the notebook containing your prioritized list. 2) Carefully tear it out. 3) Carry it out to your backyard barbecue. 4) Light the barbecue. 5) Turn it on high. Now this next part is extremely important! 6) Take your priority list in your right hand and lay it upon the barbecue grill. Close the lid and cook for thirty minutes. If your priority list doesn't burn up, it has Divine approval and you should obey it to the letter. Otherwise, you should cook it until it is completely charred and black.

There! You're free! You see how easy that was? In the kingdom of God things are much simpler for here there is only one priority. Yes, you heard us right; there is only ONE priority in the kingdom of God, of which David wrote in Psalms twenty-seven verse four. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after." Without this one priority all of life screams "vanity, vanity, all is vanity." When this one thing, which gives ultimate meaning to life, is embraced, everything is changed, life is instantly and effortlessly prioritized--all things become new and balanced.

What is this one all-inclusive, all-determining thing? What is this Divine priority? Jesus is the "one thing." To know Him is to know life in perfect balance. Those who have tasted that life correctly value "all things" and gladly count them loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ (See Philippians 3:8). When Christ is truly known, all things are instantly prioritized, and, from an eternal perspective, take on their true value. In Him all the parts of our lives are united in one whole. In Him all things consist. Those things of earth, which were once highly valued, are counted as dung. The words of an

old hymn come to mind, ". . .and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace." It is when men insist upon clinging to the things of earth that they cry the loudest about balance. In a way they are asking Christ to be reasonable with His demands and like King Saul, they seek to keep the best of the herds for "an offering to God," when this same God has demanded that they all be slaughtered, the bad as well as the good. As it was then so it is with Him today. He spoke through Samuel to Saul saying,

Does Jehovah delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice! To listen is better than the fat of rams! For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idol-worship. Because you have rejected the Word of Jehovah, He has also rejected you from being king! (1 Samuel 15:22-23 MKJV)

Have you ever considered that all our efforts to balance our Christian lives could be nothing more in the eyes of God than so much idolatry and witchcraft? Have we chosen our man-made lists and priorities over hearing and obeying the voice of the Holy Spirit in each instance of our daily lives and thus chosen the letter of the law over the Spirit?

When faced with the implications of the cross, the flesh cries, "Only let me live, I will be good! I will do the right thing! Only let me be in control! I will choose good things. I will make good lists to follow." Adding to this deception is the fact that religious man is bent on Christianizing his desires, giving his ambitions and lust noble Christian names. The most dangerous enemy of the Best is not the worst, but the good things in our lives. We prefer these things! How else can we balance our desires for the things of earth and the things of the kingdom of God and serve them both? How else can the lust and love within his breast finally be at peace with each other?

We find a great illustration of this in John Bunyan's classic "The Holy War." Mr. Deceit and his "right Diabolonian friends" developed a strategy for taking back the city of "Mansoul."

So many of our friends as are willing to venture themselves for the promoting of their prince's (Satan) cause, disguise themselves with apparel, change their names, and go into the market like far-country men, and proffer to let themselves for servants to the famous town of Mansoul, and let them pretend to do for their masters as beneficially as may be; for by so doing they may, if Mansoul shall hire them, in little time so corrupt

and defile the corporation, that her now Prince shall be not only further offended with them, but in conclusion shall spew them out of his mouth. And when this is done, our prince Diabolus (Satan) shall prey upon them with ease: yea, of themselves they shall fall into the mouth of the eater.

Of these friends of Satan there was Lord Covetousness who called himself by the name of Prudent-Thrifty, Lord Lasciviousness who called himself by the name of Harmless-Mirth and Lord Anger who called himself by the name of Good-Zeal. Mr. Mind hired Prudent-Thrifty, and Mr. Godly-Fear hired Good-Zeal and Lord Willbewill hired Harmless-Mirth. These villains, being filthy, arch, and sly, quickly began to do great mischief in Mansoul. They corrupted the families and tainted their masters. When the people of Mansoul attempted to rout these villains, they hid themselves in the crowd and escaped.

A very similar assault has been launched upon Christendom today. The emissaries of Satan named "balance" (Mr. soul-life) and "stewardship" (mammon-love) live like Sanballat and Tobiah in the temple of God. These also have done great mischief. Mr. Balance (Lord soul-life) loves to micromanage every facet of his existence and to proudly boast of his achievements. Lord Mammon-love, Prudent Thrifty's cousin, loves to talk about financial stewardship and responsibility, which helps to cloak his true identity as the bastard son of his father Greed. He can't imagine giving without a compensatory return. Dear ones, it is time we called a spade a spade. It is time to seek the one thing and repent of these other gods.

Without the one thing, not two, not three but one, all is vanity and nothing is balanced. We cannot balance the Spirit of Christ. We either reject Him or receive Him. He can only be received on Christ's terms. The Spirit of Christ is the end of fleshly religious striving to hold all things in delicate balance, for by Him, through Him and of Him do all things hold together (See Colossians 1:17-20).

The Game

In the movie *Instinct*, Theo Calder, played by Cuba Gooding Jr., is doing research for his doctorate in psychology and is given a criminally insane man in an institution, Ethan Powell, played by Anthony Hopkins, as his test case. Ethan had been on staff at that same university and had "gone native" in the jungles of Africa while studying the apes. In one of the final scenes Theo Calder is speaking to his seemly catatonic patient

who has succeeded in teaching him something that he could not learn in "doctor school." He confessed something very applicable to what the Lord has been showing us about this control game called Christendom and how we play it.

Okay Ethan. You asked me a question once. "What has you all tied up in knots when you wake up sweating in the middle of the night?"

Still want to know? I've been thinking about it, thinking about it a lot. It is not the work. I love the work. I've always loved the work. It's the GAME! The GAME, Ethan! And I was so good at it. I made sure all the right people liked me. At night I'd do the check list in my mind. Am I cool with Ben Hiller? Am I cool with Dr. Josephson? Am I cool with all the people who can help me? Am I cool with all the people that can hurt me? Nobody thought I was weak or a loser. Nobody I was offending. Nobody. I loved that game.

Guess what? You taught me how to live outside the game. You taught me how to live. And you know what scares me even more? That I'm going back in! "Forgive me, Ben. Put me back in the game! I'll make you like me again. I'll do the work. I'll do *all* the work. Just put me back in the game!"

Do you wanna know the physiology behind this? Now pay attention, because I'm good at this. I'm trying not to say, "Good-bye." I'm trying not to say, "I miss you." I'm trying to forget you. Ethan Powell--case closed."

Yes, we learn to play the game and how to get a leg up on our fellow saints. Professional ministers are good at it, too. They learn how to never let the little people, "the laity," see what is really going on in their lives, their homes and in their minds. We come into the kingdom of God with all our worldly agendas and then start out following the example of those who use their craft to make gain out of the Bride of Christ. Without a deep work of the cross in one's life, our Christianity becomes a contest in which we seek to control our fellow saints and incessant posturing for an upper position and advantage over them. It is all about looking good in the eyes of men. True servanthood in Christ, following His example and seeking the lowest place of service out of love for others, is the first casualty in this game we call Christendom.

More recently we have seen a great clamoring of church men after the titles of prophet and apostle and also a clamoring of the "laity" to have one of these great men be their "covering." Yes, true apostleship and prophetic ministry is a real thing in the Spirit, but so many pass it by and take up the game. Like Nimrod, they start building and

climbing, using people as stepping stones, building their own cities and towers that they might make their name widely honored and acclaimed (see Gen. 11). It is an old sin--as old as the temptation of Eve. "If you eat of this tree you will be like God!" All the while they were in God's image and had free access to the Tree of Life so that they could live forever with Him in His likeness. Oh how we want to be like God without yielding to and following Him. With His soon crucifixion looming before Him, Jesus prayed, "Father that they may be where I am." So few chose the Tree of Life the scripture calls the cross. The cross is final. The cross offers no platform for compromise. The cross will not negotiate, because it gets the final word.

As it was with Theo Calder, so it is for those who seek the Father's kingdom and His righteousness--game time is over. Our balance must be in the Spirit and will of the heavenly Father. To lose site of this is to lose our true balance which comes from the One who holds the worlds in balance, Jesus Christ.

We leave you with an insightful excerpt from an e-mail written by our dear friend and brother in Illinois, Jack Helser.

Regarding balance, I can sure see where that is a very serious trap--for if we are the determiners of balance, then we would be usurping the authority of God. . . In Christ, we have utterly forsaken balance -- we don't even try to balance our salvation- - we pitch ourselves fully into the arms of Jesus who carries us through to the other side. The problem of balance then rests with the one who carries the weight -- and He said, "Cast all your cares (weights) on me" . . . or He speaks of His yoke and burden which is light. So how can Jesus, who bore the sin of the world upon himself, be a light burden for us? Praise God that He is a light yoke/burden! That means He is the one responsible for balance -- we just have to surrender it all to Him! . . . If we have thrown the weight of our burden onto Christ, and He in turn has had us take up His yoke and burden which is light, then of course we are out of balance.