

**Mom’s Connect – The Balanced Life**

**October 7th, 2020**

**Balance in our Boundaries**

**What is balance?**

Balance is an even distribution of weight enabling someone or something to remain upright and steady.

Balancing Act - an attempt to handle or deal with two or more things (such as obligations) at one time, so as to satisfy often competing requirements. (Merriam-Webster).

Take just a moment and write down the top 5 things you are balancing right now…

**The Balanced Life**

Boundaries, Attitudes, Labor/Laziness, Authenticity, Needs, Communication, Emotions, Disciplines

As we dive into each of these areas, we’ll be examining what balance looks like personally, in our family lives, with our outside relationships, and in our activities.

What types of things do we balance in life? Work and play, our checkbooks, diet, time, schedules, relationships, demands/responsibilities. And we know that we balance a whole lot more, including having our tires rotated and balanced on our cars! Having the right balance of the right things gives us a much greater chance at things running smoothly. Not to say we won’t have those speedbumps or potholes in our lives, but when they come, as James says “*when* we have trials,” our properly maintained and balanced tires supporting us in life, give us the opportunity to handle those bumps better.

In fitness, in order to be able to have good balance, a person needs to have a strong core Having a strong core provides support for the rest of the body. This year we’ll be strengthening our spiritual core with Christ at the center, so with His strength we will be able maintain balance in all aspects of our lives as women, wives and moms. We cannot be balanced without Him. The key to developing balance in our daily lives is to start each day in the Word and with prayer, asking God to guide our thoughts, activities, and responsibilities.

**Balance in Boundaries**

Boundary - a real or imaginary point beyond which a person or thing cannot go. i.e. parents sent boundaries for their children.

Synonyms – bound, cap, ceiling, confines, end, extent, limit, limitation, line, termination

**Types of Boundaries**

* Physical – fences, walls, signs
* Natural – rivers, mountain ranges, oceans, deserts
* Imposed – laws of the local government, state, country
* Personal – personal space, privacy, handshake, or hug etc…

**Why Boundaries are Important – God Created Boundaries!**

The concept of boundaries is rooted in, the nature of God Himself. God defines Himself as a distinct, separate being. He also defines Himself as separate from His creation and says, “I am who I am and there is no other God but me.”

God is a God of order as we’ve seen from the beginning in creation and beyond. He created time. He established boundaries for our days, weeks, months, and years and even the rising of the sun and moon. Time is in his hands. The ocean has its boundary – knowing just how far up the shore to go. He also gives us instructions in His Word for boundaries in life pertaining to godly living, putting off the old self and putting on the new, and he also created boundaries for our relationships such as marriage, a life-long covenant. Boundaries protect us.

**Boundaries, Bad or Good?**

Boundaries sometimes carry a negative connotation. For example: a boundary can restrict or keep one from doing something. But instead, what if we looked at boundaries more like standards? Standards are something to strive for, different from the mindset of preventing or restricting. In essence, boundaries should come from our standards – which come from the Word of God.

**Striving for the Lord**

Strive – to devote serious effort or energy, to try very hard, struggle. Hebrews 12:1 says: Let us run the race with endurance the race that is set before us.

* Luke 13:24 *“Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”* We are to strive to stay on the narrow path to Christ.
* 1 Timothy 4:10 *“For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.”*
* 2 Timothy 2:15 *“Do your best to present yourself to God, as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of Truth.”*
* Colossians 3:23 *“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.”*

One person in scripture comes to mind when I think of someone striving for the Lord in all aspects of her life. The Proverbs 31 woman, also known as the Excellent Wife.

*“An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar. She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong. She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant. Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.” Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.”*

Wow, what a picture. After reading this, do you think she had to learn balance and set some boundaries up a time or two? Remember ladies, she didn’t do all of this in one day, one week or even one month. This is a picture of her character and who she was throughout her life. This excellent woman must have been striving in all her endeavors with her priorities set.

**Boundary Roles**

What roles do we play when it comes to boundaries? I have identified three that apply.

* Boundary Setter – a guide for our families. This comes very naturally for those of us who are moms.

Proverbs 22:6 *“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.”* We need to be mindful that although it’s our role to place boundaries on our children and it’s equally important to put boundaries in place for ourselves we shouldn’t impose our boundaries / our expectations on others.

* Boundary Follower – Following God’s Word is critical in our protection and spiritual growth as believers. Our obedience and responses are on display to our family and to those around us. Do we do what God is asking of us? Being a boundary follower (as it pertains to God’s Word), provides protection but can also present us with the possibility of being tempted. Guard your heart and be alert to the influences and temptations around you.
* Boundary Breaker – this can be a good thing or a bad thing. The negative would be a selfish or lack of obedient response to the boundary put in place and could be looked at as rebellion. However, in this world our faith and allegiance to Christ will be tested and it will be necessary for us to break through worldly boundaries and not settle or compromise. This requires discernment.

**Areas Needing Boundaries**

A lack of boundaries can lead to a lack of self-control.

* Time – we only have 24 hours in a day – how are we using it?
Ephesians 5:16 *“Making the best use of time because the days are evil.”*

Colossians 4:5-6 *“Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”*

Psalm 90:12 *“So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.”*

* Activities – think about a typical day for you… what are the main activities you choose to do in your spare or down time? How much time are you on computer/phone? Instagram/FB/Tiktok? Binge watching shows on Hulu? Down time and rest is good and important with moderation, but so often these activities suck our time and energy and cause us to lose our joy. ☹ We can become easily discontent and lose motivation if we have no boundaries for ourselves on what we watch and how much we are watching. We tend to set boundaries for our children regarding TV time, movie choices etc… are we putting them on for ourselves?
* Tongue – can there be consequences for not having boundaries with our speech? Freedom of speech isn’t always free. When our words are careless, there is a cost.

Proverbs 10:19 *“When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.”*

Proverbs 21:23 *“Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.”*

James 3:1-12 describes the tongue as a fire, it stains the whole body, it’s a restless evil, can not be tamed. We need to be intentional with what we say and what we don’t say, being ever mindful of the impacts our words can have on others. Our tongues definitely need boundaries!

We are also to be mindful of placing appropriate boundaries regarding relationships (marriage, friends, neighbors, co-workers), our ministries and our work. Keeping our priorities where they should be: God first, then marriage (if married), children (if applies), ministry/work and beyond. Keeping the right priorities can help keep your boundaries in check as well.

**Managing Boundaries with Wisdom**

It is up to us to create and place boundaries on ourselves, our time, activities, tongue and relationships, doing so with wisdom and discernment. James 3 mentions that wisdom is from above.

* Spending time daily in God’s Word – His Word never returns void.

Proverbs 2:6 *“For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;”*

Proverbs 3:13 *“Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets* understanding,”

Proverbs 24:3 *“By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established;”*

* Prayer – James 1:5 says: *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”*
* Godly women – gaining wisdom from other sisters in Christ! Having that mentor and accountability is so important!

Proverbs 27:17 *“Iron sharpens iron, and one man (woman) sharpens another.”*

**Discussion**

1. Review the top 5 things you are trying to balance in your life right now. (What you wrote down earlier). Do any of these areas need adjusting? (For example: are there things with too heavy an emphasis or not enough?)
2. What challenges keep you from being balanced?
3. What are practical ways you keep balance in your life? How about as balance pertains to boundaries?
4. Review Proverbs 31:10-31. What were the Excellent Wife’s standards? What are examples of her striving?
5. What things are you currently striving for?
6. In looking at the areas of time, activities, our tongues and relationships, which area is the hardest to enforce boundaries on and why? What can you do to change this pattern?
7. This week, make a journal of how you spend your time each day. Log each activity and how long you spent on each item. Look for patterns and see if you should put some boundaries or time limits on certain activities, or even create time for things that are being neglected. Pray through each item and ask God to show you areas to change.

**Resources**

ESV John MacArthur Study Bible

John MacArthur – online commentary

Blueletterbible.org

Bible.org