

Finding Balance

By Christine Vander Wielen, MSW, CAPSW

I watched in awe and with some trepidation as our four-year-old daughter climbed onto the balance beam. As she was listening intently to the instructor telling her how to position her arms and legs, I wondered if she would remember what we had practiced. Having had the pleasure of spending countless occasions with her balancing on logs, curbs, sidewalk lines, sandbox sides, and balance beams, I had taught her the trick of staying balanced. In order to master the trick of balancing, she was going to have to resist the natural tendencies to look down at her own feet or to look out at her surroundings. Staying balanced on the balance beam has more to do with focus than with actual talent. When balancing, it is most important to focus at the end of the balance beam. Gymnasts refer to this as “spotting the end.” Even when they take their eyes off the end to do flips and turns, they return their focus and spot the end as soon as possible.

As this principle of focusing on the end is important when on the balance beam, it is also important when trying to find balance in life. There is a constant struggle to find the balance between work and play; being a homemaker and working outside the home; giving time and being overcommitted; letting a child make mistakes and being overprotective; working on a personal project and spending time with the family; doing housework and playing with the children, working longer hours to provide for the family and spending time with the family, to name just a few. We can stay balanced only if we focus our eyes on the Lord and allow Him to give us an eternal perspective.

Proverbs 3:5 states “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” In order to completely commit our ways to the Lord, we need to resist the temptation to focus on ourselves, and our own desires. We also need to resist the temptation of getting distracted with our surroundings, and of relying on our own wisdom and understanding. Admittedly, it can be difficult to stay focused with an eternal perspective. The Lord desires to have a close personal relationship with us. When we lose focus, the Lord is faithful and just. He readily forgives us and helps us to get back in balance.

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