**Building a Balanced Life and Ministry- Proverbs 9:1**

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**Teachers Notes**

**A. How do we build a balanced life and ministry?**

1. What do we need to do to develop a balanced life between our ministry and our life.

a. Someone has said that many Christian leaders are building a ministry but not a life.

1) John 10:10 says that “Christ came to give us life and life more abundant.” What does this mean to us?

* 1. Proverbs 24:3-4 – How do we build this abundant life? -– on wisdom
     1. It says that “by wisdom a house is built”.
        1. And wisdom is defined as the ability to put what we know into practice. Proverbs 4:7 – The beginning of wisdom is “to acquire it.”
        2. We know that wisdom comes from God – but we have to do our part.
     2. Proverbs 24:3b says, “and by understanding it is established.”
        1. This speaks of relationships between the members of the family and others.
           1. Proverbs 4:7b – “And with all your acquiring (of wisdom) get understanding.”
     3. Where does understanding come from? -- from knowledge. Vs. 4
        1. To have understanding we need knowledge: - Col. 2:3 – “In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”
           1. How to build a home.
           2. How to have a Christian marriage
           3. How to raise children, etc.
           4. How to build a ministry
           5. How do we live a balanced life
        2. This requires time and investment.
           1. You reap what you sow.

1. Proverbs 9:1 – 7 Pillars that will support the balanced life (Luke 6:48) we are building.
   1. Again we see that it is wisdom that builds (edifies) the house, home, life, & ministry.
      1. “And she hewn out – dug out or carved out - its seven pillars or columns.” GOD PLACES THE WORLD ON THE PILLARS THAT HE CREATED.
         1. This indicates an abundance of work, effort, & investments.
         2. Takes time.
         3. Requires involvement by all members of the family.
      2. What is the purpose of a column?
         1. What happens if one of these columns is weak or damaged?
         2. The whole life of the house is in jeopardy

* 1. Let’s look at 7 pillars of the family.
     1. First: COMMITMENT – What are we willing to die for?
        1. To God – Ps. 37:4-6. – our relationship with him
        2. To Marriage – Eph. 5:22-31. – What does “leave and cleave” mean?
        3. To being good parents. – “Train up a child in the way he should go.”
        4. Building a Godly home – Proverbs 16:3 – “Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established.” - Joshua 24:15
        5. To ministry – setting an example for others.
     2. Secondly: PROPER PRIORITIES.
        1. The things we give our time, money and attention (interest) to are our priorities. (God’s)
           1. When Joshua was affirming his family’s position in Joshua 24, he was establishing priorities.
        2. What kinds of priorities do we have?
           1. A priority is something we give our lives to – values.
           2. It can be an idol, something we worship.
        3. What should our priorities be?
           1. Deut. 6:5 – “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”
           2. Matt. 6:33 – “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and then all these things shall be added unto you.”
     3. Thirdly: PROPER ATTITUDES
        1. A perfect example of proper attitudes is found in Jesus.
           1. Phil 2:1-8 – READ.
           2. If each of us would characterize the attitude of Christ, we would have no problem relating properly in our homes.
        2. The basic premise that Jesus came was to serve and not to be served.
           1. If a husband would learn to love like Christ, and a wife to submit like Christ, and the children to obey like Christ, then our homes would be a happier place.
        3. The reason that this does not happen is found in verse 3:
           1. “Do nothing out of selfish or empty conceit, but with humility…”
           2. The basis of Christ’s effectiveness was His Love, Submission, his Obedience that came out of his Humility.
           3. It is selfish pride and self-interest that will keep us out of balance.
           4. We must humble ourselves and get our priorities in order – we need to have the attitude of Christ – that of a servant.
     4. Fourth: BALANCE OF TRUTH AND LIFE – Duet. 4:9
        1. If we are going to live a balanced life then we have to have a proper balance between what we say and what we do.
           1. It is through our relationships at home and in our ministry where this is learned and tested.
           2. For example: Ps. 78:1-8, talks about the home being a school where we learn how to deal with life with people who really know us.
           3. We can fool people at work but it is hard to fool our wife or family.
        2. The home should be the first to testify of the Wonders of God.
           1. It is the place where we establish our testimony as it says in Ps. 78:5a. “Teach them to their children” as in vs. 5b.
           2. It should be a place where we learn confidence in God, 7b and to keep the Lord’s commandments, 7c.
        3. What are we teaching our family through Word and Example about a balanced life style – work, play, devotion etc.?
           1. Someone has said, “We teach what we believe but we reproduce what we are.” Matt. 7:15-20, tells us that by a person’s fruit we will know them.
           2. Truth - as good as it is - means nothing without an example. John 14:6 - Jesus came as truth and life.
           3. We need to be a living example of God’s forgiveness, grace, salvation and balance
           4. If we live a life in balance then we will reproduce this in our family and others.
        4. Have we taken the time to know our children well enough to be able to speak into their lives? Do we take time with them?
           1. Remember, wisdom comes from understanding and understanding comes from knowledge and knowledge comes from relationship.
           2. “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”
     5. Fifth: DISCIPLINE – SELF-CONTROL
        1. Part of living a balanced life is self-discipline and self-control.
           1. What kind of model are we showing to our family and colleagues in this area?
           2. Do we demonstrate discipline and self-control in our speech, attitude, thoughts, money management, time, etc.?
        2. Discipline comes from the same root word as discipleship.
           1. If we are true disciples of Christ, then we will have a disciplined life.
           2. Read Proverbs 1:1-7, The goal of wisdom is to have a “disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair.” v. 3
           3. The goal is that we can give teach prudence, knowledge and discretion to the young. v. 4
        3. As all of us need to be disciplined (corrected) at times, we also need to learn how to discipline ourselves spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, etc to have a balanced life.
     6. Sixth Pillar: PROPER RELATIONSHIPS
        1. If we are going to have a life in balance we need to control our relationships.
           1. Developing relationships is very important but we have to be careful where we invest our time and energy.
        2. Where we commit our time and energy is where we have our priority.
        3. Proper relationships will help us live a balanced life. However, improper relationships will do the opposite.
           1. Who do we allow to speak into our lives? For example: Who has influence over our time, talents and resources?
           2. Who do you listen to? Who gives you advice? Who has influence on your life?
           3. Where does God, your spouse, your family stand in your significant relationships?
        4. For example: Does your family feel like they are secondary compared to other relationships in your life?
           1. Most affairs begin when a husband or wife begins to build stronger relationship with someone other than their mate.
        5. We need relationships that will hold us accountable to a balanced life-style.
           1. We need a proper relationship with God that will help us have a proper relationship with our wife and family that will lead to proper relationships with others.
           2. All healthy relationships begin with us seeking a relationship with God
           3. God

Husband Wife

* + - * 1. Examine your relationships – are they helping you live a balanced life-style?
    1. Seventh – PRAYER – DEVOTIONAL LIFE
       1. If we are going to live a balanced life-style then we have to get this area of life in order.
          1. Many years ago Gordon McDonald wrote a book entitled, “Ordering your Private World.”

It was a good book that taught us how to discipline and control our private world.

We all have our secrets that control us.

* + - * 1. The problem was that Gordon McDonald wasn’t practicing what he was writing.

It was soon discovered that he had been having an affair for several months.

When the media talked to him about this situation he said, “I was living a lie.”

He had allowed his fame and success to distract him from a balanced life-style that included time with God and His word.

* + - 1. It is so easy for us in ministry to put our devotional and prayer life aside because we are in ministry.
         1. We use the excuse that we pray without ceasing (1Thess. 5:17) or we pray everywhere at anytime (I Tim 2:8), but we don’t have a regular time of prayer and devotion.
      2. This is the most important center pillar of our balanced life-style.
         1. Remember the story of Samson. He lost his power because of Delilah cutting his hair. But when the rulers of the Philistines were having a party they brought Samson out to make fun of him. He asked a servant if he could be put between the center pillars that held up the building. And we know what happened.
         2. Just like what happened to the Philistines could happen to us if we are not careful with our pillars.
      3. The Psalmist understood this when he wrote, “Evening, morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud; and he will hear my voice.” Ps. 55:17
  1. These are the pillars that support our lives and bring balance and safety.
     1. Maybe if one is missing our lives will continue to stand, but if we continue to take another one away and another, eventually our lives will crumble.
        1. Maybe the pillar is only damaged and needs repair.
        2. We can live with it and survive, but what kind of testimony is this to our family and others?
        3. We need to dedicate the pillars of our lives to the Lord – 1 Sam. 2:8 says “…for the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s and He sets the world on them.”’
           1. Our world is dependent on these and other pillars – we need to develop them and then keep them in good order so our lives and the lives of others will be successful, healthy and protected.
     2. We need to develop and maintain our pillars of:
        1. Proper Commitments
        2. Proper Priorities
        3. Right Attitudes
        4. Truth and Life
        5. Discipline – Self-Control
        6. Proper Relationships
        7. Prayer and Devotion

1. How do we live a life of balance?
2. Recognize when your life is out of balance

You must first learn to recognize the signs of imbalance. The usual signs are stress, [anxiety](http://www.ehow.com/how_6093170_balance-church-family-life.html), depression, exhaustion and irritability. Be open should your spouse or children approach you about how you are using your time.

1. Let your Ministry be a Family Event.   
   All Christian Ministry should exist to support the family not divide the family.

Find a church that affords you several opportunities to be a family at church. Even if the church you attend seems to always separate the children out into their own programs, you can choose to have your kids stay with you in the service. Sit in church together, serve in church together, eat together after church, and talk about the sermon together. Find your own way of making church a family event.

1. Set proper parameters  
   If you are prone to be really involved in your church, then set some appropriate limits. Sit down with your spouse and even your children, and set those parameters together. Make commitments that you won't spend more than (X) number of nights at church each week, or that you won't be involved in more than (X) number of ministries at one time.
2. Re-think your priorities – How do you develop balance between your expectation, priorities and realities?

Set priorities at home and priorities at church. This will be a huge tool to help you establish and keep that much needed balance. For church, maybe some of the priorities are: Worship Together, Sunday School or Bible study. For home, some examples are: eat supper together, alone time with spouse, devotions before bed with children and whatever else you see as important enough to put on the list. Now that your priorities are established, church and family don't have to compete and steal from each other.

1. Have someone hold you accountable (wife, children, friends)

Be approachable about others warning you when you are again on the verge of being unbalanced. Let your spouse and even your children have that freedom to hold you accountable to the commitments you have established. Find someone at church who you know and trust to help keep you accountable.