

 GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

2022 Women's Conference

Keeping Your Balance: Navigating Wisely through the Challenges of Life

Speaker: Pam Hardy

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Navigating Wisely Through the Challenges of Life

Session 1 - Keeping Your Balance, Part 1

Praise Passage

1 Chronicles 29:10-13 (NASB)

10 So David blessed the Lord in the sight of all the assembly; and David said, "Blessed are You, O Lord God of Israel our father, forever and ever.

11 "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.

12 "Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone.

13 "Now therefore, our God, we thank You, and praise Your glorious name.

INTRODUCTION

1 Corinthians 9:24-25

It is good to be "unbalanced" in your love for Christ!

Deuteronomy 6:5

Psalms 9:1; 27:1, 39:7; 42:1-2,5; 54:4; 63:1, 73:25

Jeremiah 29:13

Philippians 1:21; 3:7-8

I. FAMILY AND MINISTRY

A. The Balance

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Family - Gen. 2:24

Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:4

1 Timothy 3:4-5; 5:14

Titus 2:3-5

Ministry - Romans 12:3-13

1 Corinthians 12

John 13:34

Romans 15:14

Galatians 6:1

Ephesians 4:32

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Hebrews 3:13; 10:24

B. The Extremes

Family - a self-centered focus on the family

a tendency to idolize your children (making your life revolve around them)

neglect of ministry to those outside the family

lack of commitment and reliability in your local church body

Ministry - neglect of responsibilities to and within the family

challenges with children and family that result from a lack of proper

attention to family issues

a lack of love for the church among your children

II. SELF-DENIAL AND LIBERTY

A. The Balance

Romans 14

Self-Denial - 1 Corinthians 6:12, 19-20; 9:27
Titus 2:12

Liberty - Galatians 5:1,13
Colossians 2:16-23
1 Timothy 6:17

B. The Extremes

Self-denial - self-righteousness
Legalism/"works-righteousness"
an inability to enjoy Christian freedom
prideful judging and lack of love toward fellow believers

Liberty - sinfulness/worldliness
license (disregard of God's moral code)
selfish flaunting of Christian liberty
prideful judging and lack of love toward fellow believers

Believe as I believe – no more, no less;
That I am right (and no one else) confess.
Feel as I feel, think only as I think;
Eat what I eat, and drink what I drink.
Look as I look, do always as I do;
Then – and only then – I'll fellowship with you.

(Taken from Growing Strong In the Seasons of Life by Charles Swindoll. Copyright © 1983 by Zondervan. Used by permission of Zondervan.)

III. PATIENCE AND CONFRONTATION

A. The Balance

Patience - 1 Peter 4:8
Proverbs 19:11

Confrontation- Matthew 18:15
Luke 17:3
Romans 15:14
Galatians 6:1
Proverbs 27:5-6; 28:23

B. The Extremes

Patience - fear of man
fear of losing reputation or relationships
lack of sacrificial love for others

Confrontation- pride/judgementalism
a critical, ungracious spirit
difficulty in building and maintaining relationships

Navigating Wisely Through the Challenges of Life

Session 2 - Keeping Your Balance, Part 2

Praise Passage

Psalms 145:1–10 (NASB)

- 1 I will extol You, my God, O King, and I will bless Your name forever and ever.
- 2 Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever.
- 3 Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.
- 4 One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.
- 5 On the glorious splendor of Your majesty and on Your wonderful works, I will meditate.
- 6 Men shall speak of the power of Your awesome acts, and I will tell of Your greatness.
- 7 They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your abundant goodness and will shout joyfully of Your righteousness.
- 8 The Lord is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.
- 9 The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works.
- 10 All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord, and Your godly ones shall bless You.

IV. TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL

A. The Balance

Temporal - Genesis 1:31
Psalm 104
Proverbs 27:23-27; 31:13-27
1 Timothy 4:4-5

Eternal - Matthew 6:19-34
Philippians 3:20
Colossians 3:1-2
1 Timothy 6:7,17
1 Peter 1:4

B. The Extremes

Temporal - overemphasis on worldly success and achievements
materialism (excessively preoccupied with material possessions)
fear/anxiety about potential losses
excessive preoccupation with temporal issues or causes
undue reliance on certain philosophies or ideologies (examples could be
health, exercise, diet, politics, schooling methods, etc.)

Eternal - neglect of God-given responsibilities
unfaithful stewardship of material possessions
lack of appreciation for the beauty of God's creation
lack of compassion for those who are suffering

V. INNER MAN AND OUTER MAN

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A. The Balance
2 Corinthians 4:16
1 Samuel 16:7

Inner man - Proverbs 4:23
Matthew 12:34
Mark 7:18-23
Hebrews 4:12

Outer man - 1 Timothy 2:9-10; 4:7-8
1 Peter 3:4

B. The Extremes

Inner man - morbid introspection/self-focus/self-absorption
paralysis (excessive concern about motives)
sloppiness or slovenliness

Outer man - wrong priorities
vanity/shallowness/externalism
immodesty
excessive desire for physical experiences or pleasure
Phariseeism/hypocrisy

Quote: "Our character is the picture, our appearance is the frame; our frame should complement the picture, not distract from it." (Sandi Keasling)

VI. REALITY AND HOPE

A. The Balance

Genesis 50:20

Psalm 3

Romans 8:28

1 Corinthians 13:7

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

2 Kings 6:8-17

B. The Extremes

Reality – skepticism/cynicism/pessimism
bitterness
despair/depression

Hope – naïveté
foolish or unreasonable optimism
immature refusal to deal with reality

VII. STRIVING AND TRUSTING

A. The Balance

Nehemiah 4:13-14

Psalms 127:1

Proverbs 2:7; 3:5-7

Proverbs 21:31

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

Ephesians 2:10

Philippians 4:6-7,11

Colossians 1:29

1 Timothy 6:11, 12

James 4:13-15

B. The Extremes

Striving - self-confidence/self-sufficiency
“works-righteousness”
anxiety/fear

Trusting - laziness/passivity/presumption on God
mysticism
“let go and let God” mentality

Truly holy affections in a saint are balanced. This is the dominant trait of their sanctity. The whole image of Christ is impressed upon them. . . there is in Him every grace; and He is full of grace and truth. Thus there is apparent in some saints the same beautiful proportion that there is in the true image of Christ.” (Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*. [Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1984] 157–58).

Navigating Wisely Through the Challenges of Life

Session 3 - Trusting God

(Based on the book Trusting God, by Jerry Bridges)

Praise Passage

Revelation 5:11–14 (NASB)

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

INTRODUCTION

- The heart of the Christian faith: trust
- The challenge of the Christian life: trials

James 1:2-3

... when you encounter various trials...

Job 5:7

I Peter 4:12-13

Our goal is to have Paul's perspective on suffering:

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

... therefore I am well content with distresses, with persecutions with difficulties... for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Two key issues...

I. THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF GOD

A. God Is Completely Sovereign

Genesis 50:20

Job 42:2

Psalms 103:19; 115:3

Daniel 4:35

Lamentations 3:37-38

Isaiah 14:24, 27

Colossians 1:16-17

Ephesians 1:11

2 Timothy 1:12

- providence defined: "God's providence is His constant care for and His absolute rule over all His creation for His own glory and the good of His people." (Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God*. [Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1988] 25).

- Purpose of God's sovereignty: His own glory and the good of His people

- Three key questions for every situation:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

B. God Is Infinite In Wisdom

Romans 11:33-34

Psalms 147:5

Proverbs 2:6; 3:19

- wisdom defined: "The selection of the best end of action and the adoption of the best possible means for the accomplishment of that action." (Trusting God, p. 18)

God, in His wisdom, often uses trial and adversity to accomplish His purposes:

Psalms 119:67-68, 71, 75-76

Hebrews 12:5-11

Isaiah 55:8-9

Romans 9:20

Romans 8:28-29

God's purpose for our "good" is NOT comfort or happiness but conformity to the image of His Son

1. Benefits of trials

Deuteronomy 8:2,16

Job 23:10

Psalms 66:10

Romans 5:3

James 1:2-4

1 Peter 1:6-7; 5:10

2 Corinthians 1:4-5; 4:17

Philippians 3:10

Ecclesiastes 7:3-4

2. Behavior during trials

1 Peter 5:5-7

Psalm 27:14; 57:1; 61:1-4, 62:8

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

C. God Is Perfect In Love

Jeremiah 31:3

Romans 8:35-39

Isaiah 54:10

- For the clearest evidence of God's love, we must look to Christ's sacrificial death for us on the cross and NOT to our circumstances

John 3:16; 15:13

Romans 5:8

I John 3:16; 4:9-10

Psalm 145:8-9

Ephesians 2:4-7

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

II. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN

A. The Development of Trust

1. I must study

God's Word: Proverbs 22:17-19 ...so that your trust may be in the Lord...

Psalm 9:10

Psalm 119:50, 71, 93, 105

Other Resources: The Attributes of God, by A.W. Pink
The Knowledge of the Holy, by A.W. Tozer
Our Awesome God, by John MacArthur

2. I must pray

Philippians 4:6 ...in everything by supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God...

Psalm 34:4; 61:1-4

3. I must choose

Proverbs 3:5-6 we must make the choice to trust
Luke 1:38

Habakkuk 3:17-18 Yet I will exult...I will rejoice...

B. The Results of Trust

1. For God—honors and glorifies Him

1 Corinthians 10:31 . . . or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore we make it our aim . . . to be well pleasing to Him.

Psalms 40:3

2. For man—joy and peace of heart

Isaiah 26:3 You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because He trusts in You.

Philippians 4:7 Be anxious for nothing . . . and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Psalms 5:11; 33:21; 34:8
Jeremiah 17:7

CONCLUSION

- A word about our children

Tozer: We are often hindered from giving our treasures to the Lord out of fear for their safety; this is especially true when those treasures are loved relatives and friends. But we need have no such fears. Our Lord came not to destroy but to save. Everything is safe which we commit to Him, and nothing is really safe which is not so committed. (A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 19XX] 28).

Our gameplan – 1 Peter 4:19

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Trusting God by Jerry Bridges

The Power of Suffering by John MacArthur

A Path through Suffering by Elisabeth Elliot

The Path of Loneliness by Elisabeth Elliot

Suffering Is Never for Nothing by Elisabeth Elliot

The Pursuit of God by A.W. Tozer

The Thought of God by Maurice Roberts

A Heart for God by Sinclair Ferguson

Desiring God by John Piper

A Praying Life by Paul Miller

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter, www.elisabethelliot.org

SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION

Psalm 13:1-2, 5-6

Psalm 18:30

Psalm 31:14-15, 19, 22

Psalm 32:10

Psalm 34

Psalm 56:3-4

Psalm 94: 18-19

Lamentations 3:22-25

Matthew 11:28-30

John 14:27

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Hebrews 4:15-16

1 Peter 2:21-23; 4:19; 5:5-7

QUOTES

Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1988)

In order to trust God, we must know Him in an intimate, personal way. . . it is more than just knowing facts about God. It is coming into a deeper personal relationship with Him as a result of seeking Him in the midst of personal pain and discovering Him to be trustworthy. It is only as we know God in this personal way that we come to trust Him. (p. 20)

Our first priority in times of adversity is to honor and glorify God by trusting Him. We honor God by choosing to trust Him when we don't understand what He is doing or why He has allowed some adverse circumstance to occur. (p. 30)

Confidence in the sovereignty of God in all that affects us is crucial to our trusting Him. If there is a single event in all of the universe that can occur outside of God's sovereign control then we cannot trust Him. His love may be infinite, but if His power is limited and His purpose can be thwarted, we cannot trust Him. (p. 37)

God knows exactly what He intends we become and He knows exactly what circumstances, both good and bad, are necessary to produce that result in our lives. (p. 121)

While it is certainly true that God's love for us does not protect us from pain and sorrow, it is also true that all occasions of pain and sorrow are under the absolute control of God. (p. 30)

Sometimes we come to the place where we do not demand of God that He explain Himself, but we try to determine or comprehend for ourselves what God is doing. We are unwilling to live without rational reasons for what is happening to us or those we love. We are almost insatiable in our quest for the 'why' of the adversity that has come upon us. But this is a futile as well as an untrusting task. God's ways, being the ways of infinite wisdom, simply cannot be comprehended by our finite minds. (p. 125)

If we are to experience peace in our souls in times of adversity, we must come to the place where we truly believe that God's ways are simply beyond us and stop asking Him 'why' or even trying to determine it ourselves. (pp. 126-127)

But though we should never ask a demanding 'why?' we may and should ask God to enable us to understand what He may be teaching us through a particular experience. But even here we must be careful that we are not seeking to satisfy our souls by finding some spiritual 'good' in the adversity. Rather we must trust God that He is working in the experience for our good, even when we see no beneficial results. We must learn to trust God when He doesn't tell us why, when we don't understand what He is doing. (p. 125)

Maurice Roberts, *The Thought of God* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1993)

To have God in his mind and thought is the believer's constant source of strength. (p. 4) The thought of God should be the Christian's panacea. It should cure all his ills at a stroke. (p. 5)

Panic is the sinful failure to apply our knowledge of God to particular problems. Panic is possible only when God is obscured from our thoughts by visible circumstances. (pp. 6-7)

The degree of a Christian's peace of mind depends upon his spiritual ability to interpose the thought of God between himself and his anxiety. . . for it is not outward circumstances that can drag us down, but our own reaction of despair to them, when we fail to perceive the hidden hand of God in all events. (p. 7)

Our thoughts must be re-educated to have a high view of God. . . (we must) bend our minds to the task of concentrating on His infinite greatness. (pp. 13-14)

SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERCESSORY PRAYER REQUESTS

SPIRITUAL CONDITION (for all loved ones)

Genuine salvation

Spiritual sensitivity (a tender, open heart toward spiritual things)

An enduring love for and obedient attitude toward Jesus Christ and His Word

True repentance and sorrow over their sin

A strong desire to know God and glorify Him

A strong desire for Bible study and scripture memorization

CHARACTER QUALITIES (for all loved ones)

Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

Unselfishness, sacrificial love, and forgiveness toward others (especially toward other family members)

A love for honesty and truth (and a hatred for lying!)

Humility and a grateful spirit

Holiness/godliness in daily living

Wisdom/seeking God's guidance in decisions

That they would conquer their personal areas of weakness (list them) (Ex: pride, selfishness, anger, etc.)

SPECIAL REQUESTS FOR HUSBANDS

Purity and faithfulness (mental, emotional, physical)

Leadership in the family (family worship, setting standards, etc.)

Wisdom in decision-making

I Tim 3:2-7 (above reproach, husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous, one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence, not a novice, having a good reputation among those who are outside the church)

Titus 1:5-9 (blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful Word that he may be able to exhort and convict)

SPECIAL REQUESTS FOR CHILDREN

Love and respect for parents/a submissive, obedient, teachable spirit

That they would learn to personally trust God and depend on Him at all times

Leadership qualities (integrity, wisdom, discernment, and courage)

Courage to stand against peer pressure and temptation (not be controlled by "fear of man")

Moral purity/physical purity till marriage (daughters especially: concern for modest dress)

That they would someday be a godly wife or godly husband

Pray for future spouse (genuinely converted, live a godly life, be obedient to the Word)

Physical protection for children

POEMS/PRAVERS

"A Quiet Mind"

What room is there for troubled fear?
I know my Lord, and He is near;
And He will light my candle, so
That I may see the way to go.

There need be no bewilderment
To one who goes where he is sent;
The trackless plain by night and day
Is set with signs, lest he should stray.

My path may cross a waste of sea,
But that need never frighten me;
Or rivers full to very brim,
But they are open ways to Him.

My path may lead through woods at night,
Where neither moon nor any light
Of guiding star or beacon shines;
He will not let me miss my signs.

Lord, grant to me a quiet mind,
That trusting Thee, for Thou art kind,
I may go on without a fear,
For Thou, my Lord, art always near.

(Amy Carmichael, *Toward Jerusalem*. [Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1977], 34. ©, Used by Permission.)

“Thy Way Is Perfect”

Long is the way, and very steep the slope
Strengthen me once again, O God of hope.

Far, very far, the summit doth appear;
But Thou art near my God, but Thou art near.

And Thou wilt give me with my daily food,
Powers of endurance, courage, fortitude.

Thy way is perfect; only let that way
Be clear before my feet from day to day.

Thou art my Portion, saith my soul to Thee,
O what a Portion is my God to me.

(Amy Carmichael, *Toward Jerusalem*. [Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1977], 52. ©, Used by Permission.)

Loving Lord and Heavenly Father,

I offer up today all that I am, all that I have, all that I do, and all that I suffer, to be Yours today and Yours forever. Give me grace, Lord, to do all that I know of Your holy will. Purify my heart, sanctify my thinking, correct my desires. Teach me, in all of today's work and trouble and joy, to respond with honest praise, simple trust, and instant obedience, that my life may be in truth a living sacrifice, by the power of Your Holy Spirit and in the name of Your Son Jesus Christ, my Master and my all. Amen.

Elisabeth Elliot Gren (Used by permission)

In heav'nly love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding
For nothing changes here.
The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?

(Anna L. Waring, born 1820)

(The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter, May/June 1994, elisabethelliott.org/newsletters/may-june-94.pdf)

"For Our Children"

By Amy Carmichael

Father, hear us, we are praying,
Hear the words our hearts are saying,
We are praying for our children.

Keep them from the powers of evil,
From the secret, hidden peril,
From the whirlpool that would suck them,
From the treacherous quicksand pluck them.

From the worldling's hollow gladness,
From the sting of faithless sadness,
Holy Father, save our children.

Through life's troubled waters steer them,
Through life's bitter battle cheer them,
Father, Father, be Thou near them.
Read the language of our longing,
Read the wordless pleadings thronging,
Holy Father, for our children.

And wherever they may bide,
Lead them Home at eventide.

(The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter, May/June 1994, elisabethelliot.org/newsletters/may-june-94.pdf)

Biography

Pam was born and raised in a Christian home in Houston, Texas. Christ graciously called her to salvation while she was in her first year of college. She met her husband Carey at the University of Houston while she was pursuing a degree in nursing, and they were married in 1976. After graduating from college in 1977, Pam worked as a nurse in cardiac intensive care, and then for two physicians in private practice. In 1983, with the birth of her first child, Pam left her nursing career behind and began a full-time career as a mother.

One of Pam's greatest joys is studying the Word of God and imparting its truth to other women. For several years Pam taught in the track for wives at the annual Shepherds' Conference at Grace Community Church in Los Angeles. She has continued speaking periodically at retreats and conferences for women across the United States as well as in other countries around the world.

Pam is privileged to be a pastor's wife and she and her husband have had the opportunity to minister in several churches in Texas and California. She currently serves at Carey's side, loving the people he shepherds at Twin City Bible Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Her main involvement through the years has been serving in the various women's ministries of the church and playing piano on the worship team. Pam's hobbies include reading, writing, and music, and she is blessed with four adult children and two grandchildren.

