

*BALANCING ACTS*  
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4 practices to  
help beat  
burnout and  
create a healthy  
balance in life  
and ministry

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# BALANCING ACTS

4 practices to help beat burnout and create a healthy balance in life and ministry

## 1. *FILL YOUR CUP, NOT YOUR CALENDAR.*

Something will always encroach on your time—whether it’s an emergency or an incredible opportunity you’d really like to say yes to. But wall to wall appointments and non-stop to-do lists don’t leave room for growth and development. Having time blocked on your schedule brings balance to the busy by providing space and accountability for personal and professional growth.

I block my calendar for reading and continued learning. Why? Because continuous learning is a must for 21st century leaders. The higher your level of leadership, the more margin you need for this continued growth.

You are 42% more likely to achieve a goal when you write it down, so set a goal. But don’t stop there. Make the bold move to block time on your calendar to truly invest in personal growth.

### *ACTION STEP:*

Set a growth goal; write it down, and block a recurring time on your calendar weekly to work at achieving this goal.

### *PRAYER PROMPT:*

Ask the Lord for wisdom, knowledge, courage, discipline, and perseverance on your new growth track.

## 2.

*PRAY  
MORE  
NOT LESS.*

I believe so fully in the power of prayer—I’ve seen too many miracles not to believe. It’s critical to expand your prayer covering before heading into any new endeavor or initiative.

The more responsibilities we have, and the busier we get, the harder it will be to protect these sacred disciplines. We may be tempted to skip or shorten our prayer time, but we cannot afford to do so.

“I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.” — Martin Luther

Expanded responsibility and escalated opportunities in life and ministry require a proportionate increase in God’s Word, and especially in the life-saving, life-giving act of prayer.

*ACTION STEP:*

I grew up on the mission field with parents who valued time in God’s Word and prayer above all else. It’s how we started every single day. To this day, time in God’s Word and time in prayer remain two of the non-negotiables on my calendar. If my schedule demands those slots, I’ll simply wake up earlier—even if it means the middle of the night—in order to not shorten, hurry, or sacrifice that critical time in God’s Word and in prayer.

My dad is one of the best examples and teachers of the importance of a vibrant prayer life. He is constantly speaking “breath prayers” – talking to God all throughout the day. It’s as natural to him as breathing and just as important to his life. If you want to learn more about breath prayers, read *Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home* by Richard J. Foster.

*PRAYER PROMPT:*

Try incorporating breath prayers into your day. They can be as simple as, “Thank you Jesus”, “I praise you, Father”, “You are always good”, “Father, you are here” or as specific as “Give me courage”, “I need you now”, “Protect me from this temptation”, “My life is in your hands”, “I believe you can heal me.”

## 3.

*LIVE IN  
EXPECTANCY.*

“One day the widow of a member of the group of prophets came to Elisha and cried out, ‘My husband who served you is dead, and you know how he feared the Lord. But now a creditor has come, threatening to take my two sons as slaves.’ ‘What can I do to help you?’ Elisha asked. ‘Tell me, what do you have in the house?’ ‘Nothing at all, except a flask of olive oil,’ she replied. And Elisha said, ‘Borrow as many empty jars as you can from your friends and neighbors. Then go into your house with your sons and shut the door behind you. Pour olive oil from your flask into the jars, setting each one aside when it is filled.’ So she did as she was told. Her sons kept bringing jars to her, and she filled one after another. Soon every container was full to the brim! ‘Bring me another jar,’ she said to one of her sons. ‘There aren’t any more!’ he told her. And then the olive oil stopped flowing. When she told the man of God what had happened, he said to her, ‘Now sell the olive oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on what is left over.’”

*2 Kings 4:1-7 NLT*

Having been in Christian ministry for many years, I think we can fall into a trap of apathy where we are tempted to operate from a place of no longer expecting God to enlarge our capacity.

I’ve found these three truths from the story of the widow in 2 Kings 4:1-7 revolutionary to escaping a passive stance and renewing anticipation in the expectancy of faith in God as it relates to our future.

**God meets us at the level of our expectancy.** As many jars as the widow was able to gather, God was more than able to fill.

**Expectancy depends on what God says, not on my circumstances.** To the widow, her situation was dire. To God, her situation was divinely doable.

**Expectancy creates an atmosphere for the supernatural.** When there is nothing else we can do, the best thing we can do is step forward in faith.

Not only is this a beautiful story of God’s provision, but also a powerful illustration of expectancy. How many jars do you have? Have you just settled? Or is there something in you that says, “God, I know what you can do. Grant me the capacity to create more space and expect you to fill it to overflowing.”

*ACTION STEP:*

What situation are you currently facing that has you stressed or worried? Hand your situation over to God, gather the jars and get ready for Him to fill them (and you) up!

*PRAYER PROMPT:*

“God, give me the courage to ask for help from others and reminders that you are always faithful. Help me to live in the faith-filled expectancy of what you can and will do rather than succumb to the fear and worry around my current situation.”

## 4.

*BECOME  
INTENTIONAL  
ABOUT  
FAMILY  
BALANCE.*

I'm often asked, "How do you serve God and have a family too?" I have one word that answers that question: intentionality.

Growing up as a missionary kid, I traveled with my parents, saw, and participated in their ministry firsthand. I understood my spiritual history and heritage, which shed light on my spiritual destiny and global mission.

Today, many of us labor in fields that produce no tangible outputs through which our children can readily identify. This poses a challenge to our kids to firmly grasp their place in the world and their purpose in life. We must be intentional to instill a clear understanding of their spiritual heritage in our children.

What being intentional looked like for me and my family will look different for each of you—it will be as unique as your personality and situation. So my saying, "Be intentional," is actually quite nebulous.

*ACTION STEP:*

Schedule a block of time into your calendar this week to step back, figure out what being intentional in your life and family looks like, and then begin doing it. Rigorously.

*PRAYER PROMPT:*

*"Father, thank you putting our family together with intention and endowing us with your holy purpose. You not only have plans for each of us individually, but also for our family as a whole. Help us to have an appreciation for each other's unique personalities and gifts. May we use our time and talents to glorify You in all that we say and do."*

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