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The Guide to Learning Series

LEARNING TO KEEP YOUR BALANCE

Mayan Revelation Number 274

Monograph Four

Self-Interest and Concern for Others

The Physical and the Spiritual

Work and Recreation

Faith in Yourself and Trust in God



BELOVED PERFECTOR:

Day by day you strive to improve your personality and to form those habits which are the basis for a happy and successful life. You endeavor to surmount fear, to break the grip of worry, to work effectively, and to think creatively. You may achieve considerable success in these areas and still be distraught unless you learn to keep your life in balance.

The pressures upon most of us are numerous. Often we become fatigued by strain. This will steadily increase if we allow our lives to become warped, but it is possible, even under stress, to maintain mental and spiritual balance - in the same way that we quickly restore body balance when traveling in a car that swerves.

An airplane pilot can fly "blind" in bad weather. When Charles Lindbergh was on the memorable solo flight across the Atlantic he slept for short periods while instruments kept his plane on its course and in proper balance. As Lindbergh awoke from a cat nap he never found that his plane had turned over, or had rolled to a forty-five degree angle. This could not happen when the controls were left in the care of the automatic gyroscope.

Our lives, too, can be stabilized by balancing forces. If we have established habits that give us self-control, when storms of disappointment and grief break upon us we need not roll with the waves of gloom. We will have built into our personalities those resources which will steady us as we ride the gale.

This Lesson brings instruction in personal balance. It teaches how to establish:

- ... balance between self-interest and concern for others.
- ... balance between the material and the spiritual.
- ... balance between work and recreation.
- ... balance between faith in yourself and trust in God.

Approach this Lesson with a sincere longing to master the principles that will increase your poise. Earnestly pray:

Dear Heavenly Father, I am grateful that Thou hast made an orderly world. I look at the planets and know that they will keep spinning in orbit. I breathe the air about me and marvel at the balance of nature. I grow weary, and when night comes I give thanks for Thy gift of sleep.

Help me to better understand the laws which govern human efficiency. Grant me power, but also grant

me peace. In Jesus' name. Amen.



SELF-INTEREST AND CONCERN FOR OTHERS

Deep in our hearts there is the desire for a rich, full, satisfying life. To achieve this we work not only to acquire physical comforts, but also to develop those qualities that will improve our minds and bring peace to our hearts. We endeavor to control fear and depression. We make an effort to increase our self-confidence, as well as our bank accounts. We try to establish those habits that will enable us to think creatively and to work efficiently.

God does not intend for us to live meager, pinched lives. We are made in His image and destined for nobility. Our every effort to climb the heights is rewarded by the realization that Someone is encouraging and supporting us.

As sons and daughters of God we should be men and women of power. We should live triumphantly. Therefore, we are not fulfilling the high purpose for which we are called if we do not daily strive to be our best selves.

Naturally we also long for our families to possess the material things that will enrich their lives and give them security. But we should not let our efforts to secure the best for ourselves, and for our loved ones, blind us to the needs of others.

We mark as narrow and unworthy the prayer of the man who said: "God bless me and my wife, my son John and his wife - us four, no more." Certainly we would never be guilty of uttering such prayers! Yet sometimes an analysis of the ways in which we spend our time and our money reveals that far too much is spent upon ourselves.

Unless we are alert we may succumb to the temptation to become self-centered. If this happens our horizons are limited and our lives are cramped. When the desire for self-improvement is not balanced by a desire to serve others, one becomes lopsided, and this distorts his personal growth.

Altruism, on the other hand, opens the gates by which Divine Power flows into our lives. As we are generous - both with our means and with ourselves - we discover new depths of happiness. We find that we can trust the Master's promise: "Give, and it shall be given unto you." (Luke 6:38).

Three rules - if consistently followed - contribute to the development of a well-rounded life.

1. HAVE AN HONEST CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE OF THOSE YOU MEET TODAY. THIS WILL MAKE YOUR OWN PROBLEMS SHRINK IN SIZE.
2. HELP TO LIFT THE LOAD OF SOMEONE ELSE. THEN YOUR OWN LOAD WILL SEEM LIGHTER.

3. BALANCE YOUR EFFORTS FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT WITH EFFORTS TO AID OTHERS. AS YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE SATISFACTIONS AND THE SERENITY OF THOSE ABOUT YOU, YOU WILL DISCOVER THAT THERE IS LESS TENSION IN YOUR OWN LIFE.

You can have perfect poise when your life is in balance.

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THE PHYSICAL AND THE SPIRITUAL

A person who would maintain serenity must keep a balance between his material interests and his spiritual interests. He must avoid the Scylla of secularism and the Charybdis of fanaticism.

Surely God would not have made red roses, luscious apples and sweet corn if He had not intended for us to enjoy them. He would not have put the forests, and fish, and animals under our domination if He had not planned for us to use them. He would not have endowed men and women with physical desires if He had not purposed that they should be satisfied.

Physical love soon grows stale if it has no spiritual counterpart. The perfect marriage develops from tenderness and understanding. Without these, intimacy soon brings frustration and a sense of emptiness.

A house will become a shell when members of the family have selfish interests and no true love for each other. Friendship becomes brittle, and easily broken, when it is based upon a desire for material or social gain.

Fine furniture, stylish clothes, the latest model car, or the most recent gadget, may bring momentary pleasure. How valueless they seem when war threatens, or sickness - or death - grips us!

An overwhelming desire for the latest fads and fashions can destroy our happiness. If we become envious because our neighbor's lawnmower is bigger than ours, and he has a freezer while we can't afford one, then no matter how many other luxuries we possess we can still think of ourselves as second-rate. This attitude leads to a mad scramble for the marks of prosperity - forgetting that true success involves the mind and heart, as well as physical things.

Secularism has a crippling effect on both adults and young people. It sets false standards for social approval. It makes one blind to the deeper satisfactions of life.

When parents have a ceaseless desire to gain more and more material things, this is often transferred to their children. Boys and girls who have too many luxuries showered upon them are not fortunate, but handicapped. Their lives are warped unless they are taught that God is the Giver of all things, and that each person must use wisely and well the wealth that is entrusted to him. We all need to frequently be reminded that true happiness depends as much upon mental and spiritual treasures, as upon those of a physical nature.

Do not wait for a world crisis or a personal tragedy to make you consider

your assets. Weigh your acquisitions to see what kind of security you are building up.

We would not be like David Thoreau and go to some Walden to see how many material things we can live without. But we all can learn a lesson from his experiment.

Do not allow your life to become cluttered either by trivials, or by busy-ness. Cut away those things that are encumbrances. Recognize that your priceless possessions are those that have eternal worth.

Jesus, the greatest teacher of all times, said: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal." (Matthew 6:20).

But the Master would not have extolled the "holy men" of India who, with spikes, torture their bodies in an effort to subdue them. Jesus shared both the joys of the wedding feast and the concern of the host who wanted to have enough wine for all who had come to participate in the festivities.

The Heavenly Father has given us both physical and spiritual blessings. Our bodies become malnourished if we fail to partake of proteins, fats, and carbohydrates in the correct proportion. Our souls are starved if we allow our desire for material things to become so all-absorbing that it prevents us from seeking spiritual food.

"A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (Luke 12:15).

Daily strive to:

STRENGTHEN YOUR BODY.
ENJOY GOOD FOOD AND WHOLESOME PLEASURE.
SEEK MENTAL STIMULUS AND DIVINE STRENGTH.
MAINTAIN A BALANCE BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL SATISFACTIONS.

A professor at one of our leading medical schools closed his first lecture to the freshmen with these words: "Today you will be laboring over a cadaver; but never forget that when you become a physician you will be trying to heal a man. His illness of body will be closely related to his whole personality. The physical, mental, and spiritual aspects must be kept in balance to promote health."

You are more than your body. You are more than your mind. Yet the peace in your heart can be disturbed by improper food, or by reading books filled with horror, or filth. On the other hand, hate can actually poison the body, while love and generosity can promote physical well-being.

God has given you physical blessings and spiritual blessings. Appropriate both, in the right proportion, so you can reach your full potential.

Maintain a balance between your efforts to secure physical satisfactions and your spiritual quest. This will help you to be a well-rounded person - one who enjoys simple pleasures, yet grounds his life in faith. Keeping this balance

will foster triumphant living.

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WORK AND RECREATION

No doubt you have met the man who each morning swallows the financial news with his coffee. He talks about his business as he rides the commuter train. He crams his morning with appointments, and then he takes a client out to lunch. He rushes back to work, studies new orders and dictates to his secretary. He keeps at his desk after everyone else has left the office; and then he gathers up unfinished business to take home in his brief case. He arrives late for dinner. The children have become impatient, so his wife has let them begin eating, and they have finished and gone to play before the man is through his meal. They see their father is preoccupied, so they give him little attention. He listens to the news, and then spends the evening studying reports and new projects. When he goes to bed he tosses fitfully as he tries to worry out the solutions to tomorrow's problems.

We feel sorry for this pathetic individual - or for his counterpart, who can be seen in some teacher, doctor, minister, or housewife. We know the man feels the pressure of work, but realize that it will break him unless he learns to balance his labor with recreation.

Constant work contributes to tension. It wears the body, frays the nerves, and lowers efficiency. We are unwise if we subject our minds and bodies to such continuous strain that our reserves are drained and we become easy victims of physical or mental disease. When our lives are off balance a misadventure, or illness, or personal disappointment is enough to lay us low. So look at some of the ways by which your personality can be stabilized.

Begin by clarifying your life-aims. Of course you want to do your work well so you can provide for your own needs and the needs of your dependents. You can do this most efficiently when you are calm and alert.

Approach each problem singly. Forget yesterday's chores when they are done, and don't worry about what you must do tomorrow.

In our last Lesson we learned the importance of salvaging fragments of time for study, meditation, and prayer. Why miss superior values by cramming every brief moment full of thoughts that relate to your work?

Strive to achieve a balance between laboring and relaxing. Legislation and modern business practice has shortened the average work week. People have more time than ever before for exercise, entertainment, and travel. Don't squander a valuable part of life by failing to take advantage of these opportunities.

But recreation should bring more than relaxation. It should contribute more than amusement. In every day there should be moments that provide true RE-CREATION, or renewal. The springs of the mind and soul must be fed, or they run dry.

When you are under pressure there is increasing urgency for you to think clearly, and to make every move count. So this is no time to bury yourself under

a smothering load of work.

Dr. J. A. Hadfield, the eminent British psychologist, declares: "There are ample reserves of power at the disposal of each of us, but we must have moments of perfect mental quiet if we are to draw upon them. The habit of resting between successive tasks gives us these priceless periods of quiet, and enables us to take the strength which is waiting for us."

WORK IS A BLESSING. GIVE THANKS FOR IT.

BALANCE PERIODS OF LABOR WITH TIMES OF RE-CREATION.
Let these provide rest, or exercise, or diversion. But also seek the spiritual renewal that will enable you to live victoriously.

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FAITH IN YOURSELF AND TRUST IN GOD

Consider one more area of your life in which balance is important. Perhaps you have suffered from an inferiority complex and need to gain self-confidence. Perhaps your opportunities are limited and you must struggle to maintain self-respect.

If you are to surmount despair, faith in yourself is essential. But this alone will never lift you out of discouragement. It will never completely free you from fear and worry. Any effort to gain self-confidence must be balanced by a willingness to accept divine assurance. Faith in yourself must be balanced by trust in God.

Let us briefly trace a few ways in which these two areas of faith complement one another. Look first at our desire for self-respect.

When you have made an effort to improve your physical appearance, to speak more clearly, and to greet people more graciously, you not only make a better impression upon others, you rise in your own estimation. No one who is striving for respect will neglect these basic steps toward self-improvement.

But when you study the Gospels and comprehend the significance of Jesus' teaching that God is the Father of all, and each person is a child of God, you know that in His sight you are important. If you fully grasp this Truth you can never again think of yourself as a nobody. All you say and do takes on added meaning. Instinctively you stand taller and walk with a surer step.

You may not have received the promotion which you think you deserve. A friend may have failed to include you among his guests. Others may have spoken not one word of praise for the accomplishment over which you labored so long. Yet resentment, or distrust of yourself, need not eat as a cancer into your soul. If you have done your best, you can hear the praise of the Master and need no other commendation.

Consider, now, your desire for courage. Reviewing past successes may help to dispel fear. A firm determination to live just one day at a time may make

grim specters shrink in size. Substituting a positive thought for a negative one may help you over a bad hurdle. These efforts for self-help should not be ignored.

But see how trust in God supplements and reinforces each effort of our mind and will. With John Henry Newman we can say:

"So long Thy power hast blest me,
sure it still will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen,
o'er crag and torrent,
Till the night is gone."

When we trust God to lead us out of trouble, our courage is doubled. Negative thoughts lose their grip upon us when we affirm:

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

... Yea, though I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for
thou art with me;"

Timidity shrinks when we know we are not alone.



Conclusions:

The person whose life is kept in balance has stabilizing forces that serve to keep him on an even keel. When gales of disappointment and sorrow beat upon him he does not swerve nor go under. When the winds of adversity blow like a storm, he is able to ride the waves. He remains tranquil and keeps some measure of control over his life even when the going is rough.

If you would be a person who is calm and poised, with great reserves of inner strength, frequently check your habits to see if they are helping you to attain your goals. Choose your course. Consistently hold to it. Daily gain in serenity.

... Keep a balance between self-interest and a concern for others.

... Maintain the proper relation between the gratification of physical desires and spiritual longings.

... Work more effectively because you take time for frequent periods of re-creation.

... Have faith in yourself, balanced by faith in God.

PUT FORTH YOUR BEST EFFORT. THEN LEAVE THE OUTCOME IN THE HANDS OF THE ALMIGHTY.

You can be a person who is calm and self-possessed, one who is unruffled when things go wrong. This comes as you bolster your self-confidence by increasing your skills, and by focusing your attention upon your assets rather than upon your liabilities; but you never attempt to rely upon your human strength alone. You balance faith in yourself with trust in God.



AFFIRMATION

With God's help I can keep my life in perfect balance, and gain the peace which comes from a quiet mind and a tranquil heart.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR.