

Restoring Balance To Completely Overloaded Lives!

By Cindy Rushton



Ever had an "unbalanced tire?" Recently, I had a tire that was driving me crazy! It made the ride horribly rough. I was wore-out just from trying to drive to town because it kept pulling me off the road—obviously in the wrong direction! Just a simple trip to town was completely stressful. My hands were blistered from trying to hold on to the steering wheel the whole way to town and back! I was certain that my car was about to blow up...that something was permanently wrong! Imagine my relief to find that my problem was from one tire that was out of balance! Easy to fix. The smooth ride only took a few moments to restore.

direction, encouragement, and wisdom along our path. We miss the best! We wonder why we end our days empty and without meaning or accomplishment. We forget what is most important—or at minimum, put it off for another day. The important seldom screams for attention, but the urgent, often insignificant, constantly screams for MORE and more! We get so busy and distracted doing the urgent and demanding in life that we lose the opportunity to impact the important, that in which we are given to leave a legacy!

So, how on earth do we get out of this rat race? How are we to restore balance? If we could restore balance, how could we maintain balance? How could we make life really count for something? Here are some things that the Lord has been teaching me this year as He has pulled me back from so many GOOD things to restore balance and keep me on the path to leaving a legacy!

Ever had an "unbalanced life?" Well, the similarities are unbelievable! Talk about a rough ride! Talk about a pull in the wrong direction! Talk about stress! Sure it is easy to fix—but, oh so hard to do!

We are overloaded! Every area of our lives suffers from overload: commitments... possessions... work... information...relationships!

We are a culture that can be characterized as overloaded! We are busy. Hurried. Overworked. Stressed. Rushed. We exceed our limits. We take on WAY TOO MUCH! As my pastor says, "We write checks that our body and mind cannot cash!" Our productivity suffers. Our bodies suffer! Our vital relationships suffer. We no longer can hear God as He whispers

SLOW DOWN!

Does that one hurt or what? We are so fast paced! We live on the "fast track!" Think of the rat race we live in: one-hour print...ten-minute oil changes...instant cameras...instant potatoes...instant MICROWAVE meals! Our homes have dishwashers, slow-cookers (don't

be fooled by the name—turn them on as you run out the door for work and have a healthy meal ready to serve at the end of the day!), microwaves, and computers! Oh, and the computer thing! Yep, I am on my computer now (at our local coffee shop—yep, priorities are nice at times!) enjoying the benefits of my blessed computer complete with its battery, cd-writer, and all of the other MUSTS that I am so spoiled with! BUT! For heavens' sake...think of how spoiled we REALLY are! The computer age has taken over sweet little country stores! We have the Internet (which has faced the demand to have MORE instant connections—remember all of those ads this summer?), E-mail (to instantly communicate!), E-books (to instantly receive our products so we don't have to wait for the dreaded postal service to deliver!!), E-zines, Auto-responders (didn't REALLY think those were REAL people there all hours of the day and night??!!), Auto-processing of orders/credit cards, and don't forget Instant Messenger—for those who find Email to be too slow! We have "Drive-Thru's" for EVERYTHING—food, cleaners, pharmacies, oil changes, and even (PLEASE GASP WITH ME!) funeral homes! Well...that is where I drew the line! Drive-thru funeral homes! Where are we as a culture? On the fast track!

What do we do? Why not Sllllloooooowww DDDDoooooowwnnnnn?? I am not advocating that we STOP using technology. Rather, we should use those tools to make life easier and to make the most of our time. HOWEVER, where it really matters—relationships, home, family, homeschooling, our witness, life...where it REALLY matters, we must slow down! Restoring balance and eliminating overload is simply not possible without slowing down!

Ephesians 5: 15-16 says, *"Look carefully then how you walk! Live purposefully and worthily and accurately, not as the unwise and witless, but as the wise (sensible, intelligent people), Making the very most of*

the time [buying up each opportunity], because the days are evil." What does this look like? Well, let's go back to Genesis 33 for a look at the life of Jacob after he completely surrendered his entire life to the Lord. *"My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I WILL LEAD ON SOFTLY, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children BE ABLE TO ENDURE, until I come unto my lord at Seir."* Want to slow down, but how? Where do we begin? What can really make a significant difference? Try these:

♥ **Decide what is MOST important!** Think over life for a little while! What is it that only YOU can do in this life? Why did God create YOU? What is your life purpose? What is it that God created YOU to do? What can go? Just as our house cannot be cleaned without getting rid of the clutter—otherwise all we are doing is shuffling the clutter around—likewise, we must take an occasional inventory to declutter our life! I find this to be a battle JUST as many of you probably do and trust me, this is a life principle that I really stick to! Long ago, God impressed upon my heart that if I were going to be able to truly fulfill my calling that He had for my life, I would HAVE to only do the things that *ONLY I* could do—if it were something that anyone else on earth could do, it would have to go! Still, I will go through periods of my life and begin to get overloaded again only to find when I evaluate the value of all that I do, there are things that sneak into my schedule that vie for my focus and energy! Usually that requires that I take out those really tough pruning shears again to cut back—either by delegating the tasks to someone

else so I can be more productive at what ONLY I can do—or even more difficult, get rid of what is overloading me! I know that this is hard, but it is SO key! Take a deep look now at what you are doing. Is it really eternal? Is it the "main thing?" Is it essential? Can anyone else do it? Is it hindering you from the very best? Decide what is most important. You won't be sorry!

♥ **Examine Your Lifestyle!**

Take a little while to jot down a journal of what makes up your day? Your week? Your month? Your year? REALLY BE HONEST! Do those things count? What are the days filled with: things that are really important...or lots of fires to put out? Take a

bit longer to write out what you would real regrets? REALLY like to be accomplishing. What do you think that a "perfect day," if it were possible, would look like? How can you change your day to really slow it down so your life really counts?

♥ **Examine Your Motives!** Motives will fool us

in a heartbeat! Scripture is so very true as it warns us to beware of our heart. We simply cannot trust our hearts. They will lead us astray every time! What really motivates us? What drives us? If we can determine this, we can evaluate activities and obligations much more effectively! So, what drives you? Ambition? Your life call? The desire to be in control? Don't trust others to do things? Passion? Guilt? Ego? Insecurity (Can't say "no?" Afraid that you have no value unless you are "seen" busy?) Constantly trying to please others?

Revenge? Money? Oh, I could go on and on...motives are so very deceptive and there are so many. What is your motive? What drives you to do all you do?

Busyness does not mean that we are accomplishing. Nor does busyness guarantee fulfillment. Often, busyness is the very thing that keeps us from the very things that will bring us satisfaction, fulfillment, and contentment. Busyness, given the chance, will keep us from fulfilling our life purpose!

It is all up to us! We can choose which way to go! Enjoy the journey or wait to enjoy the brief delight of the destination? A wasted, bitter, defeated life or a life full of purpose and meaning? Burn out or real accomplishment? Deep, passionate relationships or very

Why not slow down? Relax? Enjoy the whole journey—the process getting there AND the destination! Build deep relationships! Stick to those priorities! Simplify life so you reach for the very best! Seize each moment!

Redeem The Time!

Time! Friend or foe? Have enough time in your day? Or are you a truly kindred spirit, asking God for just a few good 80-hour days and the energy to use them to the fullest? Ha! I have a good feeling that if your prayer is for that one, that you will also find that God will whisper sweetly in your ear to say that the problem is not that we do not have enough time...or that we are using time to the fullest... or even that we waste time. Rather, He would say that we need to make it our ambition to redeem the time—each and every moment we



are given!

A few months back, my pastor taught a series of messages entitled *From Burnout to Balance*. In his series, he challenged us to look at time as a great big "bank account." He said that this account is one that we are guaranteed to have daily deposits made on our behalf by God each and every day. We each get our fair share. No one gets more. No one gets less.

Think of this awesome gift! Each and every day we are given a gift that can impact all of eternity—or be squandered away into oblivion. Each day we are given this gift without any regard to our stewardship from the day before! TWENTY-FOUR HOURS! ONE-THOUSAND, FOUR HUNDRED, FORTY MINUTES! EIGHTY-SIX THOUSAND, FOUR HUNDRED SECONDS! Deposited in our "account" each and every day!

And...with this gift, we are free to use it in any way we choose. We can waste it or use it wisely. We can make a difference---or misuse it! But! One thing is guaranteed each day with all that is deposited on our behalf—it must be used up before the end of the day...it cannot be carried into tomorrow!

We all have 24 hours put into our spending account each and every day. What we do with that time is in our hands! Will we be faithful? Will we use it wisely? Will we make it count for eternity? Will we use our gift to the fullest? Will we use our gift for what really counts?

If we want to live a life of balance, we must guard this precious gift! We must measure our time as one of our greatest resources we have to invest in this life! This requires that we go back to our precious Giver and seek HIM for how we can most faithfully invest each moment! We must let Him be the Lord of

our schedule, our to-do's, our calendar. We must commit our way---ALL OF OUR WAY—to Him from our work to our studies that we pursue to our commitments to our books that we read to the activities that we participate.

We must be careful to set a guard on our time to be sure that we do not flippantly do without thinking or take on too much that we

forfeit the best! We need to purpose to really do those things that are "NEEDFUL" (remember Luke 10: 38-42?) and not just the "stuff" that we think MUST be done! We need to constantly evaluate our choices and weigh them to see if they are truly those things that help us to reach our life call.

Time...what do you think? Redeem this precious gift so our lives can be balanced? You bet!

Sell Out COMPLETELY To God's Will!

Does this scare you to death? Are you seeing visions of little grass huts...no electricity... bugs...complete with the stench of underarm odor?

Oh, beloved! My first image of total surrender to God admittedly envisioned life on a continent that was far, far away from all of the comforts of home. Still have no idea if there is a continent that could be as disgusting as my visions were. Sure, I trusted God for eternity, but never thought of heaven in the same way that I thought of my life on earth totally surrendered to Him!

Now, as we move into our 11th year as a ministry (and Harold finishes up his 1st year FULL-TIME with us!), I HAVE to tell you that God has a very, very good plan for us! He does not call us, equip us, and then send us to an assign-



ment that forfeits our trust and confidence in Him! In fact, one thing that I am thrilled to say is that although there IS work in our calling, there is delight and fulfillment that cannot be found in anything else under the sun! Seeing His provision is unbelievable. Watching His anointing fall is indescribable! Plus! No grass huts so far!

Give your ALL to God! Sell out! Don't hold anything in reserve! Abandon ALL for the call!

Scared? Just give Him a try! Take a look at Jeremiah 29 in *The Message Bible*. God says to us, "I know what I'm doing, I have it all planned out—plans to take

care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for. When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I'll listen. When you come looking for me, you'll find me. Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I'll make sure you won't be disappointed." Oh, beloved, not only will you never, ever be disappointed, but you will find that His GOOD plan will be truly good--satisfactory for you, satisfying, fulfilling, completely sufficient!

Wonder JUST WHAT could YOU do? Too young? Too old? Too poor? Not qualified—or so you think? Well, beloved! Know that God has called each and everyone of us to function in His Body. We are the mouthpieces here on earth for Him. We are the feet for Him. We are the hands here in our community for Him! He has called and equipped each and every one of us to be a part of His Body here on earth! We each have talents, spiritual gifts, natural bents and interests, and experiences that can minister to those that are growing in the Body

AND those that need to join the Body of Christ! God needs ALL of us working and functioning properly if His Kingdom—His way of doing things—will come to earth! He needs for us to be that light that shines in the darkness to bring others to Him. Just go into a dark, dark room... Light one candle... See what a difference YOU can make right where you are!



Have no idea what His plan is for you? Take a look at Romans 12: 1-2. He promises in verse two that YOU can know His good, perfect, and acceptable will for you! Yes, YOU can know that plan! How? Going back through this passage, we see how:

♥ **Become a living sacrifice—EVERYDAY!** Completely yielded. Completely dedicated. Completely committed to Him and His Way! Giving Him our ALL! *All* that we are: our plans...gifts...bents...talents...ambitions... ideas... methods... techniques... fears... delights... concerns... *all* presented to God as a living sacrifice EVERY SINGLE DAY! If we truly desire to *know* the good, acceptable, perfect will of God for *ourselves* or *our children*, we must first obediently present ourselves as a complete, living sacrifice. There may be things in our lives (things that are very precious and difficult to get rid of) that must be burnt up as a sacrifice for us to be prepared to receive God's very best OR we may find that what we bring to sacrifice before the Lord is acceptable in His sight and can return home with us (like

Abraham as he willingly prepared to sacrifice his beloved Isaac). However, the key is not in what God does with our sacrifice, it is in our heart coming before Him daily, presenting ourselves and all that we have before His throne!

♥ **Don't not conform to the world; but conform to Christ!!**

Yep! We either conform to the world or to Christ! We cannot live for one without forsaking the other! Want to know God's plan? Let go of the world's standards, the world's ways, the world's

requirements, the world's traditions, and the world's bondage. Let go of the lies of the world! We must stop serving the world at the expense of becoming ALL that God wants for us to become! If we want to live an abundant life—a balanced life—the world's way will never work! Only God's way brings balance, freedom, and true, abundant LIFE that we are really searching for! As we grow in relationship with Christ, daily become LIKE HIM, we find security and LIFE! We find peace! We find hope! We find the direction that we have been looking for all along the way! We find freedom to become ALL that God designed for us to become! Talk about LIFE! We move beyond balance to abundant life!

♥ **Be transformed by the daily renewal of your mind!** The last key to getting to know God's plan! However, this one is SO VITAL! If we truly want to live



a balanced, abundant life, we must sell out to God's will. BUT, however much we want to sell out, unless we truly let Him change our life, we will just spin our wheels in the same ruts, never becoming all that God wants for us to become! How is our mind transformed? Life changed? This life transformation

begins as we sit at the feet of Jesus. As we daily immerse ourselves in His Word, we will begin to be transformed. Then, we will soon have different priorities... different beliefs... different ambitions... and soon, we will be able to prove what is good, acceptable, and

perfectly in the will of God. If we never experience this transformation, we will always find ourselves burdened under a yoke of bondage. We will always find ourselves looking in all the wrong places for direction, approval, meaning, purpose, and rest! We will constantly battle overload. We will find life bumpy and pulling us into life's "ditches!"

God has a precious plan EVEN for you! Surrender ALL to Him! Let Him have it all! Let Him do His work in you! Don't rush! Don't drag around! Don't run from it! Live EACH day letting Him have your ALL in complete abandonment! Balance will come—but, beloved there is so much more that will rush into your life! Purpose, meaning, abundant life! Go for it!

**Build Margin—Breathing Room—
Into Your Life!**

Ever been at rock bottom? We see many

of our favorite Bible characters that we get to know during good times, but I think my favorites are those that we get to see when they are rock bottom, with NO breathing room, at the point that my mother would have said, "I've HAD IT!" Ever just "HAD-IT?"

Imagine for yourself the grief and utter pain that Job was experiencing as he cried out in Job 3:26, "I have NO peace, NO rest, NO quiet!"

Drop into the conversation with Paul as he declared that he got to his "breaking point" in 2 Corinthians 1: 8-9, "For we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about the affliction and

oppressing distress which befell us in the province of Asia, how we were so utterly and unbearably weighed down and crushed that we despaired even of life itself. Indeed, we felt within ourselves that we had received the very sentence of death, but that was to keep us from trusting in and depending on ourselves instead of on God Who raises the dead."

Finally, journey back to 1 Samuel as we are first introduced to Hannah at the point of utter desperation—you probably know a bit about her story. Barren. Broken. Taunted (by her husband's other WIFE!! Who had NO problem bearing children!). Empty. Crushed in soul. Oh, let's join her at the point that she had "HAD IT!"... "Crushed in soul, Hannah prayed to God and cried and cried—inconsolably. Then, she made a vow: Oh, God-of-the-Angel-Armies, If you'll take a good, hard look at my pain, if you'll quit neglecting me and go into action for me by giving me a son, I'll give him completely,

unreservedly to you. I'll set him apart for a life of holy discipline..." As she was praying, she sunk even lower as she was completely misunderstood by the priest, who thought she was DRUNK! We hear more of her heart in her reply to him... "Oh no, sir—please! I'm a woman hard used. I haven't been drinking. Not a drop of wine or beer. The only thing

I've been pouring out is my heart, pouring it out to God. Don't for a minute thing I'm a bad woman. It's because I'm so desperately unhappy and in such pain that I've stayed here so long!"

Relate? I know that these precious vessels were crying out in the midst of

trials and life events that were too much. However, I don't think that we find ourselves at the point of desperation without first pushing limits for quite some time! We haven't got margin to deal with the daily-ness of life—much less those life struggles, crisis situations, losses, and persecutions that inevitably knock most of us off our "rocker" into despair!

Think about it...if you are the average person in our society today, you live on fast-food, crazy hours, no sleep. You are chronically rushed (or late), overworked, exhausted, overloaded! What is the solution? Build MARGIN! Build some BREATHING ROOM! Simplify life so there is room for change... space for disruptions. How? Here are some suggestions that I am trying to implement in my own life:

♥ Accept HUMAN Limitations! Can you sense how HARD that is for ME to type? Oh, here it where it gets harder, it is not



MY idea, it is the Word of God too: "I have seen that EVERYTHING HUMAN has its limits and end no matter how extensive, noble, and excellent." (Psalm 119: 96a) OUCH! If there is a battle for balance (and YOU KNOW there is!), this is one of the biggies! We ALL have limits!

But, where we need more margin is that we don't say "NO" when we face limitations! As I shared above, we "write checks our body and mind cannot cash!" The world says, "You can have it ALL!" "You can do it all!" Even the church gives the

illusion that "I can do ALL THINGS through Jesus Christ." However, the Bible is very clear that we can ONLY DO those things that are HIS THINGS—HIS WILL! WE have limits! We have space limits. We have body limits. We have emotional limits. Jesus does not give us a blank check to do ALL THINGS. Much less, Jesus WILL NOT empower us to do ALL THINGS. He only empowers us to do those things that HE CALLS us to do. He never gives us anything that is beyond our abilities and resources to do. One clear way to judge what we are called to do from those things that we are not called to do is to look at our limitations: our red lights, shut downs, overloads, crashes. We need to look at those warning signs: pain, fatigue, stress, irritability, frustrations. Our human limitations are God's boundaries in our lives that help us to know that we are overextended and writing checks our bodies and minds cannot cash. Respecting human limitations will restore balance to even the most overloaded life!



♥ **Expect Interruptions!** Proverbs 22:3 says, "A prudent man sees trouble coming and ducks—a simpleton walks in blindly and is clobbered!" If there is one thing in life that is FOR SURE, we can be sure that life seldom goes as planned. Life cannot be predicted. Just think about it...what

truly messes up your schedule? Traffic? Car trouble? Delays? Crisis situations? Special needs along the way? We must plan for interruptions or our lives will constantly be out of balance, our schedules will never work, and much of life will be squandered! Expect

interruptions and plan room for them into every day!

♥ **Put SPACE Into Your Schedule!** Ever had your PDA/Planner/Calendar/ Briefcase complain about an overstuffed schedule? Actually my planner looks so much more "professional" when it is PACKED OUT! Only I don't handle it so well! For the last few years, I have really evaluated what I was doing that was causing me to get off my schedule and not get around to all of my to-do's. Now, granted, some days it is ME or my darling little ones! But, overall, 95% of my schedule woes are also the culprit behind life getting just way too busy—OVER-SCHEDULING! Schedules, like daily life, only work when there is SPACE in each day! Just like we see with the life of Christ (see Matthew 5-10), our life is filled with distractions, interruptions, crisis situations. We can battle against these OR we can add margin (space) into our lives that gives us room to use these as THE MAIN THING—

opportunities for ministry, opportunities for the very best lessons, teachable moments, hands-on discipleship! Not only are we able to step up to the call as it beckons us, but we are less likely to spin out of balance constantly!

♥ **Prune Life To Yield**

MORE Fruit! Several years ago, one of my dearest friends bought her DREAM land. Every time that I go to visit her, our family laughs because just driving up her driveway I begin to see a view that rivals that of the gorgeous

view on *The Sound of Music*, thus tempting me to begin to sing—"The HILLS ARE ALIVE...with the sound of music..." The land is gorgeous. But it is more than that. It is also productive! However, at first it wasn't. Rhea bought the land, complete with an orchard. Sound ready to go? Well, not exactly! Needing a bit of help with her fruit trees, she called in a professional. To her shock, she looked outside to find her precious orchard looking like a bunch of sticks in the dirt. Pruning began to have a whole new meaning! What looked like devastation actually was the key to those best fruit ever! Bigger fruit! Sweeter fruit! MORE fruit! I remember the year that Rhea was getting her first fruits after the pruning. It was a year that I needed that practical example of pruning just so I would have the nerve to let God loose with His pruning shears! I can't say it was easy! It was probably one of the most challenging times in my entire life. I had lived my life pretty much just without much thought. However, God was wanting for me to yield up EVERYTHING



so He could prune back all that was diseased...all that was broken...all that was zapping my strength...all that was causing double-vision...all that was keeping me from bearing the fruit He had planned from the foundation of the earth. 1 Corinthians 6:

12a says, "Everything is permissible (allowable and lawful) for me; but not all things are helpful (good for me to do, expedient and profitable when considered with other things)." There are many GOOD things that God would not have a problem if I were to do

them. However, those good things can keep me from producing all of the fruit that I can bear. It becomes a *choice* thing for me. I can choose whether I will allow Him total control of my entire life—even the schedule... commitments... my going... my doing. I am the ONE who can sit down, yield to the shears, and stay ready to bear more and more fruit. Likewise, I can also resist. But...I don't really like that alternative!

At the end? At your limit constantly? "HAD IT?" Take a good look look at life! Check for margin! Not enough? Build margin! Create space! Watch what happens!

DE-STRESS!

Yep! Gulp! De-stress! This one got you out of whack before too? You are not alone, beloved!

Want to know the #1 complaint in our culture? What about among homeschool moms? The booger behind despair? The reason that most quit? The reason that many never begin?

You have got it! The stress! The chaos! The mess! The lack of organization or ability to "keep it together." Want to battle for balance? This little devil will give you quite a challenge!

Yep! If there is a need among the body of Christ, this JUST might be it! But, how? Here are some quick tips for restoring balance when it all gets bumpy from the stresses of life...

♥ **Find Your Stressors!**

What throws YOU for a loop? What takes you into a "nose-dive?" What "stalls" your flight?

What are your biggest stressors? What causes YOUR stress? Identify the REAL culprit—HINT: it is NOT your husband (!!)

or your children (!!)

or God (!!).

Look at your life honestly! What REALLY stresses you out? Holding onto your stress? Carrying a burden you do not have to carry? Anxiousness? Discontent? Strife? Expectations? Willfulness instead of willingness and total surrender and total abandonment? Find YOUR stressors! Know what REALLY "punches" your buttons!

♥ **PLAN!** Plan ahead! Well in advance! One saying that always pops into my head when I think of the word plan is, "If we fail to plan, we really plan to fail!" Nothing brings MORE stress than living life without direction, without a plan, always under "crisis" management, making decisions on a moment-by-moment basis. If this is stressing you out, try to plan ahead! Plan out your goals. Plan out your schedule. EVEN the mundane things—plan out those daily routines, even going so far as to write them out! How does this help? Well, decisions

are made, saving those precious brain-cells for other uses! Trust me this works WONDERS! So, plan! Plan well! Don't wait until the last minute! Plan...then, you can settle in to go a slow pace!

♥ **Write it DOWN!** Give your brain a rest!

Talk about stressing out—our brains will stress out if we are keeping all of our to-do's...plans...goals...heartbeats...EVERYTHING on our brain! Write it down! Not only will it help to keep things from slipping between the cracks, but it will also

help us to evaluate where we have come from and where we have to go. Plus, the best yet! We will have a sense of accomplishment when we look back!

♥ **Watch that attitude!** There are going to be some life-stresses that quite honestly cannot be changed! However, we need not walk in a life of defeat and stress! Instead, when we recognize life-stresses that cannot change, that is the time to sit right down at the feet of Jesus! Ask Him to show the purpose. At minimum, KNOW that victory is guaranteed! There is no temptation or trial that is original with any of us! Nor is there anything that we are allowed to walk in that is not first filtered through the loving hands of God. He always guarantees VICTORY! So, watch that attitude! When things cannot change, change what can—that perspective...that attitude!!

♥ **Delegate!** What is it that makes it so hard for moms to get help? Our children LOVE to be Mommy's helpers! We really steal their blessings when we do not delegate to



them. Even toddlers can help fold a load of laundry! Don't try to do it all by yourself! Delegate and you will find some of the stress dissipating!

♥ **Get enough rest!** Oh! This one is soooo tough for me! But, let's honestly look at what happens in our families when we get tired: don't get enough sleep>get cranky>don't enjoy life>not too great to be around> others get cranky> irritates you more>get more tired... Why not simply get that rest?? Sleep AND that rest in body, spirit, and soul!



♥ **Self-control!** Hummmm... Such a challenge! However, we will find ourselves constantly stressed out until we learn to say "NO" to those activities, commitments, all that stuff! Bit-by-bit, they wear us down. Saying, "NO" eliminates the whole threat of stress from the onset!

♥ **Keep it simple!** Don't overload! We already KNOW we cannot do everything, but we have to remember this when choices are there to be made! Always look at anything new, whether an activity or a possession, judging its importance by what you are willing to swap for it. This works for everything—shoes, books, activities, commitments. Keep it simple! You can't do or have everything, so go for the very best!

♥ **Give yourself a break!** Don't pick yourself to death NOR let others pick you to death either! It is so easy to focus on the negative, get overwhelmed by the weaknesses and inadequacies, and get frustrated about how far you have to go! Then,

PEOPLE sure do not help! Let another person loose in your life with the license to critique you or your situation and you will be ready for the nut-farm! Give yourself a break! See this thing as a process—you will not arrive until it is all over but the shoutin' so relax, enjoy life, and give yourself a break!

♥ **Find ways to fill your cup!** We are each wired so very different. Certain things stress some of us that do not bother others. Likewise, certain things just fill our cup! STOP! Step back! Shift into low gear -or reverse! Do what it takes to DE-

STRESS! Rest! Relax! Rejuvenate! Renew! Refill! Whatever it takes, find those things that fill YOU back up! Oh! The benefits go beyond de-stressing and restoring balance—you finally have living water to pour forth into the lives of others!

♥ **Make the most of EVERY minute!** Cherish this time! Make sweet memories! Take time for the most important—the best things! Your husband! Your children! Your family life! Don't let life just slip by! Look at life and decide what you would do if this were your last year...last month...last week...last day? Would you go to the park to enjoy watching them play? Would you cuddle up and read a great book? Would you take off to the beach? Why not make those things YOUR thing? Oh, and probably find that education can be EASY along the way too!

De-stress! Crawl up into the great big comfy arms of our loving Heavenly Father! Let Him hold you during the most turbulent or

trivial stresses of life! Let Him restore your spirit! What you are doing is vital! Your enemy wants you stressed out, overloaded, out of balance! He is defeated! When he snarls, throws forth his darts, and lies to you, just snuggle up closer to your Lord! Give Him the struggles! Give Him expectations! Give Him every single burden! You won't be sorry!

Get Back To the Main Thing! Relationships!

Remember Matthew 22: 37-40? Jesus was asked, "What IS the most important thing? The bottom line? The main thing?" I love Jesus' ability to summarize ALL of life in ONE response! He summed up the main thing in three commands: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and body...to love others as ourselves...and obviously, to love ourselves! Do you see this? The MAIN THING...the BOTTOM LINE..THE most important thing was relationships! However, when we get overloaded, the very first thing that we skimp on is relationships!

Want to restore balance and get rid of all of that overload? Take a deep look at the MAIN THING! Anytime things are out of balance, take a look to see how relationships

are doing? Are they being "put off" until the pressures go away? Are they quiet while the rest of the "stuff" screams, demands, and pulls you to pieces? Ask God to constantly keep you attuned to relationships in which you are charged with ministry. Ask God to show you ways that you can love and minister to Him. Ask Him to quicken you all along the way with ideas and precious opportunities for ministering to those you are called to minister to—your husband, your children, your parents, your siblings, those that come within your sphere of influence. Cry out to Him to help you guard your time so moments do not slip away leaving a hole in this vital area of life!

So...What Do You Think???

Ready to get out of this rat race? Ready to restore balance? Make life really count? Sit at the feet of Jesus! Snuggle up close! Listen for each beat of His heart! Let Him pull you back from that "stuff." Let Him show you how to let go of those GOOD things and grab onto the very best! Give Him a chance to restore balance and set us on the path to leaving a leg-acy!



Cindy and Vivian

Notice the precious TEA pictures? Our pictures throughout this section were taken in Slidell, LA at the *Tea and Scones Tea Party*. At that tea party, Cindy shared this message. Want your own copy of the teaching? We have this tea party on audio! See our price listing to get your own copy! (look for *Restoring Balance to Completely Overloaded Lives* and *OOPS! My Cup is Empty and My Coffee Pot is Broke!*)

OH! This article is an excerpt from Cindy's upcoming book *Organization 101: HELP! For the MESSY Mom!* Look for it in the near future! We think you will love it!