

THE SPICE

A taste of what's happening for women.

Finding Balance

Amy was in the kitchen doing dishes, while her husband and preschool son played in the living room. She overheard her husband tell her son, "Go see if your mom wants to come and join us." So he excitedly ran to the kitchen and blurted out, "Mom, do you want to come *enjoy* us?"

Yes, Amy chose to put down the dishes and "enjoy" time playing instead. It took a 3-year-old to help her find the right balance in her life.

Balance. As soon as our feet hit the ground in the morning we're practicing it—and not just with our bodies. Sometimes simply putting on our socks and shoes is a balancing act, but the bigger challenges are balancing the relationships, responsibilities, and emotions that challenge us every day. We'd love to appear as graceful as Olympic gymnasts and effortlessly balance the demands of life. Instead, we walk a tightrope, barely able to keep ourselves steady as circumstances, fears, relationship issues, and busy demands try to push us off. Is there a way we can stay upright without falling down...or apart? *What does living a life of balance really look like?*

When we look at people who are experts at physical balance—jugglers, tightrope walkers, gymnasts—what do we see? Are they relaxed, spontaneous, and having fun? Hardly. In their faces we see stress, seriousness, and intense inward focus. Is that what God wants for our lives? No! It's not God's desire for us to tightrope-walk through life!

How can you get off the tightrope? Instead of trying to balance things yourself with lists of priorities and things that must be done, start with a simple change of perspective. God is your focus. Place total trust in God to help guide your choices and find balance in all areas of your life. God is your center point, your core strength, and your balance point. And don't forget—a balanced life is an *enjoyable* life. That's what Jesus promised!

"My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life." (John 10:10)



Central Church of Christ
Women's Ministry

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THE WORD

"The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand."

—Psalm 37:23–24 (NLT)

BALANCE BEAMS

- **Make God the focus, instead of the stress.** Keep your eyes fixed on him, not your circumstances.
- **Reach out for help.** Rely on God's strength rather than your own. And thank God for his hand that catches you when you wobble!
- **Keep Jesus as your strong foundation.** It's impossible to balance when you're standing on unsteady ground. Jesus doesn't waver. Let him be your rock.

Your Health: Falling Factors

Did you know that fear can make you fall? Studies suggest that people with a fear of falling significantly increase their risk for actually falling (and injuring themselves). Most of us have experienced this fear response ourselves, standing near a cliff or walking a narrow bridge and losing our balance.

The fear of falling often leads people to start avoiding activity. Less activity results in increased weakness, which further *increases* the risk of falling! A number of factors contribute to older people having impaired balance, including decrease in vision, medication side effects, illness or inactivity, tripping hazards in the home, and poor lighting.

But here's something to think about: *You could be at risk of falling in your spiritual life for the same reasons!* Check it out:

- Decrease in vision—losing focus on Jesus
- Medication side effects—things you turn to instead of God to cope with life
- Illness or inactivity—spending less time exercising and developing your faith
- Tripping hazards—temptations or sin in your life
- Poor lighting—not enough of God's Word (Psalm 119:105).

Having regular checkups and exercise, removing hazards, improving lighting, and using the right equipment can significantly reduce the risk of falling for older people. Isn't it time to give the same attention to your spiritual life?

Two Are Better Than One!

Having rewarding and affirming relationships is an important and integral part of developing a happy and balanced life. Studies have shown that people who spend a significant amount of time alone are more likely to report imbalanced lives. They also suggest that these people suffer more illnesses and don't live as long. So stay connected, and be happier, healthier, and live longer!

This month try one of these ideas:

1. **Invite** a single friend or family member to go to church or participate in a Bible study with you.
2. **Attend** a first free session of a dance or exercise class.
3. **Start** a book club or other interest group that would meet regularly.
4. **Visit** someone who is ill or homebound.
5. **Make** a list of activities you enjoy, and pick one to do with someone every week!



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Mess Equals Stress!

That's what the experts say. According to Kathleen Kendall-Tackett, the author of *The Well-Ordered Home*, it's harder to be organized now than it was a generation ago. Why? Because we have more stuff! Compared to life in the 1950s:

- **We handle six times more paper**—about 660 pounds per year!
- **Our houses are twice as big.** In the 1950s, the average home was 900 square feet. The average new home is nearly twice that size.
- **We shop more.** Easy credit has made it easier for us to buy more and less likely to follow a budget.

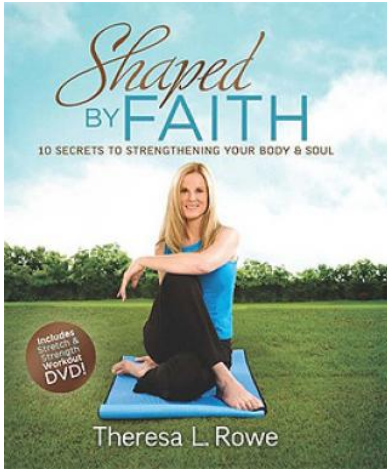
How can you combat the stress of your mess? Here are two easy tips:

- **Keep paper from stacking up.** Sort mail daily, and discard or recycle. Donate old magazines. Request online banking and credit statements instead of paper. At least once a year, shred documents you no longer need.
- **Resist the temptation to fill all the space.** Less time spent organizing, cleaning, and managing stuff means more time for family, friends, and fun!



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Media Morsels



Book Review

Shaped By Faith: 10 Secrets to Strengthening Your Body & Soul

(With bonus stretching and strengthening DVD)

Author: Theresa L. Rowe

Publisher: Guideposts

“There is an amazing, often untapped, interconnectedness between our physical and spiritual selves.”

Shaped by life, shaped by faith, and shaped by fitness, Theresa Rowe connects her moving personal story with her expertise as a fitness and wellness professional in this unique book and DVD combination. Through her stories and instruction in the book and DVD, she invites women to discover how their relationship with God can direct the course of their fitness journey and lead to increased strength and energy, self-esteem, and joy!

“My life has been wrought with heartbreak, devastation and sickness, yet it has inextricably shaped my wellness journey. I hope that my story encourages you to apply the lessons you’ve learned in life to your pursuit of a healthy body.”

Talk about it:

- How would you describe the interconnectedness and health of your physical and spiritual selves?
- What two things can you incorporate into your life that will help shape your physical fitness?
- What two things can you incorporate into your life that will help shape your spiritual fitness?

For daily inspirational Scriptures, connect with Shaped by Faith on Facebook or at shapedbyfaith.com.



Web Review

An Adventure of Faith and Service

Ready for an adventure? Looking for a great short-term mission trip?

Imagine walking among Biblical ruins and helping bring in a harvest to feed hungry Israeli children. Or stepping onto an Amazon riverboat, cruising past mango trees and stopping at a remote Indian village to help build a church.

LifeTree Adventures organizes short-term mission trips where you can travel by yourself or with a small group of friends or join a special mission trip designed just for women. You’ll travel to incredible locations and make an eternal difference in the lives of the people you serve.

All you need is a willing heart and a sense of adventure!

Find a list of currently scheduled trips and more information at lifetreeadventures.com.

March

A Taste of What's Happening for Women

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|-----------|--|--|-----------|---|-----------|-----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | Women's Bible Study 9 a.m. <i>Upper Room Ministry Center</i> | | Women's Bible Study 6:30 p.m. <i>room 2 lower level ministry center</i> | | |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| | Hiker Chicks 5:45 p.m. <i>Upper Room Ministry Center</i> | Women's Bible Study 9 a.m. <i>Upper Room Ministry Center</i> | | Women's Bible Study 6:30 p.m. <i>room 2 lower level ministry center</i> | | |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| | Hiker Chicks 5:45 p.m. <i>Upper Room Ministry Center</i> | Women's Bible Study 9 a.m. <i>Upper Room Ministry Center</i> | | Women's Bible Study 6:30 p.m. <i>room 2 lower level ministry center</i> | | |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| | Hiker Chicks 5:45 p.m. <i>Upper Room Ministry Center</i> | Women's Bible Study 9 a.m. <i>Upper Room Ministry Center</i> | | Women's Bible Study 6:30 p.m. <i>room 2 lower level ministry center</i> | | |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |
| | Hiker Chicks 5:45 p.m. <i>Upper Room Ministry Center</i> | Women's Bible Study 9 a.m. <i>Upper Room Ministry Center</i> | | Women's Bible Study 6:30 p.m. <i>room 2 lower level ministry center</i> | | |

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