



John's Schedule

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## Grace Energized Men of Balance in an Obsessive/Compulsive World



Part 3 (071104AM)

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God wants balanced, anchored lives in His Church to lead and guide others to spiritual stability and maturity. As we open to [Ephesians 4:14](#) this morning, remember how we all begin as believers. Paul reminds us that we all start out as babies not just physically, but spiritually. In Ephesians 4, Paul explained that one of the characteristics of our immature state is that we are unstable and tossed about.

*Ephesians 4:14 that we should no longer be children ("infants" NIV), tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, NKJV*

Think of this picture Paul paints for our minds. Spiritually immature people are floaters. Without the depth and stability of an anchor in the Word, they drift along with things, swept away with ideas before they even know if they are true or Biblical. That is a strong reminder that spiritual maturity only comes as we are...

### Anchored in God's Word

Well-balanced lives come from being anchored in God's Word. As Paul states in this passage, the goal of the pastor/teacher is to help these immature, driven this-way-and-that believers in to becoming solidly anchored saints. Note Paul's solution in v. 11:

*Ephesians 4:11-14 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, NKJV*

Those two verses, v. 12-13 speak to the goal of Christ's church this morning--bringing believers to spiritual stability in Christ. Showing them how to think and behave in life so as to not be driven to and fro, and then modeling, teaching, and leading other believers to mature into grace-energized men and women with balanced lives.

How is this done within a local church? First Paul introduces us to the concept of the "equipping church". This is something we all need to grasp so that we come to church and operate as a church in the way that God designed us to serve Him.

What exactly does an equipping church do? Because we know God's Word teaches us that every word of God was inspired, we first study that word. The word "equipping" is *kartartismos* and is a noun used only here in the New Testament. But the verb form [1] of this noun is very descriptive; and its meaning is most clearly seen in the way this word is used in our Bibles. Turn there with me to the first use of this word in the New Testament, [Matthew 4:21](#).

*Matthew 4:21 Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, NKJV*

Did you see equipping? It is right there, only in this verse that word is translated "mending".

If you want to circle the word "mending" in your Bible, and write nearby the word "equipping" you have just made a powerful discovery. The Holy Spirit led Paul to use this word in [Ephesians 4:11](#). The verb *kartartidzo* is here translated "mending", and the noun form is translated "equipping" in [Ephesians 4:11](#).

Now the picture God's Word gives to us. Jesus found his first disciples sitting and doing what fishermen do, looking through each part of their nets and stitching back up any tears, mending any holes, and fixing anywhere the nets had started to unravel. Mending is what this word portrays.

To even broaden our mental picture, if we trace this word outside the Bible and into the culture of Paul's day, this word is used for setting broken bones. So mending nets and setting bones both speak of taking injured, damaged, or weakened things and getting them back the way they are supposed to be. Can you see the connection? An equipping church is all about...

## Mending Lives

Now plug those usages into this famous passage about the purpose of Christ's church as we meet. Believers are out in life getting frayed, torn, and ripped by all the troubles and struggles we go through each day.

And think about the band of men Jesus called to start His church—mostly fishermen weren't they? And another man was in the sewing business that was heavily involved, a leather worker/tent sewing man named Paul. This picture of sewing, patching, mending, and repairing was so much a part of their lives. No wonder they had such powerful fellowship back then. They knew and felt in their hands what their task was to be. Mending lives so that those lives can be engaged as tools in Christ's hands building up, helping, exhorting, and discipling others.

We each sustain some degree of damage through struggles at work, conflicts at home, and temptations nagging us when we are alone. We also are often just like a net as it gets dragged along in daily use—we have sustained wear and tear to our lives just with the daily pressures and stresses of living.

But now comes the wonderful part. This truth is what has strengthened Christ's church through all these centuries since Pentecost--when we gather obediently as Christ's church, He is present. And when Christ is present is uses us to do his work of repairing one another from the injuries of life's struggles.

- We gather to have the torn places in our lives mended with God's Word.
- We come together to see God fixing parts of life that have started to unravel like relationships, hope, confidence and assurance—by His Spirit, and through His Word, and using other believers.

Now with that picture in your mind, listen to the whole passage as we stand before God and He speaks to us in His Word:

*Ephesians 4: 11-14 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, NKJV*

Pray

The church that offers these needed repairs is the church that is truly an "equipping" church.

How is your life? Is it in need of a little mending this morning? God's Word is available and in action this morning. Why not pause now and then while we study through the Bible and ask God to sew your soul, mend your heart, get back to normal your emotions that are frayed, and so on. That is what God wants to do here.

## Mended Lives Get Tied to God's Word

What is the result of being mended? You get tied to God's Word. You see that His Word is the lamp that guides, the food that feeds, the comfort that cheers our souls--as it points us to Christ.

Being mended means finding that Jesus comes to us by His Spirit, through His Word and gives us the power to do what He asks. This power to do what He has told us to do in the Bible is grace. And God's process of changing us on the inside I love to call "energized by grace".

As we move on to [Titus 2:2](#) this morning, we see what God is watching for in the life of a godly man. We are examining the first of six character traits that describe a man God uses, a life that God rewards, and a grace-energized man of godly balance. This verse should challenge each of the older men in this congregation to heed God's call to maintain a balanced life in an increasingly obsessive-compulsive culture.

We've noted in [Titus 1:12-13](#), that the Cretan culture was obsessed with the pleasures of the moment, and would grab them compulsively with no thought for the consequences. Things are the same today.

We live in a culture that often goes from one obsession to another—wanting something or someone so badly that they sacrifice the permanent for the temporal. We are surrounded by compulsive people who do things just because they felt like it at the moment. There is no stability or balance, just a wandering, restlessness always looking for some new attraction.

Please follow along in your Bibles as I read this message from God to older men in the faith.

*Titus 2:2 that the **older men be sober**, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; NKJV*

The word sober in Greek implies being unintoxicated. But it portrays far more than distancing your body from alcohol. There are so many powerful agents that can intoxicate and cloud the minds of men. Paul is also saying, if you are God's man you will be careful to stay unintoxicated by anything—whether comfort, convenience, security, money, work, sports, amusements, or alcohol.

So Paul tells us God has posted a want ad that reads:

## **Wanted: Men of Balance in An Unbalanced World**

Grace-energized men live a balanced life while surrounded by people who are driven back and forth by fads, obsessions, trivial pursuits, lusts, and emptiness.

Paul first charges Titus with training the godly, "older" men.

These "older" men are defined in God's Word as men who are over 50 years of age. This age group of men often at their peak of earnings, at the top of their careers, and thinking more-and-more each day about what really matters in life. These older men are making decisions about the significance and the lasting impact of their lives.

If you are a man age 50 or older, and missed the message last Sunday evening please consider this. We studied God's clear and direct call to all 50 plus year old men who are believers, to invest their lives in Christ's church, and not waste these best years of their life.

If you missed that challenge from God's Word—I'd encourage you to go and check that CD out and prayerfully consider how you are spending these strategic days of your life from God's perspective.

God wants men of balance. The foundation of God's man that doesn't sway with the winds of life, and who life is not driven by the waves of the culture beating against him each day—is founded upon God's promises.

We only have two possible operating systems, God's or ours. We were born with ours. We go astray from the womb God's Word tells us. But when we are saved God implants within us His Spirit that wants to guide us and lead us in God's way instead of our own. And each man who systematically makes choice to anchor his life to God's Word grows into...

## **A Balanced Man**

The balanced man of Titus 2 would be someone if you saw them around at work or church would be one of those 'cool, calm, and collected' types. They have a solid Biblical orientation that keeps them on even keel emotionally and spiritually. They know God is ruling all things from the galaxies down to their little world.

In each sphere of life the Lordship of Christ is evident: as a dad he would be a man who tries each day to be a caring, sacrificially loving husband and dad; as an employee or employer he would work hard at being diligent, consistent, and hard-working; as a believer he holds on to the consistent goal to stay in the Word, prayer, and ministry.

What others notice is that he is not given to extremes. This man neither wearies himself with the mistaken idea that he alone can solve all the problems of the world and those around him; nor does he go through life uncaring of all the problems. He is balanced, he tries to follow his personal Biblical priorities and encourage others that he can reach out to in his life.

Just briefly, listen to what I found by searching dozens of books on this word, and finding what many have said about this word through the centuries:

- This man has learned what is worth living for, he invests his time, money, and strength carefully, living by priority rather than the moment—and has become contented with fewer and simpler things.
- This man is balanced in that he has learned how to exercise appropriate emphasis upon the priorities he has concluded are his before God.
- This man is not given to overindulgence, knowing what God's Word that the pleasures gleaned from self-indulgence cost far more than they are worth.
- This man has mental sobriety exhibited in self-restraint, a freedom from the debilitations of rash decisions, words and behavior, as well as being stable, circumspect, and clear-thinking.
- This man is in charge of his priorities, is steadfast, morally decisive, and not under the sway of the various allurements of the world, his flesh, and the devil.
- The man is not controlled by outside circumstances but directed by inward convictions. In English we would say he is level-headed, clear-minded, well-balanced, and unwavering.
- In short, he is obedient to what Paul calls for ten times in the pastoral epistles, he is sober-minded just as we also see in the qualifications for a pastor in (1 Tim. 3:2). Titus 2:2's grace-energized well-balanced men are spiritually mature members of the church.

In a world that often yields to wild thinking, godly men and women must be sober-minded. They have..

## **A Balanced View of Life**

This mature man is balanced. He doesn't swing from pole to pole in tangents. He displays a strong sense of security in Christ's will, and that leads to an inner peace

and tranquility. In an increasingly obsessive and compulsive world he stands out. For example, as this man of grace-energized balance looks at life in 21<sup>st</sup> Century America he testifies that he is not staking his life on the future financial stability and prosperity of this world, rather he is a 'pilgrim and stranger' here.

God has never wanted his children to find their security in the nation they live in. As believers we are not called to "save" America, any more than Paul was called to save Rome. Paul commanded us to "honor the King" but he never advised the believers to do what ever it took to 'save Rome'.

Jesus warned us not to clean up the outside of the cup, it is the inside (the hearts) of men and women that need changing. Grace-energized thinking makes us realize that the most powerful way we can impact our culture and nation is to be all that God asks us to be in His Word. As we live out our calling we impact the people in our world and see them changing one-by-one.

Life is temporary and grace-energized balance in life keeps that truth before our minds. When Paul was teaching the new saints in Thessalonica he warned them about two extremes—one group seems to have already checked out of society, stopped working and were just waiting for Christ's coming. Paul said, get back into the flow of life, work and plan like you are going to live out a full life, but do so looking up every day for Christ's return (II Thessalonians 3). The other group seems to have bought the false security of the world that promises 'peace and safety' (I Thes. 5:2-3). To both groups Paul says the same thing—sober up, live balanced!

## A Balanced View of Troubles

Another strength of a grace-energized man is his emotional stability. God's Word makes it clear that every believer will go through times in life marked by distorted thought, blurred thinking, and temporary confusion. Part of the fall is living in a fallen body with a mind that needs to be often renewed. Usually these confusing times of blurred thoughts come when our lives get piled high with problems, troubles, unexpected crises or just plain exhaustion.

When ever you face confusing times of blurred thinking remember Elijah. Confusion reigned in his life and God recorded two amazing details in the New Testament that should always strengthen us in similar times:

- Elijah was one of the mightiest saints in God's Word (he was raptured to Heaven without seeing death, he came back to stand with Jesus on the Mt. of Transfiguration, and he is billed as one of the greatest examples of faith-filled praying in step with God's Spirit.
- Elijah was just like us New Testament saints. Yes, in [James 5:17](#), the pastor of the first New Testament church in Jerusalem, our Lord's own brother James, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit said that Elijah was a man with "a nature like ours".

So make an equation out of those two truths and what happens next. Elijah was very close to God, very powerfully full of faith and obedience plus we are just like him. That means we can relate to all the struggles he went through and that his great walk with the Lord did not keep him from having.

In [I Kings 19:4](#) Elijah the mighty man of God (just like David the man after God's own heart)—came to a point where he couldn't cope with life. He got overwhelmed to the point that he felt like life was not worth living, he wanted to die and end all the pressures he couldn't stand any more. He felt all alone in standing for God, while God knew there were 7,000 others (v.18) who also were resisting the false worship of Baal. What can we see from the Elijah equation?

First we see that Elijah's bottoming out was a predictable outcome of the times he faced. For over three years Elijah had lived under the constant stress of Jezebel's evil campaign to rid the land of true believers. Then came the "mountain top" experience of Mt. Carmel and the dramatic victory God gave over the false prophets, answering from Heaven with fire. But after all that Elijah fell apart. He became totally unable to go on physically, emotionally, and spiritually. He actually says that he "had enough" in v. 4. Elijah was depressed and frozen.

So what did God do with him? This time of depression was temporary because God prescribed proper rest, proper nutrition, and quality time with God. As soon as those three areas were dealt with Elijah returns as the clear-minded, obedient servant of the Lord he had been before. It is very important to note that God brought a faithful friend who was loyal and close into Elijah's life also at this time, named Elisha (v. 21).

The lesson is that even the best of us will go through dark times of life, confusing times when we get "down" emotionally. In fact with certain circumstances such times can almost be predicted. But they are always momentary compared to the direction and focus of our lives which grace-energized balanced thinking reigns.

## Anchored in the Storms of Life

So, Paul compares our spiritual lives to living in the midst of gale-force winds and powerful waves that beat against us each day—waves of materialistic desires, waves of sensual desires, waves of doubt, waves of fear, waves of discouragement. Each wave and the powerful winds are testing how well we are tied to God's promises. How well tied are you this morning?

One of the most moving moments of our recent journey to the Land of the Book was standing at the tomb of Herod the Great (hidden for 19 centuries and only found this past summer)—it was such sobering sight.

Built near Bethlehem into the side of a man-made mountain called the Herodian, Herod's Tomb and Palace are visible for miles around Jerusalem. Today all that can be seen from below is a monumental 30 foot wide staircase that led up to the tomb. We stood there and remembered one powerful truth—death takes away from each

of us everything but the promises of God to which we cling by faith.

Herod was wealthy, powerful, possessing the largest palace ever built in the ancient world—and he took nothing with him out of this world when he died? Why? Because death takes everything away from us except the promises of God!

What promises of God are you holding onto this morning? If everything you have on earth was suddenly snatched from you—family, house, money, job, health, friends, and possessions, what would you have left? Take it a step further, because that is what death does. So think for just a moment about the instant of your death.

At the instant of death EVERYTHING is stripped away from us, including our body—except for one thing. We still have one thing we can hold onto at death and that is God’s promises. They can never be taken away from us.

Knowing God’s promises give us what the author of Hebrews calls an “anchor for our souls” ([Hebrews 6:19](#)). That is what keeps us from being blown around, dashed upon the rocks by every storm of life or confused by every new teaching we hear.

Lives anchored in the Word of God are stable, balanced and usable for God.

With that in mind, how many of His promises are you holding onto this morning?

Promises like “I will never leave you or forsake you” ([Heb. 13:5](#)), or “I go to prepare a place for you...I will come back and take you to be with me” ([John 14:2-3](#)), or how about this one “your sins and iniquities I will remember no more” ([Hebrews 8:11](#)), “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin” ([1 John 1:7](#)).

The Bible is full of promises, made by God to us, through his Son—and a grace-energized man is holding onto enough of them that his life becomes visibly stable. Why not bow your heart before God, look inside and do a promise inventory. Quietly repeat to the Lord in your mind what you find that you are holding onto from His Word.

Those promises can never be taken from you.

Those promises are the anchor for you soul.

Those promises help you maintain balance in an increasingly unstable world.

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[1] Katartidzo is used 13x in the New Testament. Mending is also used in [Mark 1:19](#).

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