

PRESENTATION #2. Maintaining Balance in Faith, Work and Life

Q. Is it possible to overdo the practice of my Faith?

A. The answer depends on what you mean when you say, 'overdo' the practice of your Faith. For some, Faith practice can certainly be overdone if this means that it lacks balance. If it does, then it can overwhelm us, because it will often lead to hurtful and destructive results such as misplaced anxiety, scrupulosity, self-righteousness, low self es-

teem and disruptions in personal relationships. Of course, the reactionary extreme is to decide that you will not practise your Faith at all, in order to avoid all these possible results. This is even worse than Faith imbalance.

Faith Imbalance: Symptoms

*1. Faith to Control, and not to Guide*

Using Faith and Religion as means to control the decisions and actions of others is a symptom often found among Faith leaders and counselors. There is a difference between positively influencing the conduct of others and actually forcing them to act according to one's personal wishes. (see: *Luke 11: 42*).

*2. Using Faith to Instill Fear*

Religion can also be misused as a means to frighten people into submission. Predictions of an imminent end of the world or of ultimate punishment from God after death are two ways in which preachers, parents and others unknowingly misuse Faith.

*3. Using Faith for Magical Solutions*

Jesus often admonished the Pharisees who demanded supernatural signs from Him (see: *Matthew 12:38-39*). Like them, some cling to Faith practice only when prayers are answered but readily abandon their Faith when they are not.



*4. Practising Faith for Ulterior Motives*

Using external Faith practice simply for display or as a dishonest means by which to procure one's personal income or employment is imbalanced and empty. (See *Matthew 6*)

*5. Faith Practice for Rules and Rituals Only*

Faith rituals are important and Faith laws and guidelines are useful and necessary but, if one only promotes the rituals of Faith or simply enforces rules and regulations but never allows Christ to influence his/her life can be suffering from Faith imbalance (see *Matthew 23:3-4*).

*6. Using Religion to Justify Evil Actions*

Perhaps, the most sinister of symptoms of imbalance has plagued people of Faith for millennia and it is one which Jesus condemns (see: *John 2:14-16*). To justify an evil attitude or action by saying that it is being done 'in the name of Religion' is to abuse Faith practice in the worst possible way.