

?

1. How do you strike the balance between your work and recreation?
2. How much time do you actually take each year, each week, each day to deal with tension, to address your stress, to prevent burn-out?
3. How faithful are you to refreshing your body?
4. How faithful are you to refreshing your mind?
5. How faithful are you to refreshing your heart?
6. How faithful are you to refreshing your soul?
7. Are there any changes that you need to make at this time in your life to have a better balance between work and play?



Wicks, Robert. Touching the Holy: Ordinariness, Self-Esteem and Friendship. New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1992.

De Sales, Francis. Introduction to the Devout Life. Various editions and publishers. Part 3, Chapter 31.



A Ministry of



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The Highway To Holiness: All Work?

SALESIAN PERSPECTIVES



...No Way!

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

Not only might it make Jack dull: it might cripple his attempts to be happy, healthy, and even holy.

Make no mistake. Growing in holiness - making real in our own lives the love of the God in whose image and likeness we are created - is serious business. It requires hard work; it requires discipline; it requires self-examination; it requires commitment.

"It is actually a defect to be so strict, austere and unsociable that one never permits oneself recreation time."

As Francis de Sales would say, it requires devotion.

But Salesian spirituality also recognizes the value of relaxation, of taking 'time out,' of 'catching your breath,' of making time for play. In fact, relaxation is not only permissible: it is necessary!

Francis de Sales claims: "It is actually a defect to be so strict, austere and unsociable that one neither permits oneself nor others any recreation time."

The Introduction to the Devout Life (1609) contains ample evidence of the Gentleman Saint's appreciation of the important role that recreation plays in the pursuit of a fully human, God-centered life. He says: "From time to time we must recreate in mind and body."

He continues: "To take the air, to go for a walk, to enjoy a friendly chat, to play music, or sing or hunt... are such honest diversions that the only thing needed to utilize them well is simple prudence, which gives to all things their rank, time, place and measure."

To be balanced, we need to know our limitations. St. Jane once wrote in the context of a letter to a member of her community: "I must run, for I have little leisure and my arm and hand are starting to tire and hurt, even though I've just begun to write. I'm not able to do as much as I used to."

"From time to time we must recreate in mind and body."

In his book Touching the Ordinary, Robert Wicks identifies practices that can help us establish and maintain a balanced life: get enough sleep; eat right; practice leisure; pace yourself. Learn to laugh; focus on values; practice self-appreciation; be involved, but not too involved; have a support group; escape on occasion; be spontaneous; avoid negativity. Establish good friendships; practice intimacy.

Of course, there are also the spiritual practices – pray; participate in the life of the Church; celebrate the sacraments; read Scripture and other material that nourishes the soul.

Our Lord Jesus Christ spent virtually his entire public ministry meeting the needs of others: healing, teaching, feeding, challenging, forgiving; in short, working. But the Gospels that document Christ's work ethic also clearly document those times when he withdrew from his activities to rest, to renew, to enjoy an other's hospitality, to spend time with friends, all helpful in rededicating himself to doing the Will of God.

"How faithful are you to refreshing your body, mind, heart and soul?"

There are plenty of ways to achieve balance between work and play, livelihood and leisure, pay and play. Consider them in a personal, prayerful manner. Choose those consistent with the state and stage of life in which you find yourself at this time. Realize that as your life changes, so too may your means for achieving this happy, healthy and holy balance.

As you travel along the highway of life, take your foot off the gas. Sometimes, ride with the windows down. Pull over on occasion. Use the rest stop. Check out the scenic overlooks. Balancing work and play will not only help you to reach your destinations in one piece, but it will actually enable you to really enjoy the trip!

Stay sharp...and relaxed.