

BIBLE STUDY ACT & SHARE, AND FLOW BOLDLY TO ACHIEVE BALANCE King of Kings Adult Education
Session 4 Fear and Flow by Deb Nystrom
Reference Sue Ann and Ron Glusenkamp

Goal: To help each person consider what balance and wellness means individually and in the lives of God's people.

Opening Prayer:

Creator and sustainer, Lord, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service.

Strengthen us and enable our gifts to be more fully used by the power of your Spirit in us, and help us hear your wisdom as we make healthy choices for wholeness, health, able vocation, rest, and renewed energy during our study and discussion of your word to us today.
Amen.

Session 1 - Mary and Martha - Luke 10: 38-42

⁴¹"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴²but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

In the first session of this Bible study, we looked at Mary and Martha's choices, and making one choice.

We know that balance comes when we are in harmony with God and one another.

- In a "multi-tasking" world, how can we practice "uni-tasking" (that is, "there is need of only one thing," in Luke 10:42).

Freedom to Choose – what does that mean? "I got my ears pierced and drank a Fuzzy Navel," say Deanna of her declaration of independence at age 26. These served as her lucky charms. Deanna's face looks like the very illustration of a luscious, wild woman: her mop of go-to-hell red hair and green eyes make you wonder why God created any other color combinations for humans... Hard to imagine this vibrant woman was ever anything but independent, but Deanna was not always this way. For nearly half of her present 42 years, she felt paralyzed. The fear of making mistakes was what kept her locked in a life she hated. She was terrified of even the smallest choices. "I would get a

panic attack anytime I had to choose, even off a menu. I would just close my eyes and point like a child."

Her upbringing was strict and did not allow much freedom of choice. For years she did not even know what kind of clothes she liked. When Deanna decided to end an abusive marriage, her first act of independence was in getting her ears pierced. When she drank a Fuzzy Navel, and wasn't struck down, she realized her ticket out of fear-based living had begun with those small choices.

Once out of her cage, she pursued freedom with a vengeance, taking classes and reading books on personal growth. She now has a husband and two boys who love her for being who she is.

Source: What Would You Do If You Had No Fear? - Diane Conway

Jesus says, "There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her." The first part of this verse, "there is need of only one thing," is the word of relief for Martha who was distracted by many things. Mary, who has chosen the *tyn agathyn merida* ("the good piece or part"), has peace—and it will not be taken from her. This is the portion that puts all things into proportion.

- In what way have you had success in choosing the *tyn agathyn merida* ("the good piece or part")?
- How might this success build more success for you in your future?

Session 2 - Jesus Calms the Storm - Mark 4: 35-41

In the second session of the study, we looked at **acting boldly for health in crisis.**

³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

The words of Jesus are a holy "Hush!" Twice. Hush to the second power. Hush squared.

FLOW BOLDLY TO ACHIEVE BALANCE

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- When you've experienced a crisis or difficulty in some area of your life, what helped you weather the storm?
- In what ways have you helped someone else weather a storm in his or her life?
- How might the teaching of Jesus and the work of the Spirit help you in future storms?

Online LBW Hymns

"Jesus Calls Us; o'er the Tumult" 494

by Cecil F. Alexander, 1823-1895

<http://www.lutheran-hymnal.com/>

1. Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild, restless sea,
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,
Saying, "Christian, follow Me."

4. In our joys and in our sorrows,
Days of toll and hours of ease,
Still He calls, in cares and pleasures,
"Christian, love Me more than these."

5. Jesus calls us; by Thy mercies,
Savior, make us hear Thy call,
Give our hearts to Thine obedience,
Serve and love Thee best of all. Amen.

Flow -The relationship between Challenge & Skill

Flow is the mental state of operation in which the person is fully immersed in what he or she is doing by a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and success in the process of the activity. Proposed by [positive psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi](#), the concept has been widely referenced across a variety of fields.^[1] Colloquial terms for this or similar mental states include: to be *on the ball*, *in the zone*, or *in the groove*.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) found that the key to having an optimal experience is having the [right challenge](#) level matched with the correct skill level. When challenge and skill level of the person and the situation are in the optimal conditions for flow to occur the individual may have an optimal experience ([Csikszentmihalyi, 1990](#)).

The optimal experience is marked by:

1. A challenging activity that requires skill
2. The merging of action and awareness
3. Clear Goals and feedback
4. Concentration on the task at hand
5. Lacking sense of worry about losing control
6. The loss of self consciousness
7. The transformation of time

The key to the optimal experience is that it is done because it is rewarding regardless of what the original goals are. More information and a visual example using a glass of water is available here: <http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/articles/Flowexp/start.htm>

Session 3 – Paul & the Philippians -- Press on Philippians 3:12.

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

- When have you most felt alive, *on the ball*, *in the zone*, or *in the groove*?
- In what ways does Paul's message in Philippians offer help in overcoming Fear and creating space for flowing toward healthy goals?

Some people live their lives with the attitude: "finders keepers, losers weepers." Jesus turns that schoolyard saying upside-down: Finders are weepers and the losers are the keepers. Paul tells us that *the Gospel changes how we account for our life*. Emptying ourselves may allow for the Spirit to "fill us" and help guide us toward making one choice among many, in a busy or even stormy situation.

For this reference, it is helpful to focus on several aspect of SMART goals mentioned in the previous lists. Consider: *Specific, Achievable* and *Realistic*.

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Excerpts from ELCA's social statement, *Caring for Health—Our Shared Endeavor*, as adopted by the church at the 2003 ELCA Church-wide Assembly.

- To challenge all members of this church to become good stewards of their own physical and mental health by attending to preventive care, personal health habits, diet, exercise, and recreation, and by making prudent use of health-care resources.
- To urge all members of this church to develop reasonable expectations for their own health and for the health care they receive at each stage of life and to engage in thoughtful preparation with health-care professionals and loved ones for difficult choices in their health care.

- Write down three positive thoughts that come to mind when you review excerpts from the ELCA's work listed above:

- What would it look like if we would act boldly toward these goals listed above in a *Specific, Achievable* and *Realistic* way?
- In what ways have you already had some success with these goals in your past history?
- In what ways does Paul's message in Philippians offer help in overcoming Fear and Flowing toward healthy goals?
- *Which of our bible references today reminds you of this sense of the spiritual relationship of flow: a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and success in the process of the activity?*
- How might these reflections be a guide to choices to which you are thinking about saying "Yes" or "No"?

Prayer

Everlasting God, you give strength to the weak and power to the faint. Make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be made known to the ends of your creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen

LBW 406

"Take My Life and Let It Be"

1. Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
5. Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.
6. Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all, for Thee.

Text: Eph. 6:24

by Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879

Tune: "Patmos"

Caring for Health—Our Shared Endeavor

You can read the entire ELCA social statement at:
www.elca.org/socialstatements/health/resolutions.html

The original Bible Study resource for this 4 session study is here:

<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/resources/biblestudies.html>

Women of the ELCA has launched a health initiative, "Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls," committed to promoting women's complete health: physical, spiritual, and emotional. To learn more and find resources, go to

www.womenoftheelca.org/getinvolved/health.html