

Q & A

“I feel overwhelmed. I’m taking music lessons and competing in sports and trying to serve in the priests quorum and get straight A’s. How do I find balance?”

NEW ERA

We are blessed with many opportunities to develop our talents and serve others. The problem is, all of these options can make us feel like we don’t have enough time to do everything. We need to remember that we usually have time to do the essential things.

King Benjamin warned his people about doing too much. He said, “See that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength” (Mosiah 4:27). Setting priorities will help you do your activities in “wisdom and order.”

When you set priorities, you set time aside for the most important things before you schedule in less-important activities. Think of it like this: if someone gave you rocks, pebbles, and sand to fit into a jar, how would you go about it? If you put the sand and pebbles in first, you’d probably realize there’s hardly room left for the rocks. But if you put the rocks in first, they’d all fit. Then you could add the pebbles and sand. These fill in the cracks between the rocks.

■ *Put the Lord first in your life, and everything else will fall into place.*

■ *Pray for the Lord’s help in getting the important things done, like schoolwork.*

■ *Take time to relax with family and friends, and also by yourself.*

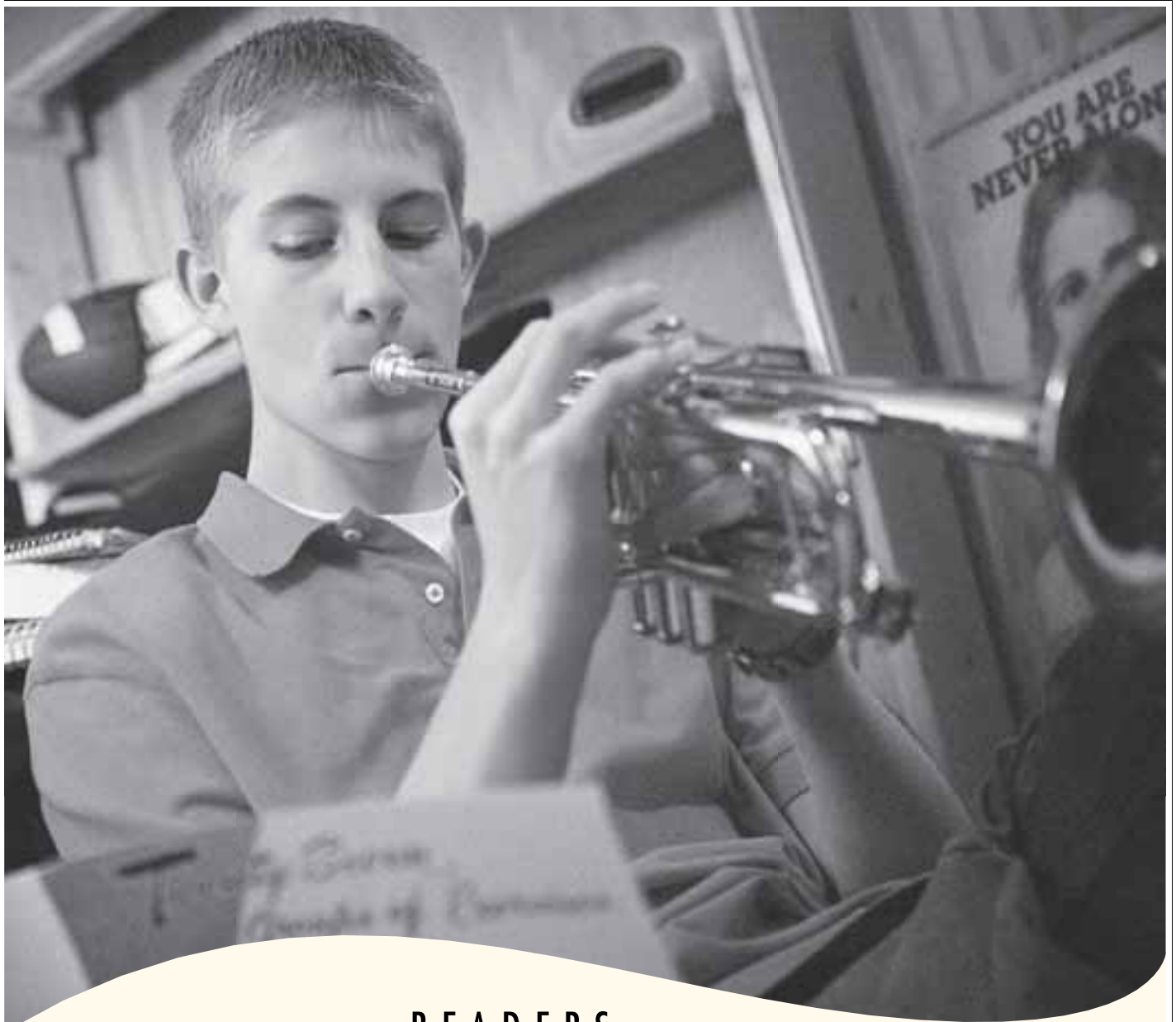
■ *To find balance, you might need to drop some less-important activities.*

Our busy days are like that jar. In order to get everything done, we need to plan the most important things—the rocks—first. Then we can plan the less-important activities—the pebbles and the sand—around them.

How can we identify the rocks in our lives? President Ezra Taft Benson said: “When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love for the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities” (“The Greatest Commandment—Love the Lord,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 4). Some important rocks in your life are daily prayer and scripture study, fulfilling your Church duties, and serving others. Other rocks include schoolwork and spending time with your family.

Many people forget the rocks of exercise, balanced meals, and getting enough rest. Rest is more than just sleep. You also need time to unwind and think about where your life is going.

What about sports, music lessons, and other worthy activities? These are like the pebbles and sand. They help develop your talents, but if you



READERS

feel overwhelmed, you might be doing too much. A more balanced life may require letting some less-important activities go. The peace of mind you gain will be worth the sacrifice.

Pray for help in deciding which activities are most important. Talk with your parents or other trusted adults who might be able to help you make wise choices. Heavenly Father wants you to be happy and successful. He will help you find the activities that will bring you the most joy without making you feel overwhelmed. **NE**



I know exactly how you feel. I am also very involved and at times feel overwhelmed. Too much of even good things can be

bad, and instead of lifting you up, they will pull you down if you are spreading yourself too thin. Joseph Smith felt the same way. Read D&C 10:4. It says to not do more than you can, and to be diligent. Then, in D&C 10:5, the Lord tells him to pray always. Before you drop anything out of your schedule, add morning scripture study and prayer.

The rest of your day will be improved, and I testify that the Lord will help you find the time and balance you need.

Stephanie J., 18, Utah

Remember, you can't do everything at once, especially when you're in school. President Hinckley said that we should further our education, so I know it is a great idea to make sacrifices (such as cutting an extracurricular activity) for things that will help us more in the journey ahead, like education.

Steven M., 19, Missouri

I have spent a lot of time with this problem and found my solution through praying. By praying I found peace come to my life and knew that if I followed the Lord, then I could make it through. My advice is to put the Lord first in all situations. For that you will be blessed. Also, work hard in everything that you do. At times it may seem rough, but the Lord will bless you for following Him and doing your part.

Justin L., 17, Lima, Peru



My mission president likes to say, "Too many goods leaves no room for best." In order to avoid this, I prayerfully identify those things that are truly important and will be best

eternally. These things include church attendance and family. The rest fall into place according to priority—not my priority, but Heavenly Father's.

Elder Sharp, 22, North Carolina Charlotte Mission

If you feel stressed, then you should see what is most important to you, and focus on that. It might help if you drop a thing or two. I did that this year, and it really helped me.

Emalea F., 14, Alberta, Canada



Currently I am swimming, serving as a student body officer, learning the piano and bass trombone, playing the piano for priesthood opening exercises, keeping an

A average in AP classes, doing my duties as a priest and Eagle Scout, and holding a job to earn money for my mission. Most of the times overlap.

I finally had to sit down and make a weekly schedule. This helped tremendously. I left at least 10 minutes of "me time" between each of these activities. But when work and swim continued to fill the same time slot, I had to drop swim for a while. That relieved much of the stress I was going through. Sometimes you just have to let things go, and prioritize your activities in order of importance.

Ryan G., 18, Mississippi



Our main goal should be to seek 'immortality and eternal life' (Moses 1:39). With this as our goal, why not eliminate from our lives the things that clamor for and consume our thoughts, feelings, and energies without contributing to our reaching that goal?"

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Keeping Life's Demands in Balance," Ensign, May 1987, 14.



I can only find balance by setting the gospel as my priority. I believe that we have to seek first the Lord's kingdom, and all these things shall be added unto you.

I know that if I put the Lord first in my life, He will guide me in everything that I want to accomplish. Receiving high grades and excelling in sports activities will follow when you have the Lord in your side.

Reinely M., 15, Washington D.C.



I find that my life is more balanced when I say my prayers and go to early morning seminary. My day runs smoothly, and I don't get overwhelmed or stressed out as

easily. But I also have to do my part by managing my time. Sometimes when things get overwhelming, it is best to take a break, even when you feel you cannot or should not. It will relieve some anxiety and enable you to accomplish everything on time.

Cristina A., 15, Washington

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

NEXT QUESTION

"When I repent, I have a hard time forgiving myself. How do I learn to forgive myself?"

**Send your answer by April 15, 2008, to:
New Era, Q&A, 4/08
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA
Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org**

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter:

FULL NAME _____

BIRTH DATE _____

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STAKE (OR DISTRICT) _____

I grant permission to print response and photo:

SIGNATURE _____

PARENT'S SIGNATURE (IF YOU ARE UNDER 18) _____