



TENSION 4 Now or Next



THE TENSION

Is it living in the **MOMENT** or **PLANNING** for the **FUTURE**?

Is it **SEIZE THE DAY** or lay the **FOUNDATIONS** for **TOMORROW**?

→ *Which do you tend to focus on, now or next? Which has your attention right now?*

→ *How as a church do we balance those? How about in your own spiritual life?*

THE DITCHES

DITCH #1 = So wrapped up in what might happen in the **FUTURE** that they've completely forgotten about **ENJOYING THE HERE & NOW**.

DITCH #2 = **EXCESSIVE, EXTRAVAGANT** living in the **PRESENT**, but with no **GOALS** or **PLANS**.

* If you're **OBSESSED** with the **FUTURE**, and if it's **SLOW** coming, is it possible to get hugely **DISCOURAGED**?

* Can we get so **ABSORBED** in the **PRESENT**, that we don't make any **STRATEGIC PLANS** for the **FUTURE**?

→ *Have you ever found yourself in either of those ditches? Do you know people who are? What are the dangers of each?*

→ *What are your thoughts on 'mindfulness' and 'growth mindset'?*

ZIMBARDO'S 6 TIME PERSPECTIVES

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Past NEGATIVE | 4. Present FATALISTIC |
| 2. Past POSITIVE | 5. Future GOAL-CENTRED |
| 3. Present HEDONISTIC | 6. Future TRANSCENDENTAL |

→ *Which of those six do you tend towards? Have you ever been over-fixated on one in the past? What is the correct balance?*

BALANCED TIME PERSPECTIVE = **POSITIVE REFLECTION** on the past, **MODERATELY ENJOYABLE** present and **HOPEFUL** future.

"The past gives you **ROOTS**, the present gives you **ENERGY** and the future gives you **WINGS**."

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

i) **TODAY** should be lived **FOR GOD** (Matthew 6:25-34, Colossians 3:23-24, Matthew 6:11).

ii) **TOMORROW** should be **TRUSTED TO GOD** (Proverbs 3:5-6).

iii) Something in all of us **LONGS** for a **PREFERRED FUTURE** (Romans 8:18-24).

iv) Without a **VISION** the people **PERISH** (Proverbs 29:18 – KJV & NIV)

→ *What does Matthew 6:25-34 teach about our relationship between present and past? And what role should the Lord have in that? What can we learn from the other verses listed in i) and ii)?*

→ *How does Romans 8:18-24 contribute to our longing for more? Why, therefore, is a sense of vision so important? Who in the Bible made a difference because of their sense of vision? Who made a difference because above all they were desperate for more?*

HOW DO WE FIND BALANCE?

1. **PEACEFUL LIVING**

Job 22:21 → *SUBMIT to God and you will have **PEACE**; then things will **GO WELL** for you.*

* Happiness is not an **EVENT** or a **DESTINATION**, but a **RELATIONSHIP**.

→ *Why is submitting to the Lord, past, present and future the key to happiness? What else depends upon this decision? What are the different ways in which people refuse to submit to God and what are the consequences thereof?*

2. **PURPOSEFUL LIVING**

* For too many, life can feel like a **GIANT HAMSTER WHEEL**.

* In which case, press **PAUSE** and look for the God-given **PURPOSE**.

* You can't change all your **CIRCUMSTANCES**, at least not immediately, but you can change your **ATTITUDES** and your **HABITS**.

→ *Anyone on that hamster wheel? Anyone ever been on it and successfully escaped? If so, how?*

→ *How have you found the God-given purpose in aspects of your life where others might have struggled? Give an example of a perspective shift that has the power to change your life for the better.*

SOME HELPFUL QUESTIONS

a) **WHY** am I doing what I'm currently doing?

b) **WHO** am I doing it for?

c) Is it about **ME** or **SOMEONE / SOMETHING** else?

d) Who is this **BLESSING** and why? Can I find **BEAUTY** in the **ASHES**?

e) What are the divine **OPPORTUNITIES, ENCOUNTERS, LESSONS** behind the next bush?

f) Is the **GRASS REALLY GREENER** on the other side?

g) Did I do the **NEXT THING** that the Holy Spirit **ASKED** me?

→ *Any of those questions resonate with you? If so, explain why. Any that you're particularly struggling with?*

→ *How is perspective related to burn-out? What is burn-out and what are the dangers? Ever feel as though you're close? Perhaps it's that giant hamster wheel.*

3. **PROACTIVE LIVING**

"Are the **HABITS** you have **TODAY** on a par with the **DREAMS** you have for **TOMORROW**?"

* **WISHFUL THINKING** alone will not get you where you want to go.

DEVELOP GOOD HABITS

1. Make a **READING PLAN**

2. Practise a **SKILL**

3. **BREAK** that **DESTRUCTIVE** habit

→ *How do good habits (good or bad) help to frame your future? How are you doing with each of those three? How do future-related habits improve your well-being in the here and now?*

So, in summary, are you waling down the centre of Now or Next Street? Any changes you need to make? Perhaps one thing you now feel compelled to do?