

Morning Star Church
Devotional Guide
Margin: Moral
August 16-20, 2010

Message Synopsis: Pastor Ike continued our *Margin* series by talking about our moral margins. He talked about how we're tempted to go to the line of temptation, and we wonder: *How far is too far? Can I go right to the edge and not fall in? Do I have wiggle room?* God wants us to have moral margin in our lives so that we can enjoy the life He intends for us instead of experiencing disastrous results from our choices.

Plan carefully what you do.... Avoid evil and walk straight ahead.
Don't go one step off the right way. Proverbs 4:26-27, GNB

Day 1 Our Moral Compass

Romans 2:14-16; 2 Corinthians 1:12; Romans 8:5-8

1. What evidence proves that people know there are moral limits built into society even if they do not profess to be Christ-followers? Does everyone have the moral compass of a conscience?
2. How does the Holy Spirit guide our conscience?

Day 2 Culture's Paradoxical Message

James 1:13-15

1. Culture sends a contradictory message to us:
 - It baits us: Go as far as you can, experience everything you can, get anything you want.
 - And it punishes us: You must pay for crossing the line.
2. What are some examples of the ways culture baits us to live without margin? What are some of the ways our culture turns against those who go too far?

Day 3 Sin Begins With a Head-Start

2 Samuel 11:1-15

1. What kind of havoc did a stray thought cause King David? Where did the spiral into sin begin for him?
2. What should David have done between verse 2 and verse 3 that he didn't do?

Day 4 Predetermine Your Pattern of Temptation

Proverbs 4:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:18-19

1. What areas of temptation make you stumble? Relapse into sin?
2. Develop a relapse plan to overcome temptation. Ask yourself these questions about your unique areas of temptation:
 - a. *When* are you most tempted? Time of day? Day of the week? When people are not present?
 - b. *Where* are you most tempted? What places? Why those places?
 - c. *Who* is with you? Alone? Buddies? Certain people?
 - d. *What* temporary benefits do you get when you yield to temptation? (Hebrews 11:25).

Day 5 God's Margins for You

1 Corinthians 10:13; Psalm 50:15; Hebrews 4:15-16; Psalm 119:9-11

1. God has already given you a moral compass (your conscience) to guide you when you encounter temptation, so His intention is for you to have success in overcoming it. How have you seen God use 1 Corinthians 10:13 in your life?
2. How can you develop a prayer life and a devotional life to help you succeed against temptation?

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Small Group Discussion Guide
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Group Icebreaker

Share with your group about a past experience when you went too far and crossed the line in disobeying your parents or breaking a law. Describe the consequences.

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1. Pastor Ike used the illustration of ignoring railroad crossing warnings as a metaphor for how many people approach crossing moral limits in their lives. Discuss with your group why people ignore the warnings of their conscience, of the law, and of the Holy Spirit.
2. Culture's message about moral limits says first, "*Get all you can in life*" then "*If you cross certain limits you will be punished.*" Share with your group how you have seen this reality demonstrated in our culture.
3. Have someone read James 1:13-15. Confer with your group about how they see people struggle with the progression of sin: *attention, arousal*, then *actions*. (Reference David's progression into sin in 2 Samuel 11:1-4 as an example if needed.)
4. Pastor Ike suggested we use three steps away from the moral edge to create margin in our lives. Those three steps are:
 - a. Identify your personal pattern of temptation. (Proverbs 4:26-27)
 - b. Flee when you encounter temptation.
 - c. Access God's resources (The Holy Spirit, prayer, the Bible) to overcome temptation. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Describe how using these steps back into margin might create safety in our lives.

Prayer Requests