

“MARGIN”

July 31-August 1, 2010

MARGIN: the space between my load and my limit

Filled up lives...

limit the full and abundant life Jesus offers.

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (Jesus, John 10:10)

Filled up lives...

1. Increase stress and decrease productivity
2. Increase self-focus and decrease relationships

So why do I keep filling?

1. Fear of missing out.
2. Fear of falling behind.

SCRIPTURE: Ecclesiastes 2:17-19, King Solomon

Jesus wants to lead me to a life of margin.

- Margin requires faith.
- Margin produces peace.
- Margin produces possibility.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Jesus, Matthew 11:28-30, NIV)

Morning Star Church
Devotional Guide
Margin: Introduction
August 2-6, 2010

Message Synopsis: Pastor Mike began a new series this week called *Margin*. He challenged us to look at our own life balance and be aware of our ability to live within healthy limits. God fully intended for us to discover the reality that being overloaded, maxed out, or overspent simply because we feel the need to be busy and productive is distorted thinking. God never designed our life to be lived out of proportion.

*Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. **Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.** I won't lay anything heavy or ill fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.*
Matthew 11:28-30, The Message

Day 1 **Losing the Simple Rhythms**
Matthew 11:28-30.

1. Have you ever noticed that we have been tricked into believing that success is determined by how much we can squeeze out of every opportunity? What do you think are the “*unforced rhythms of grace*” that Jesus is talking about in Matthew 11:29 (The Message)? What words accurately describe the rhythm of *your* life? (Here are some suggestions: balanced, pressured, peaceful, fatigued, centered, out of control, and so on.)
2. How have distractions in your life such as demands, frenzied schedules, unrealistic personal expectations impacted your life? Have these pressures ever brought you to a crisis point in your health and/or in your life of faith? If so, what was the outcome?

Day 2 **A World Stuck in Fast**
Luke 10: 38-42; Luke 12:22-31

1. Was Jesus telling Martha that she should change her activities or that she should change her focus? Is it possible that we can get to the place that we are serving too much? Why do good Christians prefer to be busy for Jesus over listening to Jesus?
2. When our heart is set on a lot of things, it is easily divided. What are the things in life your heart is most set on? How closely do those things align with becoming the person God intended for you to be?

Day 3 **God Designed You to be Successful in the Margin**
Job 14:5; Deuteronomy 5:32-33

1. God designed our life to flourish when we live in the limits that are set up for us. God does not want to *punish us*; He wants to *prosper us*. When we live in the margin He has created for us, we are able to be successful. What are some of the limits (margins) that you are aware of in your life?
2. What are some of the actual benefits for you when you set margin for your schedule, your family time, your finances, or your personal beliefs?

Day 4 **Do You Know What God Wants?**
Psalm 46

1. How long are you able to be still without feeling guilty? Estimate? What distractions are in Psalm 46? How much easier is it to pay attention to the power of God rather than the presence of God?
2. Read Luke 2:49 and Luke 23:46. Jesus' first recorded words and His last words on the cross were about the same thing: to be intentional about His devotion to God. Jesus lived an extremely busy life, yet He focused on *one necessary thing*: single-minded devotion. How can you improve your walk with God to be more like Jesus?

Day 5 **What Margin Do You Need?**
Proverbs 27:12

1. Andy Stanley says margin is the space between our current performance and our limits. He implies that we get tempted into believing that we should experience everything, get as much as we can, and not let opportunities pass us by without seriously considering how it might affect our life balance. Do you see this as a temptation in our culture?
2. Stanley also suggests that when we don't have margin three things can potentially happen to us: we might see an increase in stress and anxiety; we might become more narrowly focused on ourselves; and we might struggle in our relationships to the degree that we might be present but not engaged. Do you see any of these areas of your life increase because of the shrinking of your margins?

Morning Star Church
Small Group Discussion Guide
Margin, Introduction
August 2-6, 2010

Group Icebreaker

Pastor Mike introduced our *Margin* series by sharing about drinking down the fizz of his sodas at QT in order to get his \$.59 worth. He left “no margin” for spills. Share with your group areas of your life where you have things filled to the brim.

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;
I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*
Jesus, John 10:10, NIV

1. Pastor Mike said that filled-up lives limit the full and abundant life Jesus offers. What is the difference between a “filled up” life and a “full” life?
2. Are there any common fears that have lured you into a present lifestyle that is unsustainable? Such as the fear of missing out on something? Or the fear of falling behind everyone else?
3. Why does a life of margin require faith? Are you able to trust God to help you develop margin?
4. Have someone read Matthew 11:28-30. Share with your group your struggle between what Jesus says regarding an easy yoke and a light burden and a healthy life balance *including church activities*.

Prayer Requests