

MARGIN: EXPECTATIONS

August 21-22, 2010

- Expectations can increase stress by decreasing margin.
- Not all expectations are bad.

We need to distinguish between
unrealistic expectations and reasonable responsibilities.

**Expectations make requests that can
steal resources from living God's best.**

"But He's already made it plain how to live, what to do, what GOD is looking for in men and women. It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love, and don't take yourself too seriously—take God seriously." (Micah 6:8)

- God's expectations are always attainable.
- **Instead of playing to a crowd of expectations, I serve an Audience of One.**

*"Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you're serving is Christ."
(Apostle Paul, Colossians 3:17,23-24)*

For further study, pick up a copy of our Devotional Guide
in the lobby or go to our website: www.mscwired.org/margin

Morning Star Church
Devotional Guide
Margin: Expectations
August 23-27, 2010

Message Synopsis: Pastor Mike continued our *Margin* series by talking about expectations. Expectations can come at us from outside sources (family, friends, work, society, etc.) or from within ourselves. God also has expectations of us, and these expectations that God has can be quite different from the other expectations we encounter. We can create “Margin” by living as if we have an “Audience of One,” remembering that God’s expectations for us are most important.

“He has told you, O Mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” – Micah 6:8

Day 1 **How Others See Us**
1st Samuel 16:1-13

1. Do you find it at all odd that this passage of Scripture makes it clear that God “does not see as mortals see for they look on the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the heart,” and then also mentions that David was “ruddy, had beautiful eyes, and was handsome?” What, if anything, is the significance of this?
2. How are peoples’ expectations of you influenced by your outward appearance?

Day 2 **Carrying Heavy Burdens**
Matthew 11:25-30

1. Are the heaviest burdens that you carry placed upon you by others or are they self-imposed?
2. How do the expectations that you have for yourself and that others have for you prevent you from living a life that has Margin?

Day 3 Jesus and the Expectations He Faced

Matthew 12:1-8, 38-42, 46-50

1. In the Scriptures for today, what were the various expectations that these people of Jesus' day placed upon Him? What others expectations did He face that you are aware of? How did he live up to these expectations, and in what ways did He fall short?
2. Even Jesus did not meet everyone's expectations for Him. What can we learn from this?

Day 4 Our Expectations of God

Psalm 23

1. What do you expect of God? Has there ever been a time that God did not live up to the expectations that you had? What about an experience where God lived up to and perhaps even exceeded your expectations?
2. What promises of God do we observe in today's Scripture reading? What can we expect of God in light of these promises?

Day 5 God's Expectations for Us

Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 22:34-40

1. What does the Lord require of you? How does this list compare with other expectations that are thrust upon you?
2. Given that we are called to love our neighbors and ourselves, what impact, if any, does this have for the expectations that we put on others (and ourselves)?

Morning Star Church
Small Group Discussion Guide
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Group Icebreaker

We all have expectations in our lives, some self-imposed and some come from others. Share with your group three expectations you have of yourself in the next three months. Now share three expectations others (family, work, friends, and so on) have of you.

Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.
Proverbs 19:21, NIV

1. Pastor Mike suggested three areas where we feel the need to say "YES" to the expectations of others even when we don't want to:
 - a. When we are STUCK and have to fulfill expectations.
 - b. When we are in a PEOPLE-PLEASING mode.
 - c. When loved ones REQUEST IT and we feel like we have to do it.

Explain to your group how you are affected by some of these areas.

2. Morning Star has expectations of people who become members of our church: attend worship at Morning Star regularly; be a part of a small group community; serve in an area of ministry at church; be a committed financial giver; pray for our church; invite your friends to worship with you. Are any of these unreasonable?
3. Mike suggested that we need to distinguish between *unrealistic expectations* and reasonable *responsibilities*. Discuss in your group the difference between the two.
4. It was suggested that we consider these questions as we *assess requests made of us*:
 - a. Is this within God's plan for my life?
 - b. Do I want to own this? Is this my choice?
 - c. Does this represent my best use of resources? (What are the ROIs, Returns on Investment?)
 - d. Would I recommend this action for someone else?

How could you use these suggestions to determine whether you wanted to respond to an expectation or not?

5. Have someone read Matthew 11:28-30. Pastor Mike suggested that when we surrender over to Jesus the control of our decisions, He will bring freedom to us and we can evaluate requests of our life based on His wisdom. This allows us to serve an audience of ONE rather than please a crowd. Discuss how this truth can be applied in our lives.

Prayer Requests