

1 **Margin: Finding Balance for Overloaded Lives**

Finding Emotional Margin
Wednesday Night Bible Study
March 23, 2011

2 **God's Original Intent
(Genesis 2:1-3)**

- God established a pattern for the way life should be when He created the world

- He created the world in 6 days and rested on the 7th

3 **God's Decree**

- God declared that the 7th day was to be holy, set apart.

- God instituted the concept of Sabbath rest at the time of creation

4 **The Need for Margin**

- God was saying don't fill every waking moment with activity, no matter how productive

- Don't extend yourself emotionally and physically beyond certain limits

5 **God's Design**

- One day in seven would be a day of rest...Sabbath rest

- Stop what you are doing and let your batteries recharge

6 Purpose

- To communicate a *biblical philosophy* for bringing balance to overloaded lives

7 The Primary Issue

- Our lives seem to be in an ever increasing inflationary cycle of pain
- We spend most of our waking moments trying to figure out how to make the hurting stop

8 The Diagnosis

- We have lost our reserves and are living lives that are constantly on overload.
- We tend to move one crisis situation to another

9 The Main Culprit

- *The main source of our pain might surprise you...it is progress.*

10 Progress has...

- ...given us unprecedented affluence, education, technology and entertainment but...

11 The ultimate result...

- ...has not been better lives....just busier

lives

- **In a word, progress has produced overload.**

12 **The Evidence**

- **Therapists are busier than they have even been and marriages are failing at an ever increasing rate**
- **Even the marriages that don't fail are joyless shells**

13 **What Happened?**

- **We have not been able to find Sabbath rest. We are living without margin... but just what is margin?**

14 **Margin...**

- **...is having the physical, emotional, financial and time reserves to respond to a God-given opportunities to be a blessing to yourself or someone else.**

15 **Margin is...**

- **...“having breath left at the top of the stairs, money left at the end of the month, sanity left at the end of adolescence”**
- **-----Richard Swenson**

16 **Margin equals...**

■ **Power – Load**

17 **Power is...**

■ *...our available spiritual, emotional, physical, financial and time resources*

18 **Load is...**

■ *...the demands that are made on our personal lives: our expectations, emotional hang-ups, relationship challenges, responsibilities, and financial obligations*

19 **Margin...**

■ ...is the amount of resources that we allow for beyond that which is needed. It is the leeway between our load and our limits.

20 **Observations**

■ We are living “marginless” lives because we don’t have a sense of when enough is enough. We cannot or will not be satisfied

21 **Philippians 4:11-12**

- ¹¹Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.
- ¹²I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

22 **Four Areas**

- **Emotional margin**
- **Physical margin**
- **Financial margin**
- **Time margin**

23 **Emotional Overload...**

- **...comes from unrealistic expectations, unreasonable deadlines, uncontrollable anxiety among other things**

24 **When we over...**

- **...extend ourselves, we have nothing left to respond to emergencies and unexpected circumstances**

25 **We then become...**

- **...defensive about our overload because we have nothing left to give. Since we have nothing left to give, we tend to tune out the need.**

26 **The Skin Analogy**

- **Our skin is designed to be a physical boundary that keeps certain things in and certain things out. It also**

allows necessary interchanges between our outside environment and our bodies

27 **Our Emotional Skin...**

- ...functions in much the same way. It allows us to feel things but shields us for feeling too much.

28 **Some people are...**

- ...said to be “thin-skinned” and others “thick-skinned”

29 **Whether we are...**

- ...said to be thick or thin skinned refers to our relative sensitivity to people and to circumstances....it is a matter of our feelings.

30 **Thick-skinned...**

- ...people tend to be somewhat insensitive to the feelings of others, while thin-skinned people can be overly sensitive

31 **We have to feel...**

- ...but it is dangerous for us to feel too much. We cannot be ruled by our feelings. A well developed emotional skin (boundary) is the key to regulating our feelings.

32 **The more...**

- ...effectively we can find a balance between being thick-skinned and being thin-skinned, the more emotional margin we will have in our lives.

33 **The Emotional Bank Account...**

- ...functions very much like a regular bank account. The more deposits you make, the better. Too many withdrawals eliminates margin creating the possibility of an overdraft.

34 **Prescription for...**

- ...restoring emotional margin

35 **Social Support**

- A nurturing system of social support is an excellent way for replenishing depleted emotional energy reserves

36 **Reconcile Broken Relationships**

- It helps to bring God close through our brokenness and it helps us accept God's grace through our humility

37 **Serve One Another**

- We do ourselves the most good when we are doing something for others

38 **Rest**

- Weekends and holidays rarely bring rest. We

need quiet, solitude and a chance to do nothing without feeling guilty

39 **Social Support**

- **A nurturing system of social support is an excellent way for replenishing depleted emotional energy reserves**

40 **Laugh**

- **God has given us the gift of laughter because He knew we would need it. Don't be reluctant to use it.**

41 **Cry**

- **Crying can indeed be therapeutic. A good cry lasts 6-7 minutes and can flush away a burdensome load of emotional pollution**

42 **Create Boundaries**

- **It is important to understand that most people are simply not sensitive. They don't even know they are hurting us. We will never regain margin until we learn to respond with sensitivity and with grace, but let our "no" mean "no".**

43 **Laugh**

- **God has given us the gift of laughter because He knew we would need it. Don't be reluctant to use it.**

44 **Envision Better Times**

- **If we believe in and work for something bigger than ourselves (church, family, community), then every expenditure of emotion will have meaning and will be reimbursable.**

45

Offer Thanks

- **We all have a great deal to be thankful for. Gratitude fill us up emotionally. Discontent drains us emotionally. The choice is ours**