



COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY

"Celebrate Life with Margin" Leaders Council Retreat

Session One

- I. Introduction
 - A. Activity #1
How Do We Use Margins? (Appendix, Activity #1)
 - B. Margins all around
 - 1. What if every book had words that ran to the edge of all sides of the page?
 - 2. What if the newspaper had no space, separation, margins between stories?
 - 3. What if nothing separated your living space from neighbors – no walls, no yard?
 - 4. What if cars had no doors? Would you lean to the left while driving, the way you lean on your car door now?
 - 5. What if when you talked with people they moved closer until only one inch from your face – comfortable?
 - 6. Do you want margin in your life?

Lesson #1 - WHO'S WATCHING OUT FOR YOUR MARGINS?

- II. The role of the watchman, Isaiah 21:6-8; Ezekiel 33:1-7
 - A. This message – a word from the watchman
 - B. Worst enemy is one who comes in under radar and catches us unaware
 - C. Personal Illustration

III. Signs of Times

- A. Source- Richard A. Swenson, M.D. Physician, futurist, and author of The Overload Syndrome and Margin – Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives.
- B. Review Material on four slides – signs of the times.
- C. Today's danger
 - 1. progress of past 50 years/unprecedented technological advances
 - 2. illusion that progress saves time when reality shows opposite
 - 3. pace of our schedules
 - 4. need for awareness and control
- D. Linear thinking – Life and Technology slide
 - 1. Chronological life time line vs. technology development flying under, over and around
 - 2. Exponential growth – underestimated effect
- E. Illustration – Rick Moranis Op Ed Piece from New York Times (Appendix, Illustration #1)

IV. The Trap

- A. Chronological Arrogance
 - 1. Believe we are smarter
 - 2. Inventions, change make us wiser, more refined
 - 3. Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8
 - A. God's change agenda = eternal agenda
 - B. Our version of progress vs. God's version
- B. Examples from real life
 - 1. 20,000 pieces of technology have to be figured out in your lifetime
 - 2. Personal illustration of how this is time consuming
 - 3. People are more tired and frazzled than ever (Appendix, illustration #2)
- C. Relationships – the big loser
 - 1. Women in your core groups
 - 2. Leaders
 - 3. Who is watching out for your margin?

Session Two

LESSON #2 - IT'S EITHER MARGIN OR MARGINLESS

I. Activity #2 – Balloon Juggle (Appendix – Activity #2)

II. Defining Margin and Marginless

- A. Margin – space between our load and our limits; amount allowed beyond that which is needed;
 - 1. Reserve for contingencies and unanticipated situations
 - 2. Opposite of overload
- B. Illustration – flashing light
 - 1. Need for warning light when we reach 100%
 - 2. Since doesn't exist we commit to 120%
 - 3. Best scenario is scheduled at 80% with margin for the unexpected
- C. Formula for Margin
Power – Load = Margin (Margin/Marginless slide)
Power = energy, skills, time, training, emotional and physical strength, faith, finances and relational support
Load = work, problems, obligations, commitments, debt, deadlines, interpersonal conflict
- D. Marginless defined – limited or no space between load and limits; no reserve; little or no rest
- E. Illustration – Quote from Richard Swenson (Appendix, Illustration #3)

III. The Good Old Days

- A. History = more margin
 - 1. no TVs, phones, little travel, weekly rather than daily paper, no 24 hour media coverage, no internet
 - 2. churches and communities – few programs, just relationships
 - 3. no electricity – sleep came at dark
- B. Today – more convenience should equal more time
 - 1. Multi-tasking, little listening
 - 2. Not a requirement, a choice
 - 3. Illustration Peggy Noonan, Wall Street Journal (Appendix, Illustration #4)

IV. The Case for Margin

- A. Old Ecuadorian proverb "everything takes longer than it does".
- B. Plan for the unexpected
- C. Learn to say "no"

V. Activity #3 Margin/Marginless Statements (Appendix, Activity #3)

Session Three

LESSON #3 - WAS JESUS EVER IN A HURRY?

I. Busy or Speedy Illustration (Appendix, Illustration #5)

II. If Jesus were on earth today....

Would he carry a blackberry; consult it before making commitments; make notes on it for follow-up?

Would he postpone a healing because he was late for lunch at Martha and Mary's?

Would he have worn a watch?

What if someone's cell phone rang while He was teaching?

Would he have carried a beeper for emergencies?

Would he have taken a call during the last supper?

III. The message from Jesus

A. Time urgency conspicuously absent

B. The concept of passing by

1. Mark 15:21

2. Luke 18:35-43

3. Luke 19:1

4. John 1:3

C. Bumper sticker illustration (Appendix, Illustration #6)

Session Four

LESSON #4 - SET YOUR MARGINS

- I. Would You Rather.... Activity (Appendix, Activity #4)
- II. God's authorization for margin
 - A. What does God honor – faithfulness or productivity?
Availability or busyness?
 - B. God invented time and reserves the right to set the rules for its use
 - C. Matthew 11:28-30 (add personal illustration if possible)
 - D. Isaiah 32:17-18
- III. Steps to Margin (refer to slide)
 - Save the spaces in life for what really matters
 - Be intentional James 1:22
 - Say no to non-priorities Titus 2:11-13
 - Tame TV and technology
 - Periodically disconnect; control interruptions
 - Nourish relationships Proverbs 4:9-12
 - Stop the hustle, Slow the pace Matthew 6:31-34
 - Use the gift God gives for enjoyment (free three)
 - Define and defend your boundaries
 - Celebrate your margins Psalm 71:14-23
- IV. Conclusion
 - Inside and Outside the Margin Activity (Appendix, Activity #5)