

1. Lord willing and he doesn't change my mind, we are going to finish our series this morning about **Margin**.
2. Margin is the space around the edges of a page or document that keep all the letters and words and phrases from running together.
3. Margin is the space that we need in our lives so that life doesn't get out of control.
4. And I think most of us would admit that life can very easily feel out of control at times.
5. Having margin in our lives doesn't mean that we are in control of everything, and we can determine every outcome, but having margin does allow us the space to choose what we will allow to influence us.
6. It gives us the space to say no to those things that are not the best, and yes to the things that bring us life.
7. In week one we saw several examples of God establishing the principle of margin all throughout the bible.
8. In week two we discovered that one of the reasons margin is so vital is that the demands on our time can be overwhelming.
9. Especially when you consider that most of us have this thing called a cell phone that blurs the lines between rest and work and church and family.
10. But Jesus understands. His time was constantly in demand, so his solution was to establish space and time where he could get away and be with his father and his disciples.
11. Last week we talked about margin as it relates to our finances.
12. We live in a world system that doesn't want us to have space when it comes to our money.
13. The Lord's plan for margin in our finances is to want first, count the cost second, and then get third.
14. **Luke 14:28-30** "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? 29 For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, 30 saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'" (NIV)
15. When we count the cost before we get or buy, it allows us some really great margin.
16. We can make a decision based on truth rather than emotion.

17. It allows us to avoid credit which the bible calls a form of slavery.
18. We can count the cost of not only getting the thing but keeping and maintaining the thing.
19. And it allows us to plan for emergencies by putting money aside first, rather than every difficulty being a reason to panic.
20. This morning I'm going to ask you to consider what kind of margin you have in your life as it relates to your relationships.
21. In Matthew 22, one of the experts in the law was looking for a way to test Jesus and try and catch him in some error, so he asked Jesus a question.

TEXT: **Matthew 22:36-40** "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (NIV)

TITLE: **Margin in Relationships.**

INTRO:

1. Lord. Which is the greatest commandment? And as only Jesus can do, he essentially gave three commandments that have great significance.
2. Yes, the command was to love. Love God. Love others. But in order to love others it is necessary to love yourself first.
3. So, the command was to love. Said another way. **The command was to be in love relationship with God, with ourselves, and with others.**
4. The greatest commands, the ones that everything else in the bible hinges on has to do with loving relationships.
5. So it could come as no surprise that if everything hinges on love relationships that the enemy will do everything in his power to damage and destroy relationships every chance he gets.
6. Satan hates for us to be in love relationship with God, ourselves, and with others.

7. So rather than allowing us to have margin in those relationships. The space to relate to and enjoy one another, the enemy will look for every opportunity to introduce friction into those relationships.
8. Have you ever heard or said the following statement? They just rub me the wrong way.
9. Rather than margin. Space and freedom and room to relate and grow and love, there is tension and friction and conflict.
10. How many are still with me?
11. Let me be clear before we move on. I am not suggesting that all relationship conflicts can be solved by practicing margin in those relationships, but I am saying that probably very little conflict can be resolved without intentional margin or space created on our part that places priority on, and gives space to that relationship.
12. I am at a stage in life where I have discovered that the most valuable things in life are not things at all.
13. What is of most value to me are the relationships that I have.
14. My relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. My relationship with my family. And my relationship with other believers and the lost. In that order.
15. No amount of money or stuff can come close to the fulfillment I enjoy when I am in healthy, loving relationship with God my father, my family, and the family of God.
16. But just because those relationships hold high value for me doesn't mean I am necessarily good at creating the proper space or margin that is needed in order for those relationships to continue to grow.
17. In truth, sometimes I am downright terrible at creating the proper margin or space needed to invest in those relationships.
18. But here's the thing. I don't think I am alone. I believe all of us are susceptible to struggling with cultivating the proper margin in our relationships.
19. I know there were several people in the bible that struggled.
20. One of those people was king David in the Old Testament.

21. As we will see in just a moment, David seemed to do well at creating space or margin in his relationships with God and with other believers, but he did a pretty crummy job at creating margin for his family.
22. Let's dive in.

Margin with the Lord.

1. What do we mean margin with the Lord. Creating Margin in our relationship with the Lord involves setting aside time and space for us to interact with him and him to interact with us.
2. I shared last week about the Jesus chair. Some one told me they had a Jesus chair in their home. I was intrigued. I wanted to know more.
3. The Jesus chair is a chair that is out of the way in a place that allows that person to spend time reading the word, praying, and meditating and hearing from the Lord.
4. We see examples of David setting aside time and space, margin, to read the word, pray, meditate, and worship.
5. **The Word.** Psalm 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. (NIV)
6. **Prayer.** Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. (NIV)
7. **Meditation.** Psalm 1:1-2 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, 2 but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. (NIV)
8. **Worship.** Psalm 42:2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? (NIV)
9. David was really good at saying no to other things so he could say yes to spending time with The Lord.
10. David may have been good at it. Sometimes I am not.
11. I have learned that the only way for me to stay healthy spiritually is I have to feed myself and I have to spend time with the Lord that is just for me, that has nothing to do with being a pastor.
12. But guess where I'm tempted to get lax when the demands of life start tugging? You guessed it. The margin that I need with the Lord.
13. Two things before I move on.

14. First, I know you probably already know you need margin in your walk with the Lord. That you need to intentionally set aside space and time with Him so your relationship can be healthy.
15. Second, the purpose for talking about it is not to lay a guilt trip on anyone.
16. Turn to your neighbor and say, this is a no guilt zone.
17. The purpose of our talking about it is so that we can dispel the lie that, everybody else does great at this and I am the only one who struggles. Bologna. That is a lie of the enemy to keep us bound in condemnation.
18. A part of our human condition is that the cares of this life have the tendency to choke out the margin we need with the Lord unless we are intentional about setting aside space and time for him and him only.

Margin with family.

1. If David did a great job creating margin with the Lord, the scripture makes it clear that he did a pretty poor job of creating margin with his family.
2. In 1 Kings chapter 1, we see great insight into how David related to, or in this case didn't relate to one of his sons.
3. David is near the point of death. He has made it clear that his Son Solomon will become king when he dies.
4. But David is frail and in poor health, so his fourth son Adonijah tries to take advantage of the situation by making himself king in rebellion toward his father.
5. 1 Kings 1:6 gives great insight as to why Adonijah did such a thing.
6. **1 Kings 1:5-6** Now Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, put himself forward and said, "I will be king." So he got chariots and horses ready, with fifty men to run ahead of him. **6** (His father had never rebuked him by asking, "Why do you behave as you do?") (NIV)
7. David, for all his love for the Lord and all of the time he created to spend time with God, didn't create hardly any margin or space to be a father to Adonijah.
8. Adonijah was now an adult, and David had never even once had a conversation with him about his behavior.

9. No wonder Adonijah rebelled. Well, if you don't have any time for me daddy David, then I am going to push back against you.
10. David had not taken the time and space to develop a relationship with Adonijah.
11. Why not? I would guess it had to do with all the demands in David's life to be the king.
12. Guess what. We are all susceptible to giving in to the demands of life and leaving very little margin, time, or space for our families.
13. Pastor Wayne Cordero, who wrote the book *Leading on Empty*, recounted that after suffering a severe season of burnout, became aware that one of the reasons he was so depleted was because he had not invested in the support system he so desperately needed, his family.
14. He said, I would go be a pastor and be everything else to everybody else, and I would come home exhausted and empty, and I hadn't saved anything for my family.
15. I was giving everyone else my best, and giving my family leftovers.
16. I am here to confess. Been there, done that, got the t-shirt.
17. The enemy loves it when we are so consumed with other things, often times good things, that we don't give our families the margin and the space needed to build healthy, life-giving relationships.

Margin and other believers.

1. Again, this was an area where King David seemed to do well.
2. One of my favorite verses in the bible is this one.
3. **1 Chronicles 27:33** Ahithophel was the royal adviser. Hushai the Arkite was the king's friend. (NLT)
4. In listing the important people in his kingdom and in his life, David made it know that there were people who were close to him.
5. David recognized his need for close relationship with other men of like mind and like faith.
6. Ahithophel was an advisor. David had given him permission to speak to things concerning the kingdom.

7. Hushai was the king's friend. They have listed here tribal leaders. Overseers of supplies and military leaders. And included in this list was a guy who had the distinction of being the king's friend.
8. What does that tell us about the importance of being in close relationship with people who can just love us for who we are?
9. And yet we live in a world where our definition of a friend has become one of a thousand "friends" on social media who we don't even know, and sometimes don't even like.
10. Or we end up knowing more about that "friend" on social media than we do about our next-door neighbor or the person who works next to us.
11. If David needed a friend, I'm pretty sure you and I need friends. Close relationships with other believers who can fulfill a vital role in our lives.
12. Proverbs 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend. (NLT)
13. Margin in our relationships.
14. With the Lord.
15. With our families.
16. And with other believers.
17. Again, I want to reiterate. This is a guilt free zone this morning.
18. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
19. Let's cast off condemnation for not being perfect at having margin in our relationships, and let's move into some encouragement.
20. Would anybody here this morning like some encouragement?

Conclusion:

1. One of the deceitful tactics of the enemy is he loves to entice us to believe the lie that God and others really don't want to be in relationship with us.
2. He loves to spew out what I call mind garbage.
3. God doesn't love you. He can't forgive you. He is turned off by all the mistakes and failures in your past and present.

4. Your family and your brothers and sisters in Christ really don't want to know the real you.
5. If they knew the real you, they would reject you. If they knew what you were really like they would judge you.
6. You don't want to get close to them, stay at arm's length.
7. When you see a brother or sister in Christ put on a big smile and pretend everything is ok.
8. After all. They have a big smile, and it looks like everything is just great in their life.
9. The only problem is it is all a lie.
10. Because the enemy knows if you and I attempt to get everything else right, but we fail at making the time and space for deep, meaningful relationships with God, with our families, and other believers, then we have missed the whole point.
11. **Matthew 22:36-40** "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (NIV)
12. Everything that is of value hinges on loving relationships.
13. We need to be loved by God and we need to love God.
14. We need to love ourselves, and we need others to love us.
15. We need to love others, and they need to be loved by us.
16. We need one another.
17. Prayer.
18. Make groups of 4 or 5 people.
19. Take a moment and thank God for those around you.
20. Pray for them that the Holy Spirit will give them the strength to say no to less important things, and yes to creating margin for relationships.