

1. Last week we finished our series about the subject of contentment.
2. **1 Timothy 6:6-8** Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. **7** After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. **8** So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. (NLT)
3. So, pursuing godliness, seeking to be more like Jesus every day is absolutely wonderful, and it is an aim that all of us should have.
4. And yet, seeking godliness alone is not complete. When we seek godliness, and we add with that godliness contentment with what we have and where the Lord has us, the KJV & NIV says great gain, and the NLT says great wealth.
5. I truly believe wealthy people are not the ones who have the most, wealthy people are those who are content with what they have.
6. This morning we are going to consider the cousin of contentment. Meaning this next principle is closely related to contentment.
7. The one word that I want us to use to kind of focus our attention is the word **"Margin."**
8. Before we dig deeper into what margin is, I will tell you that you will not find the word margin in the bible.
9. To the best of my knowledge, no version or translation of the bible uses the word margin. However, the principle that the word margin represents is literally seen from cover to cover.
10. When you look at any document. Read any story. Read in your bible, scan an article on the internet, margin is the space around the edges of the page. (hand out illustrations)
11. Margin is the space on the outer edges of the page.
12. Along with margin there is space between words. Space between sentences. Space between paragraphs, and space between each line.
13. The margin or the space makes it easier for us to separate letters, words, thoughts, and ideas, and to then make sense of what we are reading.
14. Chances are you have never seen an example of the illustration on the other side of the page.
15. This is what a page looks like without margin. This is also what a page looks like without any of the other spaces.

16. Without margin, it is more difficult to distinguish between letters, words, and thoughts.
17. Without margin or space everything runs together. And the page is filled edge to edge.
18. When I created this page for the illustration and I gave it to April to help me make copies, the look on her face was priceless.
19. It was exactly what I was hoping for. That page without margin or space, along with how the letters line diagonally down the page are a little bit difficult to look at.
20. I believe it is not a stretch to say that the margin and the space on the page is just as important as the letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs, and the margin and space is just as important as the message contained in them.
21. Even though in the margin, nothing is happening, and nothing is being said.
22. Even though in the spaces, there is an absence of activity, the margin and the space is highly necessary.
23. Now, let's apply that to your lives.
24. God, the giver of all good gifts, and Jesus, through whom comes a blessed life, never intended our life to be like the page with no margin and space.
25. You are valuable. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. God knew you and he loved you before you ever entered the world.
26. And he has given you a life to live that he longs to fill with blessing and hope and strength and peace, in spite of all of the things in this world that work to rob us of those blessings.
27. He has given you a life and a calling that he would love to use to bring himself glory, to build his kingdom, and to make an eternal difference in the lives of those who come in contact with you.
28. He has given you a life in which he would like to supernaturally show up and show out from time to time. He literally wants to blow your mind with how awesome he is and how much he loves you.

29. He has given you a life that has purpose, and once you find that purpose and begin to live that purpose it brings such fulfillment that it is hard to put into words.
30. And all of that activity and all of that stuff and all these wonderful blessings, as exciting as they are don't have nearly as much meaning when you live a life without margin. Without space.
31. Just like the margin and the space on the page serve to make what is written more meaningful, when we can identify and accept the margin and the space God has created us to live with, it too helps bring meaning.
32. Margin.
33. I believe if we will slow down and observe our world and how people live, we will discover that many people are trying to live life without margin and space.
34. Or at least too little margin and space.
35. Stress, anxiety, never ending activity, never ending communication, never ending demands on our time and our talents and our resources.
36. And because of the stresses of it all there are addictions and in some case sickness. Relationships are broken and families are torn apart.
37. And I know that there are many factors that contribute to that reality, but running around like chickens with our heads cut off. Stressed out. Stretched thin with no room to breathe isn't making anything better. It is probably making things worse.
38. I think we need to come back to the Godly principle of margin. Space.
39. What I'd like to do for the next several minutes is I would like to share several scriptures from all over the bible that give us examples of margin in our life.

Genesis 2:1-3 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. 2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

1. Genesis chapter one records the creation of the earth and everything in it.
2. Chapter one is a flurry of activity. In the description of the creation we are given a measure of time called days and another one called weeks.
3. For 6 days God is creating, creating, creating, and creating some more, but on the seventh day he rested from all his work. (Margin. Space.)
4. And then he did something very interesting. Verse 3 says that God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.
5. That word holy means sacred, consecrated, hallowed and divine.
6. Now I have believed much of my life that God's creating of the world is absolutely miraculous. I sometimes get lost just thinking about it.
7. But God made it clear that the seventh day, the day he did absolutely nothing but rest, was just as valuable and just as important. He made it holy.
8. Margin. But margin didn't come just one day a week. God set up the principle of margin each day.

Luke 8:22-24 One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out. **23** As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. **24** The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!" He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm.

1. This passage and this story is sandwiched right between a season in Jesus' life where crowds of people surrounded him. He was healing. He was casting out demons. He was teaching. Performing miracles. It was a flurry of activity.
2. But in the midst of all this activity, Jesus gets on a boat, and he falls asleep. (Margin. Space)
3. And if it had not been for the disciples waking him up, he probably would have slept right through a nasty storm that threatened to capsize the boat.

4. But here's the thing. I am convinced that this was not the only time in Jesus' life that he slept. I tend to believe that he slept some each and every day.
5. Again we see God, through his son Jesus separating the work and the activity and the stuff of life by inserting this space where he did absolutely nothing.
6. And it was the sleep, the doing nothing, that gave him some of the strength he needed the next day to perform miracles and be the savior of the world.
7. Margin. Space.

Leviticus 19:9-10 "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. **10** Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God.

1. So essentially, in this farming society, when they gathered the harvest out of the field, God commanded them to not reap all the way to the very edges of the field, and to not go back and pick up the kernels of corn or wheat that accidentally fell to the ground.
2. They were to leave them for the poor.
3. Can you picture the field in your mind with the edges of the field still full of crop? It was a lot like the piece of paper that has the margins.
4. He instructed them to do essentially the same thing when they harvested grapes. Don't go over the grape vines twice and don't go back through and pick up those grapes that accidently fall to the ground.
5. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner.
6. We will look at this deeper at another time. But the command to harvest this way was not just for the benefit of the poor or the foreigner.
7. It was also for the benefit of the farmer. God was essentially saying, don't count on every square inch of field providing you the food you need. Calculate that in when you plant, so that it won't be necessary to scrounge around on your hands and knees just to get enough food to feed your family.

8. This command was so important that God repeated it again 4 chapters later. **Leviticus 23:22** "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the LORD your God."
9. Did you notice in both passages that God repeats. I am the Lord your God. In other words, God is saying. Hey. This is important. Don't take it lightly.
10. **How important was it?**
11. It was so important that in the book of Ruth, if a landowner by the name of Boaz, had not obeyed this command to not harvest all the way to the edge of the field, then the young widow Ruth would not have been able to gather grain in Boaz' field and the two wouldn't have met.
12. If the two hadn't met, Boaz wouldn't have had the opportunity to redeem the life of Ruth, and they wouldn't have been married.
13. And if they hadn't married, then a man by the name of Obed wouldn't have been born. His son Jesse wouldn't have been born.
14. And his son David wouldn't have been born. This David became the king of all Israel, and it was through the lineage of David the Jesus himself descended.
15. How important was it? It was so important that it played a part in the revealing of the savior of the world.
16. How many are still with me and am I making any sense?
17. It's almost as if the Lord was saying to the children of Israel. Hey. I want to get your attention.
18. Can I be so bold as to say? The Lord is speaking to someone (in person, online) and he is saying hey. I really want to grab your attention.
19. Because there is something better than the hamster wheel many in our world live on.
20. Matthew 7:11 tells us that God is a God of good gifts.
21. When God our father tells us to live with margin, it is because he wants to bless us and give us something better.
22. So, I want to close this morning by identifying 3 things that happen when we attempt to live life without enough margin.

Problems become emergencies.

1. There is a little phrase that uses the word margin. That phrase is margin for error.
2. Have you ever heard anyone say, there is no margin for error? Basically what they are saying is, there isn't any room for anything to go wrong. If something goes wrong, we are in big trouble.
3. But here's the thing. Jesus assured us emphatically in John 16:33 that we will have trouble.
4. So the reality is, no matter how hard we try, we can not and never will be able to prevent things from going wrong.
5. So the solution is to leave margin for error. Leave room for things to go wrong.
6. If we live a life with proper margin, then when something goes wrong, though it will be highly unpleasant, I will not be the end of the world.
7. But if we live a life without proper margin. If every moment of every minute of every hour of every day is jam packed with activity and stuff and responsibility.
8. If every dollar and every resource is spent and all used up.
9. If every ounce of energy is depleted on a consistent basis, then pretty quickly a problem turns into an emergency.
10. And nobody can live in emergency mode for very long without breaking down, mentally, physically, spiritually, or emotionally.
11. Can I get a witness this morning?
12. Without enough margin in life, life is just one emergency after another.
13. Secondly, without enough margin...

Relationships suffer.

1. Here is what I have found to happen in my own life when I don't leave enough margin.
2. And yes. I struggle sometimes with this principle of margin.
3. When I am not leaving sufficient margin in my life, my relationship with the Lord becomes strained.

4. Because when I don't have enough margin, usually my time spent connecting to God by reading his word, praying, and meditating on His truth begins to slip.
5. And when I'm not leaving enough margin in my life, my relationships with the people closest to me, especially my wife become strained.
6. Because healthy relationships don't just happen. They have to be invested in. But if I have spent myself everywhere else then it's pretty hard for me to bring much of value home to my wife.
7. And finally...a life lived without enough margin...

Tends to separate us from God's divine involvement in our lives.

Conclusion:

1. I must confess, I can't take credit for this last thought. A great brother in the Lord pointed it out to me.
2. Do you remember the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke chapter 10?
3. Without margin in the life of the Samaritan, the man who fell among thieves, was beaten and left for dead, would have never experienced restored health.
4. If the good Samaritan had not had a healthy dose of margin in his life, the parable probably would have gone like this.
5. A man was going along, was attacked by robbers, and was left for dead.
6. Along came a priest (Pastor), but he moved to the other side of the road and kept on going.
7. Then along came a Levite (deacon), but when he saw the man, he too passed on the other side.
8. And finally, along comes a good Samaritan. This Samaritan really had good intentions and he really wanted to do something to help the man, but he didn't have enough time.
9. He was on his way to Jericho to conduct business, his day was packed from sunup to sundown and there just wasn't any room in his schedule to help the man.

10. And besides that, helping the man would have required a little bit of money.
11. Now. The Good Samaritan did ok in his business, but he was always stretching his budget to the limit, and sometimes he was even going over budget with credit.
12. But going over budget didn't normally happen because of necessities. It happened because he wanted the latest, greatest stuff.
13. After all, everybody else is getting it.
14. And so, with no time and not enough money, the Samaritan felt bad, but what could he do?
15. And so he kept on his way.
16. What happened to the poor man in the ditch? Who knows. Surely somebody came along and helped him.
17. You see the Lord wants to use us. He wants to show up in our lives and bless us, but so many times he does that through others.
18. He wants to use us to bless others and he wants to use others to bless us.
19. But if no one has any margin. Or space left in their life. We all miss out on the blessings.
20. And let's be real. We all struggle from time to time with margin.
21. I know I do.
22. And yet here is our loving father, always reaching out to us.
23. All week this verse has just washed over me.
24. **Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."**
25. Would you join me in doing that this morning? Coming to him?
26. Do you need rest for your soul? There's no shame in admitting that. Just the opposite. There is wisdom in admitting that we need rest.
27. I want us to pray for one another.
28. If you need some rest, raise your hand.
29. Those around them, would you move out and pray for them?