

1. We began a series last week about the subject of **margin**.
2. I told you that you will not find the word margin in the bible, but you will find the principle of margin all throughout the bible.
3. If you will look at the insert in your bulletin, you will find an illustration of margin.
4. Margin is the space around the edges of the page. There is nothing going on in the space. Unlike the words and sentences and paragraphs on the rest of the page, the space is just space.
5. But if you look at the other side, we discover that the space is highly important.
6. Without the margin or space, everything runs together. The words and ideas are more difficult to understand when there is no margin.
7. In the same way, a life lived without margin or without space can be extremely difficult to navigate. A life without margin is a life of stress, struggle, and strife.
8. Now. We cannot avoid stress and struggle and strife all together, but we can minimize their affects on our life when we can identify and accept the margin and the space God has created us to live with.
9. This week we are going to consider the first of three areas of our life where we would be wise to practice margin.

**TITLE: Time**

1. I like to watch live sporting events and along with that comes commercials.
2. I generally tend to tune the commercials out, but recently I was intrigued by a particular commercial.
3. It is a commercial that features a rapper by the name of Snoop Dog, and the commercial is about beer.
4. Just for clarification, I don't listen to rap, and I do not drink beer, so I am not advocating for either.
5. But the message of this commercial was absolutely profound.
6. Snoop Dog says, if time is money. Most people tend to be paid for working units of time. Hours, days, weeks, months.
7. **If time is money, don't you think the real question should be how we spend it?**

8. We are probably more likely to think about how we spend our money, and potentially less likely to think about how we spend our time.
9. So for a few minutes this morning I am going to ask you to consider how you spend your time.
10. Time, or more specifically the demands on our time, is an area of life that requires intentional margin or space in order to keep from being overwhelming.
11. I gave the illustration last week of the hamster on the wheel. Running, running, running, but never seeming to get very far.
12. Without the proper margin or space as it concerns the demands on our time, we can certainly begin to feel like that hamster. We can begin to feel out of control. As if the demands of life and the stuff of life are in charge, and we are just along for the ride.
13. But I want to share with you a wonderful blessing that the Lord has made available to us through the power of the Holy Spirit.
14. When we are living a life guided by the spirit, one of the byproducts of that spirit lead life is self-control.
15. **Galatians 5:22-23** But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! (NLT)
16. When living a spirit lead life, the Holy Spirit guides us in such a way that life is not out of control, life is under control.
17. The holy Spirit empowers to be in control of ourselves, rather than everything and everyone else being in control of us.
18. Now. That is the ideal. That is what a perfect, spirit lead life looks like.
19. But the reality is none of us are perfect, and we don't live in a perfect world. We are fallen beings who live in a fallen world.
20. We live in a world where the demands on our time and energy are never ending.
21. We could make a list of all the things that constantly vie for our time, except I am finding that different seasons of life have different demands.

22. A young parent or family with children will probably be pulled by working, paying the bills, raising kids, shuffling kids to activities, trying to have a healthy marriage. And then you add church and serving and living for the Lord.
23. Whereas an older person has a whole different set of demands.
24. I once heard an elder make the statement that if feels like all they do is go to the doctor and go out to eat, and there isn't much time for anything else.
25. One of the things I think most of us have in common is this thing called a cell phone.
26. I'm not sure there has ever been a single device that while helping us get so many things done, at the same time makes us accessible to more demands from more people than ever before.
27. I am guilty at times of living a life in which it seems I am at the mercy of my cell phone.
28. As much as I try and put boundaries in place and try to practice proper margin, this little device seems to blur the lines between work and family and play almost constantly.
29. The other day I sent my first text of the day at 5:30 am, and I received the last text of the day at 10:15 pm.
30. And it seems as though no matter who it is or what it's about, everything is urgent. Or at least I feel like it's urgent.
31. So, what are we to do? The bible tells us that through the power of the Holy Spirit we can have a fruitful life of self-control, and yet we live in a fallen world that seems continually out of control.
32. I believe the best thing we can do is look to the perfect example of what it looks like to practice having proper margin in the area of how we spend our time.
33. And the perfect example is Jesus.

### **Jesus understands the demands on your time.**

1. If anyone ever in the history of the world understands the modern day demands on our time it is Jesus.

2. Even though he never had a cell phone, the lines between work and friends and family and ministry were continually being stretched into a blur.
3. In John chapter 2 Jesus performs his very first miracle of turning water into wine. But he really didn't want to. He did so at the urging of his mother. **John 2:4** "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." (NLT)
4. He just wanted to attend a wedding, but he was called into service about something he didn't think was any of his business.
5. In **Luke chapter 5** Jesus was in a house teaching and performing miracles, which was a drain on his energy. But in the crowd that day were some pharisees who were looking for opportunities to trip him up. Which was a drain on his energy.
6. And in the middle of the lesson, 4 men bust through the roof of the house and let down their paralyzed friend so Jesus could heal him.
7. Jesus does heal the man, but then the pharisees start inwardly questioning his authority as if to say, well who do you think you are to forgive sin.
8. I'm tired just thinking about it.
9. In **Mark chapter 5** Jesus was surrounded by a crowd of needy people, when a man named Jairus fell at Jesus feet begging him to heal his sick daughter.
10. Jesus agrees to go with him, but on the way a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years touched his robe, which caused healing power to be released from him and captured his attention.
11. The woman is healed, but as Jesus starts again toward the house of Jairus, someone runs up and says, it's too late. The little girl has died.
12. Undeterred, Jesus goes to the house anyway and raises the little girl from the dead.
13. I don't know about you, but I have a headache just thinking about all of that.

14. In **John chapter 6**, Jesus is surrounded by a great crowd on one side of the lake. He sends his disciples ahead in a boat to the other side of the lake, and he walks on the water toward them in the middle of the night.
15. When they arrive on the other shore, the crowds of people have arrived ahead of them, and Jesus exposes their motives.
16. You're not following me because you want to know the truth, you are following me because I fed you earlier and you want more food.
17. Everywhere Jesus turned there was need, and urgency, and there was commotion.
18. Jesus truly understands what it is like to be pulled in a million directions at break-neck speed from morning till night.
19. But he not only understands the experience of all the demands on our time, he also understands the feelings of feeling like you are being pulled apart at the seams.
20. Paul described Jesus this way. **Hebrews 4:15** For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet without sin.* (KJV)
21. That word infirmities has also been described as weakness. Jesus not only understands our weaknesses, but he also understand the feelings of our weaknesses.
22. So if you are here today and you feel like you are being pulled apart at the seams by all the demands on your life, recognize there is a wonderful savior who knows exactly what you are going through, and he feels it with you.
23. But also recognize that Jesus doesn't want you to stay in that out-of-control state. He has given us an example of what to do with it all.
24. And I has everything to do with margin or space.
25. How did Jesus deal with all of the demands on his time and energy?

**He regularly said no to the urgent and yes to margin.**

1. Everybody say the word no.
2. Short no.
3. Loud no.

4. Long no.
5. Jesus, being fully God and at the same time fully human understood that no one can survive that kind of pace without some margin.
6. What did his margin consist of?
7. **Mark 1:35** Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. (NIV)
8. Jesus intentionally chose a time where he could be away from everyone and spend time with his father. Margin.
9. After healing a man's withered hand he did this in **Luke 6:12** One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. (NIV)
10. Without a doubt, prayer was a significant part of Jesus margin, but notice that this prayer took place as Jesus disconnected from those around him for a specific period of time.
11. This time it was more than just some time in the morning, it was all night.
12. After he fed the 5,000 Jesus did this in **Matthew 14:23** After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, (NIV)
13. Again we see the element of prayer, but Matthew makes it very clear that Jesus disconnected from everyone for a while and that he was alone.
14. **Mark 6:31-32** Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." 32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. (NIV)
15. They got away from the crowd. They went to a quiet place. They went to a solitary place where they could be left alone. And they ate a meal so as to renew their strength and rest.
16. Margin. Space.
17. How did Jesus deal with the rat race going around him? At specific times he purposefully and intentionally said no to the hamster wheel, and said yes to time and space that would allow him to spend time with his father and to be renewed.
18. I know you know this, but **if Jesus needed margin, then you need margin.**

19. How can you and I practice margin? At specific, intentional times, turn off the phone, tv, computer, or whatever else it is that distracts you, and get alone in a quiet place where you can be with the Lord and get renewed.
20. Don't eat on the run all the time. Sometimes sit down and have a meal together with others. In the quiet. No electronic devices at the table.
21. Even if it is bologna sandwiches. Say no to everything else and sit down.
22. You will probably have to say no to your kids sometimes. No, we can't run all over the country every night of the week. No, you can't play every sport or be involved in every activity, you are going to have to choose one or the other so that we have time to rest as a family.
23. You are probably going to have to say no to some people who only need you when they want something. People who always seem to live in emergency mode.
24. You may have to adopt the saying I read once, **Failure to plan on your part, doesn't necessarily constitute an emergency on my part.**
25. Oh by the way. Did I mention that it probably won't be easy to do these things and practice margin? Especially if you have been in the habit of not practicing margin?
26. I am convinced that saying no to the crowds so he could get away and take care of himself was not easy for Jesus.
27. He loved these people. He had come to the earth to seek and save the lost. And many of these people were lost.
28. I believe that every time he decided to take a break, get away, and establish some margin, there was a spiritual battle going on.
29. I believe with all my heart the enemy tried to make him feel guilty for getting away from the very people he came to save.
30. But Jesus knew that he only had so much to give. And when he was out, he had to take care of himself to get renewed so he could give some more.
31. And finally. When establishing margin with our time, we need to know that...

## God will not create margin for us.

1. God will for sure help you choose and create margin, but he will not do it for you while you sit passively by.
2. At times I have heard people misquote a passage of scripture. They may be going through a difficult time, and they will try and encourage themselves by saying, well, God says in his word that he will not give us more than we can bear.
3. But actually, it doesn't say God will not give us more than we can bear.
4. What it says is this. **1 Corinthians 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. (NIV)
5. Temptation is one thing. God will not let you be tempted beyond what he is capable of helping you with.
6. But being overwhelmed because we regularly choose not to practice margin in our life is not something God just automatically solves for us.
7. The Lord will help us, but he will not do it for us. We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit.
8. **Matthew 11:28-29** "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. (NIV)
9. Notice our part. In order to get rest we have to move toward him and receive his rest.
10. We have to take his yoke upon us. Meaning, we have to get in stride with the Holy Spirit. Because if we will submit to the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives he will teach us.
11. All along the demanding, time crunched way, the Holy spirit will speak to us and guide us and remind us that we have limits and that we are not superhuman, and that we need to take a break and establish some margin and some space.
12. But he will not override our will. The Lord is gentle and humble in heart. He will not force us to establish margin, but he will be there to help us if we choose to let him.

## Conclusion:

### 1. Margin.

2. So, let's review for a moment.
3. In a perfect world, the fruit of the Holy Spirit working in us will result in self-control. We are in control of life rather than life being in control of us.
4. But we don't live in a perfect world.
5. Jesus understands not only the experience of all the demands, but he understands the feelings of all the demands.
6. And he sets the example for us. To say no to the urgent and yes to the margin and space that we need by turning some things off so that we can tune into the Lord and what he longs to do in our lives.
7. And thirdly, we must cooperate with the Holy Spirit in order to be successful, God will not do it all for us.
8. Pray.
9. Thank the Lord that understands all the demands and the overwhelming feelings of those demands.
10. Ask the Lord to show you what you need to say no to, so you can say yes to the margin you desperately need.
11. Commit to cooperation and obedience as the Holy Spirit helps you.