

CITYWEST CHURCH

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MAINTAINING MARGIN.

“Have the people of Israel build me a holy sanctuary so I can live among them. **9** You must build this Tabernacle and its furnishings exactly according to the pattern I will show you.
Exodus 25:8-9 (NLT)

1. THE SECRET PLACE.

So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8** Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.

James 4:7-8 (NLT)

Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment. **7** For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory. **8** The Lord says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. **9** Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.”

Psalm 32:6-9 (NLT)

James is writing and reminding the people, and us today that you can't let the world lead you and your life, and at the same time live a life after God.

Don't live one way in your margin and another of the rest of your page. Don't let the seemingly bigger part of your life wash away the margin.

You can't change your schedule with life and work as the year ramps up, but you can draw near to God.

2. ITS ALL THE SAME PAGE.

Margin can get us thinking that our time in the Lord doesn't have much bearing on the rest of our lives. Or the smaller margin part of our lives is where God is and where God does his work.

But the truth is margin is important but we must remember it's all part of the same page.

We must remember that it's all connected. Everything is spiritual and we must not limit God's moving in our lives to just the margins.

We must value the margin not as the only place God speaks, but that as we create room in our hearts and lives, God will fill it.

One of Jesus' teachings helps us grasp this:

A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. **18** A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. **19** So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. **20** Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

Matt 7:17-20 (NLT)

A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart.

Matt 12:35 (NLT)

"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us."

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NLT)

3. PHARAOH DOESN'T WANT YOU TO HAVE MARGIN.

In Exodus, Moses goes to the pharaoh and asks for three days in the wilderness to offer sacrifice to God. It doesn't go down well.

"After this presentation to Israel's leaders, Moses and Aaron went and spoke to Pharaoh. They told him, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go so they may hold a festival in my honor in the wilderness." "Is that so?" retorted Pharaoh. "And who is the Lord? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don't know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go." But Aaron and Moses persisted. "The God of the Hebrews has met with us," they declared. "So let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness so we can offer sacrifices to the Lord our God. If we don't, he will kill us with a plague or with the sword." Pharaoh replied, "Moses and Aaron, why are you distracting the people from their tasks? Get back to work! Look, there are many of your people in the land, and you are stopping them from their work."

Exodus 5:1-5 (NLT)

The story continues with Pharaoh doubling down and making their work harder.

So much so the Israelites who were for Moses and what God had said turned on him and said you are a trouble maker.

Don't be surprised that when you try and draw aside the demands of life will rise up.

Pharaoh is dead but the spirit of pharaoh and Egypt is still alive and well today.

Starting things like margin of tithe, rest, reading etc can seem like it makes your life harder but push through. There is a promise land awaiting you, and fellowship with the God of the universe every step of the way.

Connect Group Questions:

- 1. After the series on Margin what are some ways you have or want to create margin in your life?**
- 2. What are some practices that have helped you? (eg bible reading, solitude)**
- 3. How can we encourage one another to start and keep margin in our lives?**