

MARGIN—2 SCHEDULING MARGIN

Alright, if you have your Bibles with you let's open them up to Ephesians, Chapter 5

How many would love to have more time to spend with God? "I'd like to have more time to spend with God." Oh yeah raise them up high, or God might strike you with lightning! In reality, most of us would love to have more time to invest in this important place.

But if the truth were to be known, if you actually had more time, if God just said; "Poof, now there's 25 hours in a day!" It is very unlikely that most of us would actually spend our time doing those important things.

The reality is, culture just has a way of overwhelming whatever margin we have. Just look at the last time you had a day off, chances are pretty good that you didn't spend eight glorious hours in God's presence.

Chances are pretty good what you did is you ran errands, or you caught up on chores, or you vegged in front of the TV, or you caught up on some sleep. Chances are there were many things that felt urgent to you that overwhelmed what you say is truly important.

It's just kind of way life is. It's a little bit like this; I don't know if any of you have ever driven a car whose wheels were out of alignment. The car just naturally pulls to one side, and if you don't consistently fight it, the pull will take you off-center to the side. In reality, all of us, we are out of alignment by nature to God. By nature, we are sinners and the pull is away from God, toward this culture. In reality, culture pulls us off-center into a margin-less lifestyle.

• **MARGIN: THE AMOUNT AVAILABLE BEYOND WHAT IS NECESSARY. What U Have! -VS- What U Need!**

In our scheduling lives, margin would be having more than enough time. It would be having extra time.

It would be having time to help someone who is in need without wiggling out!

Margin would be having time to listen to our children and not working in our minds.

Margin would be having time to be interrupted and be glad about it, "I'm so glad I could be here to help you."

Margin would be having to rest, to relax, to reflect.

Margin is having a great amount of time with the people that you love.

Margin is having plenty of quality time with the creator and sustainer of this universe, time with God.

Margin, for most of us, is the very thing that we do not have; margin.

Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Eph 5:15-17

Be very careful, because if you are not very careful, you need to understand that there is a pull away from the most important things, to the lesser important things of this world. Fight against the pull of culture, fight against it! The default stance of living is not wisdom, it's foolishness.

Be careful then how you live, how you plan, what you say yes to, what you say no to; be very, very careful to fight against the pull of this culture. The verse goes on to say.... Vs 16

Be very careful, be very careful how you live, or culture will drag you away from the things that you say matter most into a margin-less and meaningless lifestyle.

Andy Stanley, wrote a book called The Best Question Ever. The one question that really captures the essence of this book is one that I believe is so important when it comes to our "scheduling margin".

For example, if I said to you, "Hey, can you do such and such next Saturday?" Chances are, most of you would kind of look at your calendar and say, "Are we free? Well, if we are free, then we can do it." So, you ask, "Are we free?" It's not a bad question, but not the best question.

Or, you might say, "Well, is this right, or is this wrong? Well, since it's not wrong, it must be right, so we will do it." But, a better question to ask when it comes to our scheduling is **not is it right, or is it wrong, or are we free?**

But, a better question to ask would be this, "Is it wise?"

In light of _____, is it wise?

"In light of our future hopes and dreams, ...our current family situation, marriage, small kids, kid leaving home right now, is it wise to do this?"

In light of the fact that our days are numbered, James says, "Your life is a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes."

In light of the fact that life is precious and short and that every day is a gift from God, in light of that fact, is it wise that we invest our time in this? Is it wise?

HOW DO WE SCHEDULE WISELY?

I would argue that most of us are scheduling foolishly, rather than wisely. I will give you just one very simple statement, we have said this before and I promise we will say it again; the answer to the question of how do we schedule wisely is this:

We must have the courage and faith to say "no" to many good things, so that we can say "yes" to the best things.

Because too many good things quickly become the enemy of the best things. Be very careful then how you live, not as unwise, but as wise.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2

The closer I am toward God, the more different I am than culture. The closer I am to the heartbeat of God, the more differently than we live and invest our time than so many other people.

Normal is not working! It's not! What is normal is marriage...divorce. What is normal with kids...rebellion! What is normal relationally...emptiness! When it comes to scheduling, what is normal...being overwhelmed, being overworked, being frenzied, being stressed, being miserable, being busy and yet being empty!

What we have to understand is that busyness does not equal productivity. There are so many people busy doing useless things. Busyness does not equal importance. Busyness does not equal meaning.

In fact, I would argue that so many people are being robbed from a life of meaning, not because they are not committed; but, because they are overcommitted.

Just because you could do something, does not mean that you should do something.

There was an article in USA Today, speaking of Neilson that said the average American spends 28 hours a week watching television! Twenty eight hours a week! Is that wise? If you are the average American, by the time you reach your mid 70's you would spend over 10 years in front of a TV! Is that wise? Normal yes, wise no!

Here's what is amazing to me; those of you that are Christ followers. There are two things that are phenomenally important to your success and your relationship with God, but, as soon as the margin is squeezed out of your life, in almost every instant these two most important ingredients are also squeezed out of your life. You watch, as soon as you get rushed or overwhelmed, the two most important things that we should never let go of are often the very first things to go. What are those two things?

1) **INTIMATE TIME WITH GOD.**

Intimate and consistent time realigning daily with God, because by nature our hearts are out of alignment. Daily we realign our hearts with the Word of God, with His truth and with His presence.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

A lot of you are going to say, "Well you know, that's real good for you preacher guy, we know you work Sundays, but we don't know what you do the rest of the week so you can have time with God. We live in the real world, I don't have time to have time with God."

I would argue all day long that you don't have time not to have time with God; you don't! If you want everything else to be added unto you, you seek Him first.

It's like the tithe, you put aside the first and He blesses the rest. You seek Him first and the rest of your day is aligned to the heartbeat of God.

Last week, I asked you to spend five minutes just being in the presence of God. This week, I challenge you to double it; double it, go to 10. Open up God's Word this week daily, first thing, and just take it in. Realign your heart to the things of God and watch as the rest of your day, things are more productive and more in place because you have sought first the Father of all. The first thing to go is the most important thing. Intimate time with God.

2) **INTENTIONAL TIMES OF REST.**

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. Matthew 11:28-29

Most of us, when we get busy, and when we lose margin, we feel like we cannot afford to take a day of rest. God worked six days and on the seventh day what did he do? He rested!

One of the 10 Commands, "Thou shalt honor the Sabbath"; take a day of rest. In the Old Testament,

God said; "You can work the land for six years, on the seventh year you cannot plant and you cannot harvest, you have to give it a year of rest."

Let me ask you this, those of you that are Christians; do you think it's wise to neglect time with God daily? Do you think it's wise to not honor God with one of His top Ten Commandments to rest?

Here is the deal. You think that you don't have time for these important things and the reality is, you don't have time for the most important things because you are out of alignment with God. I will not surrender to culture and I am fighting with everything in me to be different, to be weird, because normal is not working. If you don't have margin, you are missing out on the most important things. Realign daily with time with God, rest, rest in your souls. Or, you can just be normal.