

MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

Tuesday, March 26, 2019

The Margin Challenge

Overview: In our quest to balance all the world is throwing at us every day (personally and professionally) of our lives, the need to create more margin in our lives is centrally important. Now the question is how we create more margin to create more impact in the most important areas of our life.

Hearing Our Stories: Ron Remak

Segment Questions:

- Imagine you are a car that runs on physical, emotional and spiritual fuel. How full (on a 10-point scale) are you in each of these areas right now?
- Margin is the difference between our daily load of responsibilities and our capacity to handle all of them well. Can you recall at least one time in your life that the load was well above your capacity? Tell us about it. When you do feel that way, is there anything you do specifically to “ease the load?”
- In what of the following areas do you have trouble living within your limits? (Take two minutes to review the list and then to share.)
 - Spending money beyond your means
 - Sleep
 - Helping people
 - Spiritual endeavors (church, Bible studies, missions)
 - Social activities
 - Community volunteerism
- Why do you think God designed us with limits? What spiritual benefits do our limits present us?
- What would you do with more margin in your life? What areas of your life will benefit from doing so?

Action Questions:

- Tony Campelo, a well-renowned theologian suggested the most important margin of our day is the first five or ten minutes of the day. He suggests that we set our alarm ten minutes prior to when we usually get up and before we put our feet on the floor:
 1. Thank God for the day and breath of life.
 2. Thank Him for all the blessings in our life.
 3. Ask Him for His divine help in your day.
 4. Then, above all, LISTEN . . . and you will often feel the peace and comfort that surpasses all understanding.
- Psalm 46:10 – “Be still and know that I am God.” How often do you have an actual intentional quiet time when you turn off the world to tune into God, His voice, His direction?
- What does the first five or ten minutes of your day look like?
- Are you motivated by any of our discussions to identify where you can start your quest to secure more margin in your life?

THE MARGIN CHALLENGE

Our last Men's Life meeting found us discussing the "busy-ness of life" (busy, hurried or harried).

This lesson I would like to follow up that topic with a focus on how to identify, develop and then embrace something called margin. Margin can be identified as those moments or time in between the load we carry each day and our physical and emotional limits.

You know "load," right? The everyday challenge to balance so many people, personal and professional responsibilities, community commitments, friendships, family, texts, emails, voice messages, and, oh yes, how about time with our faith journey (church, prayer, quiet time, praise music, discipleship, etc). . . . all the things we all often need or want more time to do.

A perfect example of my struggle with margin is right next to my bed (it's kind of laughable if it wasn't so sad . . . and revealing). Right next to my night stand are four to five books that have been in the same spot, without any change in the book marks for months, if not a few years.

At the top of that stack is, of all things, a book called "MARGIN," ironically one of many books that I haven't found the margin in my life to read.

I also still remember at a past Men's Life discussion years ago, the question was, "If we had 26 instead of 24 hours a day, what would we do with it?"

1. One person said that finally we would have the time to read our Bible or have a more consistent quiet time.
2. Another said "I would spend more time 'dating' my wife."
3. And then another said they would take more time to call or write those family members, friends, coaches and teachers that poured into me in the past.

Then the wisest one of us said something I will never forget. "We would probably just fill it with more stuff and complain we didn't have time for the most important things." We all shamefully agreed.

In this fast-paced world where we are all trying to do "more," faster, better, for more people and trying to keep the "main thing the main thing" in the midst of it all, it is harder than ever to find any extra time or margin to fit in the most "important areas in our lives."

For help and guidance on how Jesus dealt with margin in His life journey, we can turn to scripture. (See next page for applicable scripture)

Bottom line is this, we seem to all have the need and desire to fit a little more "quality" time in our day. If we can be intentional about finding that margin, I have got to believe that the daily impact we will have in all the important areas of our lives will be greater and even more blessed.

LET'S DO IT!

Genesis 2: 2-3 – On the seventh day, God had finished his work of creation, so He rested from all of His work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy.

Luke 6: 12 – In these days, He went out to the mountain to pray and all night he continued in prayer to God.

Matthew 11:28 – Come to me, all of you who are weary and carrying a heavy burden, and I will give you rest.

Psalms 46:10 – Be still and know that I am God.