Margin- The amazing gift of Sabbath

Margin

What is Margin?

Margin is the space between 2 things.

• The space on printed books between the print and the edge of the paper is called the margin.

• The space b/t revenue and expenses is called the profit margin (Supermarkets operate on 1-1.5% profit margin- they have to sell millions of dollars of groceries).

• Margin of error- The space between the actual and the estimate (voting polls).

• Margin of victory- The space between the winner and the person closest to them.

• Life Style Margin- Space between work and rest, between activity and reprieve.

God knew we would need Margin in our lives. So, in his wisdom, when He created us, before sin entered the world, He made provision for us to have margin in our lives. He knew there would be a tendency to overcommit and fill our lives with so much activity and commitment he created a space between weekly work cycles for us to rest and recover.

Genesis 1:27,31-

27- So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

31-Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Read with me.

Genesis 2:1-3- Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

1. On his first full day of existence, man experienced margin- a day of rest.

God created Adam on day 6 and the first thing Adam experienced on his first full day of existence was…rest. Margin.

Principle of first things. First use, First mention, etc.

God introduced man to a day fo rest the first full day of his existence. That is like beginning a job and you show up for your first day and they say, this is a free day for you.

Another word for Margin is Sabbath.

Just so we would not forget and

2. To reinforce this principle of margin, God included it in the 10 Commandments.

• You shall have no other gods before Me.

• You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything.

• You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

• Honor your father and your mother.

• You shall not murder.

• You shall not commit adultery.

• You shall not steal.

• You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

• You shall not covet your neighbor's house, wife, or property.

• Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Which one of the 10 commandments is it OK to Break?

 You shall have no other gods before me. This is still in place.

 Worshiping idols or images? Still not OK.

 Taking the Lord’s name in vain? I think we all agree this is one we need to keep.

 Thou shall not murder- Jesus raised the bar on this by saying if you have hatred in your heart you have committed murder in your heart.

 Thou shall not commit Adultery- Jesus raised the bar here as well. If you look lust after someone you have committed adultery in your heart.

 Don’t steal.

 Don’t lie.

If you think about the Sabbath have you committed in your heart? 

 Remember the Sabbath, keep it holy.

This is the only commandment we break and then brag about it. (I am so busy….working so hard…haven’t taken a day off in……

Deuteronomy‬

2.

Slaves work like dogs and never get to take a break. Not so with sons!

Book- “From Slavery to Sonship” by Leif Hetland.

A weekly Sabbath is the birth-right of humanity, ratified and vindicated by Him who represents humanity. The Sabbath was made for man and Jesus is Lord of it.

Mark‬

NKJV-And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”

NLT (nearly legitimate translation)‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬- “Then Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath.”

Mark‬

25 But He said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: 26 how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?”

27 And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”

Mark‬

“He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. 2 So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. 3 And He said to the man who had the withered hand, “Step forward.” 4 Then He said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they kept silent. 5 And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

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3. ‬ Practicing the sabbath principle is an act of obedience and faith.

Agrarian Society- their lives depended upon a successful harvest.

Not only did they have to rest one day a week. They had to do so in seed time and harvest!

Anyone here grow up on a real farm?

• When it is time to plant the seed you work hard to get it onto the ground. Too early, a late frost can kill the tender plants, too late- there might not be enough rain or time to come to maturity.

• Then when the harvest comes in everyone goes to work and works until the harvest is safe and secure. If it rains it can ruin the harvest in the field.

But God also commanded that the ground be given a sabbath rest (to lie fallow) once every 7 years.

Lev. 25:3-5- Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; 4 but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the Lord. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard.

Lev. 25:18-22- So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety. 19 Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety.

20 ‘And if you say, “What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?” 21 Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years. 22 And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat of the old harvest.

Illus. Of course they didn’t have modern technology to be able to study the minerals in the soil and how different crops pulled certain minerals out of the soil. But now we understand better that letting a field lie fallow, free from any cultivated crop, is part of a good crop rotation program. By remaining unsown, the ground rests and fertility can be restored. modern farmers and gardeners often turn to the wisdom in ancient farming practices. This philosophy fuels the idea of sustainable farming and gardening, where wise crop rotation -- and allowances for fallow soil -- keep soil naturally sustained rather than depleted.

4. God Releases His blessing when we honor the Sabbath Principle.

Isaiah 58:13-14- NKJV-

If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,

From doing your pleasure on My holy day,

And call the Sabbath a delight,

The holy day of the Lord honorable,

And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,

Nor finding your own pleasure,

Nor speaking your own words,

14 Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord;

And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth,

And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.

The mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

This principle applies in our modern age as well.

>> R.G. Le Tourneau –Inventor of earth moving equipment. Supplied them for Hoover Dam project. Very successful business man.

During WW2 he refused to give in to pressure to run his assembly plant 24 hours a day 7 days a week. He shut it down for Sunday. His plant and people were more productive than those that were going non-stop and never taking a day off. LeTourneau served both God and humanity by setting aside 90 percent of his salary and company profits for God, and living on the other 10 percent

>> Chik- Fi-La- goes against the cultural tide and is closed on Sunday.

Each Chik-Fi-La location averages $3.2 million dollars in annual sales. That is 30% more than what McDonald’s averages per store.

>> Hobby Lobby- Closed one day a week.

Anyone here remember “Blue Law” Certain items you could not purchase on Sunday,

But pastor Kermit, we are in the NT not the OT, doesn’t that make it different? Yes, you will not get stoned if you break the Sabbath (just like adultery or disobedience to your parents). In addition, grace in the NT means the sabbath doesn’t have to be a specific 24 hour period of total non-activity. But the principle must be evident in our lives.

>> One of my professors shared a story of when he stayed with an orthodox Jewish family for a short time. One Sabbath he was going to go somewhere but they told him if he walked down the sidewalk he would be breaking the Sabbath, But, they said, you can cut across the yards without breaking the Sabbath. So he takes off cutting across the yards, climbing over the fences, across other yards, climbing over the fences, soon he begins to sweat and he is out of breath…and he realizes. IN an effort to not break the Sabbath by “working”, he ended up working a lot harder! But according to Orthodox Jewish rules, he did not work on the Sabbath!

What does Sabbath look like today?

Illus. I was in Israel with my 2 oldest sons on their graduation trip and we were staying in an orthodox Jewish area. We were told that Friday before sundown we needed to make sure we had everything we needed- food, etc. because at sundown all the stores would close. We were also told that we would not be able to drive so we would need to walk from our apartment to the missionaries apartment- about 30 minutes walk. They said it we tried to drive most likely we would have rocks thrown at our car and people shouting at us.

What the sabbath principle is not-

It is not a strict observation of a 24 hour period. You don ‘t have to prepare your Challah Bread the day before and at sundown cease from all activity, no cooking, no driving, etc.

It is not a strict 40 hour work week.

It is not creating a set of rigid rules that lead to absurdity and legalism (religiosity)

It is not telling your pastor you cannot serve in the church b/c that is your sabbath.

It is-

Being intentional about setting aside time to cease from your normal work.

Trusting the Lord to bless your efforts as you step back from work alcoholism.

Bringing your life into balance so you can be replenished.

It is learning to rest in God’s ability.

I suggest you set your rhythm of rest up on your calendar and not allow other things to interfere.

Question: But pastor Kermit, I am a single parent, surely God understands if I don’t practice the sabbath principle.

5. Whatever keeps you from honoring the sabbath principle is an idol.

Hebrews 4:1-9- NKJV-

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. 3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said:

“So I swore in My wrath,

‘They shall not enter My rest,’ ”

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; 5 and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.”

6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said:

“Today, if you will hear His voice,

Do not harden your hearts.”

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

Conclusion-

God knew you needed Margin in your life so He created the sabbath for your blessing and benefit.

When you honor the sabbath you are putting faith into action.

Response-

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you personally through this message?

Great job of keeping the sabbath principle active in your life.

You need to take action to integrate the sabbath principle into your life?

If so, what is the next step for you?

What is the Lord saying you about your smart phone? Is there ever a time when you are not tethered to it?

Resources-

Haven River Inn- Comfort Texas. Lamb’s Tale Ministries. 2 free nights per year.

The Prophet’s Chamber, Russellville, Arkansas. 5 free nights as available.

https://ag.org/Resources/Resources-For/For-Ministers/Renewals-Retreats-and-Vacations

Article- “Renewal as a way of Life” by Dutch and Pam Frey

Books-

“Refresh, Renew, Revive” by HB London, jr.

“The Rest of God” by Mark Buchanan (restoring your soul by restoring SABBATH).

“Clergy Renewal” by Richard Bullock and Richard Brusehoff

The Prayer of Rest

Blessed Savior, I am not good at resting in the hollow of your hand.

Nothing in my experience has taught me this resting.

I have been taught how to take charge.

I have been taught how to be in control.

But how to rest?

No, I have no models…well, that is not exactly right.

Jesus, when you walked among the Jerusalem crowds and in the Judean hills, you pioneered this way of living.

You were always alert and alive,

You lived utterly responsive to the will of the Father.

Manifold demands were placed upon you, and still you worked in unhurried peace and power.

Help me to walk in your steps.

Teach me to so only what you see, to say only what you say to do only what you do.

Help me, Lord, to work and rest and to pray and rest.

I ask this in your good and strong name. Amen.