

# TRANSFORMING YOUR FAMILY

HOW TO CREATE  
MARGIN  
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JANUARY 9-10, 2015

## Opening Remarks

Dr. Richard Swenson would say we are out of "margin", the title of his best-selling book. Margin is the space between your load and your limit. We are vulnerable to dangerous overload. Overload due to- activity overload, change overload, choice, commitment, competition, debt, expectation, information, media, ministry, guilt, people, possessions, problems, technology, traffic, work overload [tired yet?]

Jesus offers a "yoke" with him that creates "unforced rhythms of grace". Interested? Can you believe that is possible?

## Warm it up

In his book *The Busy Christian's Guide to Busyness*, Tim Chester suggests twelve diagnostic questions to determine how ill we've become with "hurry sickness."

Take the group's pulse by responding out loud to each question:

- 1] Do you regularly work thirty minutes a day longer than your contracted hours?
- 2] Do you check work e-mails and phone messages at home?
- 3] Has anyone ever said to you, 'I didn't want to trouble you because I know how busy you are'?"
- 4] Do your family or friends complain about not getting time with you?
- 5] If tomorrow evening were unexpectedly freed up, would you use it to do work or a household chore?
- 6] Do you often feel tired during the day or do you find your neck and shoulders aching?
- 7] Do you often exceed the speed limit while driving?
- 8] Do you make use of any flexible working arrangements offered by your employers?
- 9] Do you pray with your children regularly?
- 10] Do you have enough time to pray?
- 11] Do you have a hobby in which you are actively involved?
- 12] Do you eat together as a family or household at least once a day?

### **Talk it over**

Read and discuss three passages from scripture which have to do with creating margin in our lives and families.

What does this passage contribute to our hope of creating healthy margin?

Matthew 11:28-30

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Deuteronomy 6:4-14

### **Work it out**

In his sermon, Scott urged us to "Retreat to Advance" and "Drop the Right Balls."

Where do you need to retreat [Divert Daily, Withdraw Weekly, Abandon Annually] in order to add margin?

Q: Any "balls" [activities, time-sinks] you need to drop?

Q: Any balls which have dropped which you need to pick up again? [This is the Advance part where you have created margin for! Remember that for any START, there must be a commensurate STOP.]

### **Wrap it up**

Taken wrongly, this study can add guilt rather than rest! The big idea is that you will not finish well without margin in your life. You may feel like you are on a starting sprint in your work, family, ministry, etc. Pace and margin matter.

Taking rest seriously requires humility, faith and freedom. In Christ, you can do this.

Speaking out loud to your group and family the steps you want to take to increase balance and margin in your life will help cement your long term success in any changes you have identified.

### **Pray it through**

Have someone in the group read Matthew 11:28-30. [If you can get The Message version.]

Several people pray for the group to personalize Jesus' invitation and the margin creating steps people have identified.