



Week Seven: "Changing Priorities. Creating Margin."

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For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. – Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

I. The Problem

"As modern people we are all on a search for significance. We desire to make a difference. We long to leave a legacy. We yearn, as Ralph Waldo Emerson put it, 'to leave the world a bit better.' Our passion is to know that we are fulfilling the purpose for which we are here on earth. All other standards of success – wealth, power, position, knowledge, friendships – grow tinny and hollow if we do not satisfy this deeper longing."

– Os Guinness, *The Call*

A. When God's work takes a _____

1. The historical setting

- Haggai is a post-exilic prophet
- The Jews had been in captivity for 70 years
- But they had been allowed to return to Jerusalem by Darius
- They began the rebuilding of the Temple
- But after 14 years, it stood unfinished
- Haggai's job was to get them to complete the work

2. The Rebuke (verses 3-5)

- Consider your _____!
- They had _____ the building of God's house
- But they were living in _____ houses
- The problem: Misplaced _____
- They were not putting God _____
- They were more concerned with their own _____

3. The Result (verse 6)

Symptom 1: _____

- They were living very _____ lives
- CONSIDER YOUR WAYS!

Symptom 2: _____

- They were experiencing lives without God's _____

- Why? Because you refuse to give _____ the priority it deserves

B. When we don't have enough _____ for God

- It isn't that we lack time, talent, energy, or passion
- It is that we lack _____

"Margin is the amount of time allowed beyond what is needed. It is something held in reserve for contingencies or unanticipated situations. Margin is the gap between rest and exhaustion, the space between breathing freely and suffocating. It is the leeway we once had between ourselves and our limits." – Dr. Richard Swenson, *Margin*

"Margin is about intentionally uncluttering our lives ... if you have no margin, then you will have nothing to give away. Margin allows us to do life at a pace that lets us listen to God's calling and direction." – Lloyd Reeb, *From Success to Significance*

1. _____ margin
 - Without it we crash and burn
 - We run our tank on empty
 - We have nothing left to give God or others
2. _____ margin
 - We are overspent
 - We are maxed out
 - We live in survival mode
 - We have no excess to share with God or others
3. _____ margin
 - We are out of shape
 - We lack energy and motivation
 - We are physically drained from just daily existence
 - We have nothing left to give God or others
4. _____ margin
 - We are overcommitted
 - Our lives are filled with religious activity
 - But we have no time to listen to God

Spiritual margin exists when your heart is so filled with God that it overflows into the lives of others. – Lloyd Reeb, *From Success to Significance*

C. Make time for God

- You'll never hear *from* Him is you never listen *to* Him
- You won't ever do His good works if you fill every second with your own
- Putting your priorities over God's will never bring true satisfaction

CONSIDER YOUR WAYS!

ANSWER KEY: backseat, ways, put off, fancy, priorities, first, comforts, dissatisfaction, unsatisfying, discipline, blessing, God's work, left over, margin, emotional, financial, physical, spiritual