

Margins

Lesson 2: Emotional Margins

I. The Big Picture Problem

We are bombarded every day with the reality of the weight of our society on our minds and souls:

The state of marriages

The number of teen suicides

The opioid crisis (drug overdoses)

The rise of mental illness (involving about 25% of the population/constituting 15% of the national "burden of disease")

The rise in health expenditures (about \$10,000 per person per year/ almost 20% of our Gross Domestic Product.)

II. The Personal Problem

In light of the societal challenges, we tend to slip into survival mode with nothing left to give. There is nothing in reserve. Eventually, we begin to tune out the need.

We are left with no emotional reservoir. We are drained. We are hardened and callous.

We are just getting by. Take a look at Psalm 143: 3-12.

III. The Solution

Insights from Scripture: Philippians 4: 6-7

A. Do not be anxious

"Anxious"- "merimnao" - Literally it means to have a split or divided mind. It's a mind that cannot properly focus. It is bouncing around, never settled.

What do we worry about? What were you worrying about a year ago?

Matt. 6:25 Don't worry about the tangibles of life (life, food, body, clothes)

Luke 12:11 Don't worry about the intangibles (how to defend yourself, what to say in a difficult situation etc.)

Thought: Worry- We gather bundles of sticks to build bridges we never end up crossing.

1. Some Biblical worriers: Jacob (Gen. 32:11), Elijah (I Kings 19:14) and Timothy (I Tim. 4:11-12)

2. What worry will not achieve:

Consider Matt. 6:27 Worry makes no substantial difference to our lives

3. What worry does achieve:

It will rob you of energy with which to engage normal living (Prov. 12:25)

It will minimize your impact and ministry potential (I Tim. 4:12)

It will negatively impact your relationships (Gen. 32:11)

It will cause you to live in fear (John 14:1-3)

It causes you to question God's sufficiency in our lives (II Cor. 12:9-10)

It causes us to question God's sovereignty over our lives (Rom. 8:28)

B. Note the role of prayer

"Prayer and petition with thanksgiving"

1. Cast your care on Him : I Peter 5:7 "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

2. Learn to trust Him : Isa. 40:10, 13 "See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.... Who can fathom the Spirit of the LORD, or instruct the LORD as his counselor?"

C. The result: Peace (Phil. 4:7)

1. Peace with God: Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Col. 1:20 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us"

2. Peace of God: John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Is created and bestowed by Him. It transcends all understanding (it is so precious we cannot obtain it ourselves). It is a guard, a military term that means an armed escort, or a garrison that protects. Two strong soldiers stand guard over something of great value- our minds and hearts.

IV. When you find yourself emotionally "marginless," here are some practical thoughts:

A. Cultivate some social supports

Ecc. 4:9-10 "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up."

B. Learn to enjoy what God has given us

Psalm 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

C. Keep a short sin list (with God and others)

Matt. 5:23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you,"

D. Learn to serve

Pay it forward

E. Create appropriate boundaries

Protect your prayer time, dinnertime, time with your children and time with friends.