

**Think It Over:** This section is about turning what God is saying to you into action steps. These talking points, questions, and scriptures are designed to help you take your own next step. If you are leading a group through this guide, don't feel like you have to answer every question. Pick out those questions that will stir up conversation and action among your group.

- It's a common complaint: "I'm overloaded, I just can't catch up, and I need a break." Compared to years ago, we now sleep much less and work longer every week. We are chronically rushed, late, and exhausted. God tells us that we need more margin in our lives, more space between our load and our limits, so we can enjoy life more and reduce physical, spiritual, emotional, and financial pressures. What are some of the ways drive overloads life? Have you experienced any of them in your own life? What happened?
- Why do we want to think we are superhuman and able to do everything? How does our culture make us think we have no limits in our lives and activities? What are some "warning lights" in our lives that tell us we're reaching our limits? What are some benefits of living with margin?
- What are some of your tactics for avoiding the troubles that lead to marginless living (Proverbs 22:3 TEV)? Why is it true that the faster we go, the more margin we need (Ecclesiastes 3:6 NCV)?
- Read Exodus 18:1-24. What are your first impressions? How was Moses in danger of becoming a causality of marginless living? Moses is a larger than life kind of person, but how does his story help to show you that you might be in danger of living a marginless life?
- Do you have a Jethro kind of person in your life? How does one go about having a "Jethro" in your life? It takes time, but it's never too late to begin building that kind of relationship with someone. Joining a Community Group or a church volunteer team can be a launching pad for that kind of relationship.
- Review the six ways of *How to Live with Margin*. Which one or ones do you need to give more attention to? Why? Imagine what life would be like if you were able, with God's help, to see margin in your life increased by just 20%. How would that extra breathing room change the pressure you are experiencing?

**Next Steps:** What are you are holding on to that needs to be cut from your life to gain some breathing room (Joshua 7:13 NCV)? What is one action you can take this week or one action you can trim from your life which would begin the process of restoring your margin? How bad does it have to get before you pull that lever? What are you waiting for? Make the change today!

**Changing Your Mind:** Choose one of the verses listed in the Message Guide and commit it to heart.



If you missed a message, visit [www.scc.website](http://www.scc.website) or pick up a CD at Guest Services.



Margin is the space between my load and my limits.

➤ Living without margin...

Stressed and anxious, grumpy, demanding, intolerant, conflict-prone, isolated, shallow, sin-prone, foolish, ineffective...

➤ Living with margin...

Not using up all I have, but reserving some of my time, energy, and resources for the unexpected.

- Great for your mind
- Great for your body
- Great for your relationships
- Great for your soul

*<sup>1</sup>By entering through faith into what God has always wanted to do for us—set us right with him, make us fit for him—we have it all together with God because of our Master Jesus. <sup>2</sup>And that's not all: We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already thrown open his door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand—out in the wide open spaces of God's grace and glory...*

Romans 5:1–2 MSG

## How to Live with Margin

Exodus 18:6-24

*You'll burn out, and the people right along with you. This is way too much for you—you can't do this alone.* Exodus 18:18 MSG

*If you handle the work this way, you'll have the strength to carry out whatever God commands you, and the people in their settings will flourish (be satisfied) also.* Exodus 18:23 MSG

*Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said.* Exodus 18:24 NIV

*Now the man Moses was a quietly humble man, more so than anyone living on Earth.* Numbers 12:3 MSG

### ➔ Accept my limitations.

*"I have learned that everything has limits..."* Psalm 119:96 TEV

*"Our time is limited. You (God) have given us only so many months to live and have set limits we cannot go beyond."* Job 14:5 NCV

### ➔ Ask, what motivates me to overload my life?

insecurity, fear, envy, restlessness, a desire to impress...

*Some people are never satisfied with what they own, and they never stop working to get more. They should ask themselves, Why am I always working to have more? What a senseless and miserable life!* Ecclesiastes 4:8 CEV

### ➔ Expect problems and delays.

*In this world you will have trouble!* John 16:33 NIV

*Sensible people will see trouble coming and avoid it, but an unthinking person will walk right into it and regret it later.* Proverbs 22:3 TEV

### ➔ Add buffer space in my schedule.

*It is senseless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, fearing you'll starve to death; for God wants his loved ones to get their proper rest.* Psalm 127:2 LB

*Only someone too stupid to find his way home would wear himself out with work.* Ecclesiastes 10:15 TEV

### ➔ Prune my actives regularly.

*There is a time to keep things and a time to throw things away.* Ecclesiastes 3:6 NCV

*...We should remove from our lives anything that would get in the way and the sin that so easily holds us back.* Hebrews 12:1 NCV

*Everything is permissible for me – but not everything is beneficial.* 1 Corinthians 6:12 NIV

*Some of you are keeping things God commanded you to destroy. You will never defeat your enemies until you throw away those things.* Joshua 7:13 NCV

### ➔ Center my identity on Jesus.

*<sup>11</sup>It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, <sup>12</sup>part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.* Ephesians 1:11–12 MSG

### Bottom Line:

**Drive towards margin or  
you will drive margin out.**

Resources for this series include messages from Saddleback Church and Oaks Chase Community Church.

To help you turn what God is saying to you into action steps, consider using the Think It Over section on the back.