

Pray Together

Use the first few minutes of your time together to lead your group in a focused prayer time.

- **Praise:** Spend time praising God for who He is.
- **Repent:** Take a few moments to silently confess any sin that is lingering in your heart.
- **Ask:** Verbalize your needs and the needs of others to God.
- **Yield:** Surrender your will to God.

Read Together

The letter to the Ephesians neatly divides into two sections: chapters 1-3, Doctrine; chapters 4-6, Application. In Ephesians and elsewhere in his writings, Paul argues that there is a unique way of life to be lived by those who are faithful in Christ. One scholar of Ephesians structures the section on application as follows:

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| • Walk in unity in the body of Christ (4:1-16) | • Walk in wisdom because the days are evil (5:15-6:9) |
| • Walk in holiness in the body of Christ (4:17-32) | • Be strengthened in the Lord to stand in spiritual warfare (6:10-20) |
| • Walk in the habit of love (5:1-6) | |
| • Walk in light in the world of darkness (5:7-14) | |

Saying “yes” for Christ’s glory (walking in Christ) requires a bold tradeoff: saying “no” for Christ’s glory (putting off the old self of trespasses and sins). But saying “yes” for Christ’s glory and pursuing His mission runs counter-cultural to our 21st Century North American ideals...especially the modern idolization of busyness.

Busyness is our modern badge of honor. Our busyness may result from good places—e.g., our professional successes have merited increased responsibilities. Other times busyness results from not so good places—e.g., mistaking increased activity for meaningful impact. Busyness: it’s the thing we all love to hate.

But it is our unexamined busyness that keeps many of us from pursuing the mission that God given us to do. We must recover God-honoring margin. Margin is not the natural state of affairs; everything wars against margin. So how do we create and maintain God-honoring margin in a world that defaults to marginless living?

Discuss Together

Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion.

- A growing Christian knows the way to avoid a marginal life is to develop a life with margins. Define and describe “marginless living”.
- A familiar story from Jesus’ ministry speaks about the dangers of marginless living. Read Luke 10:38-42. How had marginless living manifested itself in Martha’s life? Identify some problems that arose because of Martha’s distraction and anxiety. Discuss Martha’s view of Jesus. Discuss Martha’s view of her sister, Mary.
- Examine yourself: Are you living a marginless life? If so, share what marginless living looks like at this time in your life. The goal of this exercise is not to award a busyness badge of honor but to bring to light the widespread epidemic of busyness on individuals and families in your Life Group.
- Identify one mission you believe God gave to do that you were unable to fulfill due to your marginless lifestyle. The goal of this exercise is not to publicly shame individuals or families in your Life Group; rather to demonstrate the real impact that our unexamined activity has on our ability to live on mission for Christ.



- In contrast to “marginless living”, which creates false urgency and can inhibit one’s ability to live out God’s mission, define and describe “God-honoring margin”.
- The Bible says that marginless living is a choice (Mark 10:42). Scripture also says that living a life with God-honoring margin is a wise choice. Read Ephesians 5:15-16. How does your view of Christ inform your decision to walk with wisdom? What separates a disciple’s commitment to “redeem the time” (5:16) from a self-help author’s commitments to help create more margin for the things that matter most?
- Examine yourself: Are you living a life with God-honoring margin? If so, share what a life of God-honoring margin looks like at this season of life. The goal of this exercise is to inspire your Life Group with stories of courage from those who said “no” for Christ’s glory.
- Identify one mission you believe God gave to do that you were able to fulfill due to the God-honoring margin you established in your life. The goal of this exercise is to inspire individuals and families in your Life Group to see freedom that comes from redeeming their time.
- How do you create and maintain God-honoring margin in a world that defaults to marginless living?

The number-one obstacle to neighboring well is time. If you're taking the Great Commandment seriously, undoubtedly you will start to feel conflicted. You have relationships in your life already. And most of us aren't walking around with extra time, wondering what to do with it. We feel overwhelmed by the amount of stuff that is jammed into our schedules. Our lives are already packed. We already have enough relationships—how are we ever going to find time and energy for one more relationship, let alone six or seven or eight?

That doesn't necessarily mean that you must stop everything you're doing right now. Instead it's about taking a look at your commitments and being willing to reprioritize to be more present with your close family and friends, as well as make space in your life for those living nearest to you.

—Jay Pathak & Dave Runyon, The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door

Do Life Together

These questions are designed to be asked in a smaller group of 2-4 people. The smaller setting will provide better opportunity for authentic responses. In your smaller group time, take notes to help others remain accountable to their answers. Grow together!

- How is God calling you to “grow up” in Christ this week?
- How can Jesus redeem this area? How has He proven that in Scripture?
- Who will keep you accountable to this commitment this week?

Pray Together

Read and pray through Matthew 28:16-20.

