

Margin 4 – Moral Margin

****Bumper Video –**

-MARGIN Title

Get out your bible or your favorite app and join me in James chapter 1. You are at Redemption Church. My name is Chris Fluitt. I am blessed to be the Lead Pastor here. We are in the last week of our Margin series.

- **Margin is the space between you, your needs, & your limits**

Week 1 we told you about the importance of space. We told you that God's plan included Rest.

Week 2 we told you how we needed Margin in our relationships. We needed physical and emotional intimacy

Week 3, Last week, we told you that we need to break free from the insane normal of this world and make margin in our finances.

Today we are going to talk to you about an important area of your life that you REALLY need some Margin.

We need Moral Margin

We know it is important to have plans for your life. How important it is to have goals. We spend time making 5 year plans. We usually focus them on our careers, our education, our finances, on our relationships... No one ever sits down and centers their 5 year plan on who they want to be... they focus on what they want to have done.

This is a real problem... We need to sit down and make some goals here...

In 5 years I will not have had an affair and cheated on my spouse...

In 5 years I will not have been stealing from my job and praying that I don't get caught

In 5 years I will not have started using drugs or become addicted to a chemical dependency

In 5 years I will not have contracted a sexually transmitted disease

You might say "Pastor that is ridiculous.. no one needs that in their 5 year plan..."

I want to tell you that no one plans on this stuff happening... but it does. It happens all the time.

In counseling situations when people sit down, and on the other side of moral failure, share their thoughts and feelings... it is usual to hear them say... **I never thought this would happen to me**

No one makes plans to wreck their life... but the trouble is we don't make plans to KEEP FROM wrecking our life...

Whatever the failure... be it lying, stealing, adultery, fornication, drug addiction, porn addiction, greed addiction, being abusive, murdering someone... Whatever the failure you can recognize a lack of Moral Margin.

Moral Margin is the space between YOU and TEMPTATION

You need a buffer... you need distance... you need a boundary between you and temptation. Do you have Moral Margin?

James 1:13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;(NIV)

James 1:14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.(NIV)

James 1:15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.(NIV)

Let's look back over this scripture..

- It's not God that tempts you... Don't blame God
- It's our own EVIL DESIRES... We have evil desires inside of you.
- You are enticed

Look at James 1:14 again.. James 1:14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.(NIV)

The Greek word for Enticed is **Deleazo**. It means to Allure, Lure, Deceive, Drag, tempt... It is used in a catching of fish metaphor... Where you are drawn by bait... and then as you taste the bait... you are hooked... once you are hooked then someone else... the one who set the trap... drags you wherever they want.

These evil desires are traps... and the Bible says they are INSIDE OF US...

How much do you need moral margin? How much do you need space between you and temptation... A heck of a whole bunch... because the desire to mess up your marriage is already inside you... the desire to be angry, abusive, impatient, and domineering is CLOSER THAN YOU THINK... it's already inside of you... the temptation to lie, cheat, steal to get ahead is already floating around inside of you...

You need to put space... distance between you and the temptation! You need **Moral Margin**

There is something in our human nature that fights moral margin. We try to see how close we can get without it being a problem. We get very close but try not to go too far...

- We try to word our sentences so that they aren't TECHNICALLY a big fat lie... when we are still avoiding telling the truth and being honest.
- We justify our actions... we say "Well it's wrong what we are doing, but at least it's not this bad..."
- Let's see how close I can get to this harmful lifestyle without letting it effect my life...
- There is this person on the job that seems to really like me... let's see how close I can get by flirting... flirting is harmless right... I mean it's close... but not too close... right?

Don't eat up your moral margin. You need space between you and temptation.

It would be crazy to load a revolver with a bullet and spin the chamber and then point the gun at your head and see how close you can get before it is too close. **WAKE UP!** You are already too close! You have a loaded gun pointed to your head **DO NOT PULL THE TRIGGER... PUT THE GUN DOWN AND GET THE HECK OUT OF THERE!!!**

For some reason... when it comes to temptation we see how close we can get to the thing that is trying to kill us, ruin our relationship, steal our prosperity..

1 Corinthians 6:18a- Flee from sexual immorality.

The Greek word for Flee is **pheugo**. It means to run away, to shun, to escape, to **DISTANCE** oneself

You need to pheugo from temptation... you need to run away from sexual immorality... You need distance... You need MARGIN.

You know there aren't many places in your Bible where it tells you to run away... Your Bible tells you to fight... to wrestle... to resist... to stand... to speak... to boldly go...

BUT when it comes to temptation... especially sexual temptation... the Bible says RUN AWAY. Put Margin between you and the temptation that could hurt your marriage... put Margin between you and the temptation that could harm your reputation... Put margin between you and the temptation that will hurt others as well as yourself.

Let's take a moment and really narrow down our scope of temptation to sexual sin... And you might say "why focus on one sin when there are so many out there?"

3 Reasons

1. Churches have been afraid to talk about sexual sin. People have thought your ears were too delicate for such a topic... never mind that sexual temptation and sin is everywhere in our culture...
2. It has ruined so many lives. It has destroyed so many marriages. It has delecto'd, enticed so many people... We are going to stand up and say ENOUGH. It is time for some radical change..
3. Sexual sin hits closer to home than any other sin...

1 Cor 6:18B- Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.(NIV)

You might have thought that all sins are the same... NO! Not all sins are the same. Now the effect of sin is the same... The wage of sin is death and separation from God... But not all sin is the same

Not all sin costs you the same personally. I'm speaking personally here.

- If you speed you might get a ticket... if you gossip it may cost you some friends... BUT IF YOU SIN SEXUALLY... it could cost you your marriage... it could cost you your kids... it could cost you the respect your kids had for you... it could cost you your own self respect... it could cost you your health or life if you contracted a disease... it could cost you your job if your affair happened with an employee...

1 Sexual sin can cost you.

1 Corinthians 6:18 tells us that all other sin is outside the body... but sexual sin is against your own body.

Then the Apostle Paul underlines how important your physical body is...

1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;(NIV)

1 Corinthians 6:20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.(NIV)

You might say “Well it’s my body can’t I do whatever I want with it?” If you are a believer in Christ NO YOU CAN’T. You are God’s house. He made you and bought you with a price. You are to honor God with your body.

Sexual sin dishonors the body.. This sin is different.

Ephesians 5:3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.(NIV)

Not even a hint of sexual immorality.

The problem with culture is that the standards are so low... But with God the standards are high. If you are comparing yourself to the world you will always feel good about yourself... At least I'm not like those people...

Don't look to the culture. Look to the High Standards of Christ. Not only are we to avoid sexual immorality... we shouldn't even have a HINT of it in our life.

Here are some examples that some people would say... That's not a big deal... but I will argue that it is seeing how close we can get to temptation... At the least it could be a HINT of immorality..

The greek word for Sexual Immorality is **Porneia**. It's where we get the word pornography from. The word applies to anything sexual outside of marriage. We don't need even a hint of that in our life...

- If someone dresses seductively to get the attention of someone they aren't married to... could that be a HINT of immorality? The culture would say no... but what about God? He knows the heart..
- Reading a glamour magazine that promises "10 ways to drive your boyfriend wild in bed"... could reading that be a hint of temptation? Do we realize we might be trying to get close rather than flee sexual immorality? **IN OUR WORLD THAT IS CONSIDERED NORMAL!**

You know what else is normal in our world when it comes to sex outside of marriage? Pain, regret, lost trust, shame, guilt, fear, insecurity, divorce... If that's normal I don't want it.

The majority of marriages in the united states will be effected by adultery before the spouses turn 40 years old. That is normal. Normal is Insane. We need Margin between us and the things that can harm us.

- A married spouse flirting with a co-worker doesn't look very destructive... but how close is too close? Could it be a HINT of sexual immorality?

DECIDE TODAY that you are going to put MARGIN between you and temptation.

If you have a pornography addiction or inclination you need to put margin between you and that computer. Don't be alone with that computer. Build some accountability and install software that informs someone you trust that you have fallen into that temptation again. You might be saying... "But I would feel so ashamed..." You already feel ashamed. You feel the guilt every time and say you aren't going to do it again... It's time for radical change! Be open and honest – Banish shame by talking to your spouse.

Singles be careful when you are dating. Put space between you and immorality. Decide that you are going to save yourself for marriage. And if you aren't a virgin that doesn't mean you can't bring margin into your

life from here on.. I know that what I am telling you isn't in step with the culture... But this culture is crazy. God's way is better!

Married couples you need to save yourself for marriage as well. Save your emotions for your spouse. Couples who commit adultery are usually cheating emotionally before they cheat physically. Recognize your need for Margin.

Musician

James 1:15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.(NIV)

The temptation, the desire is conceived. After a time it gives birth to sin. You see temptation is not a sin... sin only shows up when we allow temptation to stay close to us. If we had put space between us and the temptation it might have spared us from giving birth to sin.

But if you have been tempted and have fallen into sin what happens then?

If sin is allowed to stick around, James 1:15 says it grows up and gives birth to death.

Your temptations without margin will kill you. Your sin if you allow it stick around will bring death.

So what do we do about this? I want you to come to this altar today. I want you to take time to pray and create space for God. But I also want us to take communion together.

Please join me up here in the altar area right now. Please come by this table and receive the elements of communion. We will be taking them together.

1 John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.(NIV)

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.(NIV)

This bread represents the body of Jesus

Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.(NIV)

This grape juice represents the blood of Jesus

Matthew 26:28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.(NIV)