

“Your Disk is Full.”

Genesis 2:2-2; Exodus 20:8-11, 34:21; Mark 2:27-28; Responsive Reading, “Sabbath” ¹

Have you ever seen a screen of this color before? If you’re in the Windows computing world, you probably recognize this as the color of the dreaded “blue screen of death” that appears when your computer crashes. I particularly like this one:

“An error has occurred. We don’t even know what it is, so we can’t fix it, and you have to restart your computer. Oh, by the way, if you restart your computer you will lose any unsaved information in all open applications. On the other hand, you don’t have any other option. Press ENTER to return to Windows (it won’t work), or press CTRL+ALT+DEL to restart your computer.”

Isn’t that great? Have you ever seen a screen like that?

Thankfully, I don’t see blue screens nearly so often as I used to, but when they were more frequent, the message I saw most often went like this: **“This program has performed an illegal action and will be shut down. If this problem persists, contact your program vendor.”** This kind of crash is mostly due to poor programming.

The second most frequent blue-screen I used to see went like this: **“Your disk is full. Nothing more can be added. Please delete files or insert a different disk.”** This screen shows up when I’ve misjudged how much disk space is needed or how much disk space is available. This problem becomes more and more likely as creating and downloading videos becomes easier and easier. As Murphy once wisely opined, “Things take more space than they do.”

I don’t know about you, but my life sometimes feels like a blue-screen that says, **“Your life is full. Nothing more can be added. Please delete activities or get a different life.”** Do you ever see that screen? Things just “take more time than they do,” don’t they?

As you look at this next slide, what thoughts and feelings do you have? I find this slide difficult to look at. The print’s too small. The words run together. The words run off the page in every direction, so that it’s difficult to understand some of the sentences. The page is too “busy.” Does your life ever feel like that?

How about this slide? This one’s easier to look at. The font is larger. It’s more colorful. There’s space around the edges. This verse was actually in the center of the previous slide, but we couldn’t see it because of all the busyness.

Dr. Richard Swenson has written a book about the differences between those two slides. He called it *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives*,² and there he wrote that “Marginless is being 30 minutes late to the doctor’s office because you were 20 minutes late getting out of the hairdresser because you were 10 minutes late dropping the children off at school because the car ran out of gas two blocks from a gas station and you forgot your purse. That’s Marginless. MARGIN, on the other hand, is having breath at the top of the staircase, money at the end of the month, and sanity left over at the end of adolescence.

“Marginless is *hurry*. MARGIN is calm. Marginless is our culture. MARGIN is counter-culture. Marginless is the disease of our decade and MARGIN is the cure.”

¹ A sermon by Dr. David C. Stancil, delivered at the Columbia Baptist Fellowship in Columbia, Maryland on June 2, 2013.

² NavPress, 2004.

Rick Warren agreed that “The fact that you’re always late means that there’s no MARGIN in your life. That’s why you’re always late.” He continued, “Why are we always trying to do so much? The answer is because we forget what matters most. Instead of focusing on the few things of life that really count, that really matter, that really make a difference, we just try to do everything, and as a result we get overloaded.” Does any of this sound familiar?

And, when we start to feel overloaded, where do we usually cut back? Much of the time, we cut back on time with people we love. Is that dumb, or what?

I’m frequently able to be with people while they are dying, and when people are dying, they never ask to see their diplomas, their awards, their medals, or their trophies. They don’t want to count their money. They want to see the people they love.

The price of our material prosperity is long hours, crazy schedules, fast food, and poor health. We have lots of stuff, while our relationships are frequently in shambles. We often act as though loving relationships are something we need to squeeze into our schedules at the last minute or at the end of the day; but **God says life is all about relationships.**

While achievement is nice, life isn’t really about achievement. Life isn’t about getting a lot of stuff. Life is about relationships. After all, relationships are all that will last about your life. **The only two things you’re going to take into eternity are your character and other people—people you’ve loved; people you’ve brought to Jesus.**

Rick continued, “It’s ironic to me that people sit and watch a program called ‘Friends’ instead of making friends. They will watch ‘Party of Five’ instead of having a party for five. They will watch a show called ‘Talk to Me’ instead of talking to people they care about. They will watch ‘Who Wants to Be a Millionaire,’ when the Bible says we’re bankrupt without love.”

Here are some of the warning signs of overload. See if any of them sound familiar: physical aches and pains; emotional stress; general fatigue; irritability; difficulty sleeping; physical complaints whose sources cannot be found. Recognize any of those?

God knew we would do this, so God gave us what we know as “the Fourth Commandment”: *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Exodus 20:8-11).*

And because we humans have always had a hard time getting the point, God has repeated this instruction many times: *“Six days shall you labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest” (Exodus 34:21).* *“There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of Sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD” (Leviticus 23:3).* *“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27).*

It’s because this doesn’t come naturally to us, and because we persist in ignoring God’s warnings, that many of us eventually “see a blue screen” that says something like this: **“A fatal error has occurred at location 91101-NOHOPE4U. Your life will not work until the entire operating system has been replaced.”**

And that’s why God told us, *“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God*

wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is” (Romans 12:2, NLT).

The truth of the matter is that there is plenty of time in every single day to do those things that God intends for you to do. Let me say that again: **there is plenty of time in every single day to do those things that God intends for you to do . . .** with plenty of margin to boot. And if you don’t have enough time or enough margin, guess what? You’re trying to do things God doesn’t intend for you to do.

Jesus said that he intends for our life with Him to be “abundant,” “joyful,” and “renewing.” If my life or yours doesn’t feel like that, then we’ve got stuff in our lives that Jesus doesn’t intend to be there. Did you hear that? **If your life has no Margin, then you’ve got stuff in your life that Jesus doesn’t intend to be there.** Now what you’ve got may all be good stuff, but if your life has no Margin, you’re cramped up and stressed, not joyful. Your life is not “abundant.”

Don’t worry about “remembering the milk.” Remember the Margin. Margin is breathing room. Margin is a little reserve in your life that you’re not using up. Margin is that uncluttered time around the edges of our lives where we find renewal and strength. And more often than not, God speaks to us most clearly “in the Margin.”

Our lives have Margin—if they do—as a direct result of choices—our choices. So put space in your schedule. Nobody else is going to put space in your schedule. You’re going to have to schedule Margin yourself.

I must warn you, though, that choosing Margin often generates objections from others. They don’t understand our choices. They resent the fact that we’re not as stressed as they are—and they’re usually doing good stuff. There’s just too much of it. They’ve lost focus. The Main Thing is no longer the Main Thing.

Paul told us that the way to freedom, to Margin, is to let God change the way we think. We’ve gotten our mental system files all messed up, and we need to reload our minds from God’s Mind. After God has worked this transformation—and only then—will we be able to see what needs to be cut out of our lives, and what needs to be added. Only then will we be able to see and experience the beauty of what God intends in a “Margin-filled life.” Only then will we know, and know for sure, that “In the Lord, the Lord alone, is everything I need.”

Remember this: just because a need exists and you could possibly meet that need doesn’t always mean that God intends for you to meet that need. There is plenty of time in every single day to do those things that God intends for you to do . . . with margin left over, most days. When a man ran up to Jesus and asked Him for the “Cliff Notes” version of the Bible, Jesus answered, **“Okay, here it is: Love God and Love Other People. That’s it.”**

Rick Warren, in his characteristically memorable way of describing things, wrote that “The best use of life is **love**. The best expression of love is **time**. And the best time to love is **now**.” If you go through this day without showing love to someone, then no matter what else you’ve done today, the day was wasted. Why should God give you another day if you wasted this one? And what guarantee do you have that you or the others in your life are going to be alive on this earth tomorrow?

Do you want your life to be marginless, or do you want your life to be peaceful, with a quiet, strong center? The way to “get there from here” is to let Jesus be your Center. He’s the only anchor that will hold. His is the only heart that is pure. His are the only purposes that will endure. Choose to put first things first . . . today!

Sabbath

Leader: *“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done (Genesis 2:2-3).*

People: ***“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Exodus 20:8-11).***

Leader: *“The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed (Exodus 31:16-17).*

People: ***“Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest (Exodus 34:21).***

Leader: *“There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of Sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD (Leviticus 23:3).*

People: ***“Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27-28).***

Leader: *He said to them, “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Matthew 12:11-12).*

People: ***“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29).***

Reader One: The Word of God for the People of God!

People: **Thanks be to God!**