

M A R G I N

creating space for what matters most

Hello Everyone my Name is Enrique Alejandro Lopez, **most people call me Henry**, I am one of the pastors here at Shadow Hills and I, like many of you have a **MARGIN problem**.

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The M A R G I N in my life looks nothing like this greatly designed logo.

The M A R G I N in my life actually looks like this

Slide 2

[→MARGIN←] cramped

who am I kidding it actually looks more like this [**MARGIN**]

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I believe many of you can relate to either of these forms of limited margin?

Today is the third part in a teaching series on **creating space for the things that matter most**. Our specific topic today is

Spiritual Margin.

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Before I continue I must state a **disclaimer**.

I am not here to teach you, how to create more space, for God in your life. I say this, because **a lesson on creating more space for an Omnipresent God would be :/oxymoronic:/**

We cannot create more space: for the One who **created S P A C E**,

What we can learn to do, is live the lives God intended for us to live, in the space He has given us to live them in .

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To live with spiritual margins means to live within the boundaries that God has set. The two main boundary lines that God has set for us are: living in Christ and like Christ.

In order to live in and for CHRIST we have to have two things the right perspective and the right priorities.

And there ya have it – spiritual margin is living within the lines God has set. These lines are living in Christ and living for Christ by having the right perspective as our foundation right priorities as our guidelines.

Before we go any further, I would like to lead us in a Prayer, I encourage you to either say the

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prayer on the screen in your heart and mind or out loud.

Lets Pray.

God by your word, teach, encourage, and if need be challenge me today, Jesus grow my connection and my obedience to you and your word today, and Holy Spirit prepare me in advance to share what I will learn today, so that you may use me to be light in a darkened world. Amen.

What does it look like to live in and live for Christ?

What's the measuring line for something like this.

Thanks to the Apostle Paul we have a great overview of what a person with who lives in and lives for Christ looks like. Paul in the book of Romans dedicates the first 11 chapters to setting up **proper gospel doctrines** for the Jewish & Gentile believers in Rome. In Chapter 12 Paul begins to teach on **what practical gospel living** looks like.

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In essence He says that those who live in Christ and for Christ do the following;

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1.) Present your bodies as holy & acceptable to God.

(vs.1)(they do this by)

2.) Don't conform to this world, be transformed by the **renewal** of your mind.(vs.2) (proof of a renewed mind)

3.) Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought, have sober judgment. (you live within the bounds set by God when you (vs.3)

4.) Love genuinely w/brotherly affection, detest what is evil, hold fast to what is good. (vs.4)

5.) Outdo one another in showing honor. (vs.10)

6.) Don't be lazy in your devotion, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. (vs.11)(When you)

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7.) Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. (vs.12)

8.) Contribute to the needs of the saints & seek to show hospitality. (vs.13)

9.) Bless those who persecute you; bless & do not curse them. (vs.14)

(When you)

10.) Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. (vs.15)

11.) Live in harmony w/one another. Don't be proud, but associate w/the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. (vs.16)

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12.) Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought, to do what is honorable in the sight of all. (vs.17)

13.) So far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. (vs.18)

14.) Never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God. (vs.19)

15.) If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink,.. (vs.20)

16.) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (vs.21)

There it is, a 4k, high definition picture of what it looks like to live in and for Christ.

There it is, the glorious vision of how we can stay ever so close to our Loving God & how we can extend, the grace that we have received to those around us – including our enemies.

At the same time there it is – a list that points to how much, we have yet to grow.

God has every right to call us to live by the truths in Romans 12 because He lived them first and because He lived them we are blessed.

We fail to live within these bounds because:

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[our Perspectives, our Priorities, our Pride, & our Passions] are either slightly or radically skewed.

So what is the right perspective, what do we need to see and understand more clearly in order to live in Jesus and for Jesus.

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The first thing to know is that:

1. That living in Christ & living for Christ starts with knowing the right truths about Christ.

The right perspective starts with the understanding That God is the creator, that He came lived amongst what He created and that He created us to with Him and like Him.

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16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.
17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
Colossians 1:16-17 ESV

Paul who wrote book of Romans, also penned these words for the church of Colossae from a Roman prison. He wrote to Colossians because their church at the time was being pulled apart by misconceptions. Greek and Jewish teachers were mixing their philosophies and traditions with the Gospel. **Jesus** was being **redefined**, **perspectives** were being **skewed** and the **parameters** of gospel living were being **blurred**.

In order to prevent the spread and stop the influence of these false teachers Paul writes:

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19 For in him (Jesus) all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order **to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him. Colossians 1:19-22**

Paul wrote these words to combat the false teachings of Greek Gnostic philosophy and Jewish legalism. Gnostics claimed that salvation was thru a secret knowledge and Jesus (*whom they defined as, at best a really high angel but not human in any form.*) While the others claimed that salvation was thru Christ, and following the laws of Moses and by sticking to Jewish traditions.

Paul doesn't put up with the Gnostic non-sense or the legalistic Jewish jargon because he knew that our greatest goal is not to be more like men but to be more like God's Son.

Paul echoes Colossians in the book of Ephesians, which was written for a similar purpose, in it he says:

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4 ...he (God) chose us in him (Jesus) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

Eph. 1:4 (ESV)

This one sentence is packed with huge theological truths **but the gist is this: God is fully aware that – that** we would naturally strive to copy and be consumed by the world and that we would try to define our own

margins to live by rather than submitting to His.

It has always been God's plan to redeem fallen man, God took the initiative in our salvation by making Jesus is the source of our holiness, so it is God desire that we would reflect Christ character.

The boundary lines that we are supposed to live in are between two stretched out arms, two nail pierced hands and nothing else. We are to live in Christ.

A guy who used to be too hardheaded for holiness put it this way:

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14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

- the words of Peter the Apostle (1 Peter 1:14-16 ESV)

The word that Peter uses for

holiness in this verse means – Slide 17

to be different because you are like God.

If there is any one in all of scripture who tried to live by his own definition of spiritual margins it's was Peter. He had a hard time submitting to the

parameters that Jesus was setting.

No Jesus can't wash my feet Jesus.

Oh, no! Jesus I'm drowning, No Jesus I won't let them arrest,
No, Jesus you shall not can't be killed and then raise on the third
day.

**Do you remember what Jesus said to Peter after that
comment?**

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23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You
are a hindrance to me. **For you are not setting your mind on
the things of God, but on the things of man."** Matthew 16:23

You got the wrong perspective Peter.

Our perspective must shift off, of the things of man
if we are to live in Christ and for Christ.

I am so grateful that we get to see Peter's transformation in the
scriptures. Most of us can relate to a human like him.

A human who struggled for sure but one who eventually got it.

Peter came to realize that

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**Spirituality is about surrendered completely
to the Savior's will and work.**

Our perspective must shift onto the work of God
if we are to live within scope God desires.

**God spoke your environment into existence,
God created you in His likeness & gave you His breath,
God showed you His Character, and attributes thru Israel's
history,
God became one of you and was born like you,
Jesus lived your life, so you'll know, that He gets you,
Jesus lived a God glorifying life to be your example,
Jesus became all of your sin's, to destroy the consequences
meant for U!**

**God gave you His Holy Spirit to teach and counsel you,
The Holy Spirit inspired Word of God so you could
know Him and make Him known.
God gave you and made you, a part of Christ's body- the
Church!
and JESUS is preparing an eternal place for you,
so that you may be where He is.**

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**The right perspective is that God calls us
to live in Jesus, for Jesus and like Jesus
because He has made much of us through Jesus.**

So far we have talked about how the right perspective helps us live within lines God desires. That living in Christ and living for Christ starts with knowing the right truths about Christ. I would now like to focus our attention on how the **right priorities** helps us live in and for Christ.

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2. Living in and living for Christ means, living out God's Commands.

Thankfully for us, the equivalent to a modern-day scholar, an expert in the law of Moses asked Jesus very specifically what should be our greatest priority, aka what is God's greatest command. I want to paint the scene for you before we get into the biblical text. Jesus has had a full day of interrogation and teaching. The Sanhedrin - Chief Priest, Scribes and Elders asked Jesus *"by who's authority do you do what you do?"*, then the Pharisees joined up with their rival gang the Herodians and asked Jesus some IRS questions about paying taxes to Caesar in front of the auditors, and then Sadducees treated Jesus like He was on some morning talk show and asked him a question about a lady with seven husbands and eternal life. All these people came to Jesus with these tricky questions in order to trap in His words so they could arrest and beat and or kill him.

Now we enter our biblical text.

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28 And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he (Jesus) answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?”
What should be our top priority)29 Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.
30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’
31 The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’
There is no other commandment greater than these.”

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32 And the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. 33 And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” 34 And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God...” Mark 12:28-34

The first thing to note, is that

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priorities and passions are linked. “The most important commandment is, the greatest priority is:

The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God. This verse begins with the priority of knowing who God is – God is the Lord and One, then the verse tells us how to respond to God. Love the Lord your God.

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Putting Passions before Priorities = Idolism

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Having Priorities w/no Passion = legalism

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Having Passions w/no Priorities = Adolescence

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Having Priorities combined w/Passion = Obedience

This Scribe like the others simply wanted Jesus to trip over his own words. But Jesus quotes from Deut. 6 to teach the strict rule following scribe that ritual does not assure salvation and that how we treat others reveals our devotion to God.

The book of Deuteronomy was pretty much written as an instruction manual for the Israelites as they were setting off for foreign lands which God had promised.

But before God sent Israel into a new world and a new existence God felt it very necessary to remind them, **to not make more of their world than they do of HIM.**

Essentially it's like the parental message, that we say to our children today, before we **send them off somewhere**, listen **“Don't forget who you are and don't forget who's you are.”**

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Very specifically through Moses he told them:

4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. **6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.**

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7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:4-9

This set of scriptures is called the Shema – it is a prayer that the Jewish people have been reciting twice a day for centuries.

In this custom and more importantly in the scriptures that this custom arises from we see that priorities must be practiced in order to be maintained.

Living in and living for Christ, by living out God's commands is to be a continual lifestyle.

Given Israel's history and our own battles between flesh and spirit we can see that when priorities and passions shifts, obedience shifts.

Deuteronomy 6 gives us five priorities we should strive to keep as we live in and for Christ.

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1. *Loving God with ALL you got.*

*You shall **love** the Lord with all your heart, all soul, and all **might!** Deut. 6:5*

When **heart and soul** are used together in this scripture they refer to the **complete person**. The word for **soul** in this verse means **passionate desire**, and the word **might** refers to strength, to energy and to power.

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2. *Keep God's commands at the core of your being.*

*These words that I command you today shall be on your **heart!** Deut.6:6 **The Heart** is the center of one's **thoughts and will** in the **OT**.*

We keep God's commands **at our** core thru prayer and being in His word. Don't just read the scriptures **soak** in them, **let them saturate every neuron of your brain**, to the point where your **gray matter starts to look like newspaper print with the scriptures written all over it.**

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We keep God's commands at our core when we get God in on the conversation going on in our heads in prayer. Prayer **changes things** because it **changes how we see** things. To read God's word and pray more means to fear and worry less Reading God's word and praying helps us fall into temptation less.

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The 3rd priority we see is that we are to,
3. Sharpen the next generation with the truth of God.
Teach them **diligently** to your children Deut 6:7

This starts in our homes and should bleed over into our Church. Invest into those spiritually younger than you.

There is opportunities to help **Preschool thru College student programs.**

by teaching, co-leading, mentoring, feeding, and helping us invest in the legacy of our faith as we continue to pay down the debt of the student building.

The Church is one generation away from extinction – if you don't believe me read the first half of your Bible – **obedience to God is not hereditary it is a learned behavior.** It takes a God dependent village to raise the godly visionaries of tomorrows church. And that is all of our responsibility.

Along with these 3 God tells us that we are keeping the priority of living in him and for him when-

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4. Share the good news of His word & goodness everywhere.

Talk of them in your house, in the streets, when you rest and when you rise. Deut 6:7 God is basically telling us to **Go on about your business** by sharing the many blessings He has poured out on us. **Will people belittle you, Yes! That's** because bitter people don't know what it's like to be blessed! So it's up to us to show-m & tell-m!

Lastly God tells us that prioritizing Him is seen

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5. Stop being socially bashful about His presence in our lives.

Bind them as a sign on your hands and heads and **write them** on your door post and gates. Deut 6:8-9

Rabbi's have taken this very literal, but this passage was meant to be metaphorical and symbolize that God is to **reign and rule** in our homes as well as in our social settings.

Simply put, when you go out and play take Jesus with you. Do this in a natural way not an awkward or weird manner. I fear that some of you don't think that **"I LOVE JESUS"** because I didn't forward your "IF you love Jesus then send this to 1000 people request."

God calls us to be Salt and Light, not to be bitter and piercing.

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As you go about your life this week keep in mind, that the space God created us to live in lies between living in Christ and living for Christ. We do this by having the right perspective and the maintaining the right priorities. That means knowing the right truths and living out God's Commands.

I would now like to encourage you to stand as we bring our service to a close. **In Prayer and in Response**

Either to yourselves or out Loud please join me in this prayer.

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God, I admit that I don't always see things your way. Your truths get blurred and so I don't live in Christ or for Christ as I should. Jesus, I confess that I make too much of myself and so I don't make much of you. Holy Spirit, I ask that would guide me into a right relationship with God the Father through His Son, that I may know, and believe, and live the right truths. Amen.

**During this song we want to give
you a chance to respond to God's word today.**

If you have come to **realize** that you need to **place faith in
Jesus**
come and **ask one of our Leaders** help you do that.

If you desire to **become a member** of our **family of faith**
come and ask one of our **Leaders** to walk you thru that.

If it has been a **tough week, month or season**
and you just want **some prayer**
come and ask one of our **Leaders** to join you.

If you want to come down to the front, as a **sign of thanksgiving**
and **praise** God then come.

This is **your time of response**
whether you **come down**
or **stay where you are**,
either way this is a good chance to get God in on t
he conversation in your heads and hearts.

This time is Yours.

