

**THE BIG IDEA:** Because we're limited, we need to limit what we do and who we do it with.

### The Take-Off

If you've been with us any at all during the month of July, you know that we've been talking about how important it is to breathe.

Not just physically (although that's a no brainer!), but in other areas of our lives where we can often feel like the oxygen is getting squeezed out of us, and specifically in the areas of our calendars, our cash, and our connections.

If you don't get anything else out of this series, I hope you get a greater understanding that having it all is impossible. In fact, the world sells us on the possibility that if we're smart enough, strong enough and good enough that we'll find a way to have it all.

God is eternal, but we're finite and frail.

God is limitless, but you and I are limited.

God is everlasting to everlasting, but we deal in 24 hour days.

God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, but we own houses with a thousand bills!

God knows and loves everyone, but we know and love a handful at the most.

Last week we talked about cash, and the need to put God first in our finances.

But we also know that our cash is limited, which is why we tell our kids that "money doesn't grow on trees."

See, you already agree that we're limited in our cash.

Those same limits exist in our calendars and our connections, and this morning I want to talk about both of those areas.

The Big Idea I want you to walk away with is simple: Because we're limited, we need to limit what we do and who we do it with.

What will separate the people who can't breathe from the people who can will be what we do once we realize that we are, in fact, limited.

Most people react to that with denial: they live as if they aren't limited. They do what they want, spend however much they want, and try to be everything to everybody.

Guess what happens? Eventually, they hit their limit - the limit that was always there.

What's the right response? Simply to put limits in place - to build margin into these areas - to say "no" to most things so you can keep saying "yes" to the best things.

So let's wrap up the "Breathe" series by talking about calendars and connections, and how we can live with margin in those areas.

## **1. Counting our days will make our days count**

- a. A little over 7 years ago, a nurse named Bronnie Ware started to notice some common themes among her patients.
- b. Bonnie cared for patients who were dying, all of them in the last 3 to 12 weeks of their lives.
- c. She went on to publish what she'd learned in a memoir called "The Top 5 Regrets of the Dying."
- d. Here are the top 2:
  - #2: I wish I didn't work so hard
    - this came from EVERY MALE PATIENT she cared for
    - they spoke of missing out with loved ones because of work
  - #1: I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me
    - the most common regret of all was based in choices made or not made
    - there is clarity that comes at the end about what mattered the most and what didn't
- e. We didn't need Bronnie to discover that. God's known this all along. In Psalm 90:12, Moses made a request of God that would help many of us: "Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom."
- f. What I love about Moses' prayer is that it was 100% grounded in knowing that only God has the perspective to give us that insight, because only God is "everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 90:2)
- g. Daytimers, time management workshops, software, books can all offer man's insight, but the only way to truly gain wisdom about our days on this planet is to gain an eternal perspective
- h. Understanding that our time is limited helps us know what to say "yes" to and what to say "no" to
- i. Counting our days helps us make our days count

## 2. Relationship success comes from pouring more into less

- a. I need to explain this, because it sounds so unloving, doesn't it?
- b. God wants us to love everyone, but when we do that, we find ourselves bumping up against limits again
- c. The way to get the most out of relationships is actually to pour into LESS of them
- d. When it comes to our connections, we need margin in the NUMBER of them and in the NATURE of them
- e. We need margin in the NUMBER of our connections (Groups):
  - Basically, the deeper the connection, the less of them we can have
  - I love how Larry Osborne uses Legos to explain connections
  - He says that all of us are like lego pieces and only have a limited number of connectors
  - Once they're full, we can't add any more meaningful connections
  - You can have lots of acquaintances, but only a few meaningful connections, especially if we are connecting in relationships that are
    - Loving
    - Engaging
    - Godly, and
    - Ongoing
    - That's a LEGO relationship, and over-connecting diminishes the effectiveness of the connections
- f. We need margin in the NATURE of our connections (Grace):
  - The number of connections we have need to be gracious in nature!
  - Grace is what keeps relationships from blowing up, like oil in an engine
  - Engines that run low on oil will eventually blow; so will connections that run low on grace
  - Colossians 3:13 / make allowances - make room!!
  - What does that look like? Like cars that give me room to run!!!
  - Be a person who gives plenty of grace to the relationships in your life
  - Make room for others to make mistakes, and then throw grace over it
  - Proverbs 17:9

### The Landing

How do we land this series? What do I want you to remember most?

Simply this: you and I are limited, but God isn't.

He is able to do more with our less, and so the best choice we can make is to honor him by living with margin in our calendars, our cash, and our connections.

Don't fight limits; invite God into them, and watch an unlimited God work miracles in the margin.

Let's pray.