



Overload, Margin, and the Christian Homeschooler

presented by
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Based on the books:
Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives and The Overload Syndrome: Learning to Live Within Your Limits, both by Richard A. Swenson.
Also please consider his devotional-type book *A Minute of Margin: Restoring Balance to Busy Lives*.

What is Overload?

The Problem

Overload is giving someone, including oneself, more work or stress than they can bear. It is not just working, but overworking... Not just being committed, but being overcommitted... Not just being conscientious, but being overly conscientious. Not just being tired—but being exhausted.

"For some, to say that we have limits seems to limit God. But saying that we have limits in no way suggests that God has limits." --Richard Swenson

Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gently and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

"Chronic overloading is not a spiritual prerequisite for authentic Christianity. Quite the contrary, overloading is often what we do when we forget who God is." -- Swenson

"Perhaps we need to get less done, but the right things."
-- Jean Fleming

What is Margin?

The Solution

"Margin is the difference between our load and our limits. It is the amount allowed beyond that which is needed... the gap between rest and exhaustion, the space between breathing freely and suffocating." --Richard Swenson

"Everything takes longer than it does"
-- Ecuadorian proverb

Balance means not having super-excellence in one area at the cost of failure in another. It means 'prioritizing' my life with God in the center and everything else around Him. I cannot throw extra into one area without taking it from another.

"God did not create hurry"
-- Finnish proverb

Schedule (Time) Margin

"I love a broad margin to my life... Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a reverie." -- Henry David Thoreau

1. Learn to say No
2. Choose carefully; "be available for God's schedule change"
3. Create buffer zones between events; stand in line
4. Schedule free time
5. Thank God continuously: Contentment

"We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God"
-- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Physical Margin

"When we dip into the tank for physical energy, we all want the ladle to return with something in it. Unfortunately, for too many of us the tank dried up years ago." -- Richard Swenson

1. Take responsibility; resolve health issues and habits
2. Healthy eating, don't snack, less-packaged foods
3. Drink lots of water
4. Exercise (stick with it, be realistic)
5. Value sleep! Develop healthy sleep habits

"We do not rest because our work is done; we rest because God commanded it and created us to have a need for it."
-- Gordon MacDonald

Emotional Margin

"Each morning we rise to meet the day with a certain quantum of emotional energy... We often have trouble accepting the idea of rationing our emotional energy... We feel ashamed admitting that our spirit is exhausting and collapsing within us." -- Richard Swenson

1. Cultivate friendships; reconcile relationships; boundaries
2. Spend time with a pet; rest; spend time alone
3. Laugh (a half hour a day) & Cry (6-7 min, as needed)
4. Hope -- envision a better future
5. Offer thanks; grant grace to others

"We become defensive about our expended energies because there isn't anything left to give. Having nothing in reserve, we tune out the need."
-- Louis H. Evans, Jr.

Financial Margin

"Many have been treading water so long that they can't remember what it was like to have money left at the end of the month." -- Richard Swenson

1. Kingdom first
2. Break debt's back; travel in the right direction
3. Counter culture; decrease spending ; resist impulses; share, lend, borrow—simplicity and gratitude.
4. Live within your harvest; discipline desires; and redefine needs; make a budget
5. Don't mortgage the future!

"Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy."
-- 1 Timothy 6:17