**TEACHING FROM REST: MARGIN**

Happy Fall, Ya’ll! Now that we are in October and have several months of school under our belts, I wanted to share the word “margin” to you from Teaching from Rest. Since I was unable to be at the ladies October meeting due to illness, I wanted to send out the idea of “margin”. Sarah Mackenzie gives some great suggestions in one of her chapters on how to look at your homeschool schedule and add in “margin” in the planning. What is margin? She gives this definition as restoring emotional, physical, financial and time resources to your overloaded lives.

**Practical application-**

1. Start with a “time budget”

a. Looking at what God has given you”, not at your list. Then, as you make your list, the things that need to be on, or off it will fall in line.

b. Non-negotiables – What are your non-negotiables? Sleep, eating, shower, prayer time, exercise, meal prep, church, morning coffee, wind down time with family, time for your spouse, extended family, or friends….

2. Insist on building in Margin- learning to restore how you manage your time and resources. Once you have your non-negotiables, fill in 80% of schooling on the lesson plan for that week, not fill it to the brim.

a. Example- 3 hours of school will not be 3 hours of homeschooling, but 80% of homeschooling. She has a visual in her book on what this may look like: Math (60 mins), Language (30 mins) and Phonics for youngers (15 mins) would be a total of 120 minutes time allotted, but time scheduled would be 105 minutes (80%). Why do this? By leaving room with a margin, when unexpected things come up during the lesson, that flex time will give your child more time to work out concepts and avoid a rushed, or crammed lesson.

In another book, Margin, by Richard Swenson, he says, “Margin is the space between our load and our limits. It is the amount allowed beyond that which is needed. It is something help in reserve for contingencies or unanticipated situations. Margin is the gap between rest and exhaustion, the space between breathing freely and suffocating.”

Anyone besides me have “unanticipated situations” in life? --- Yes! It’s hard balancing the load realistically and knowing your limit.

b. A peaceful homeschool mom includes margin in her day. Anyone want some peace in her day? Peace does not mean the absence of conflict, it means we are able to apply words and actions of peace in our day, as we go through life. By applying the 80% example to fill up each subject and leave a 20% flex gives wiggle room for the unexpected and provides a more peaceful mom who has breathing room in her schedule.

1. Break out the mold of what your calendar and school “should look like”.

Ideas: year-round schooling, teach some subjects in the summer, teach 6 weeks on, 1 week off, teach a 4-day week and 1 day for activities, catch up day/review day, field trip day, ministry day or try a “loop schedule”. A loop schedule she explains is where certain days are for science, another day is history, and another art. These subjects may just be one day a week, while other subject like grammar, math, reading is daily.

…. You get the picture- what works for YOU?

4. Morning time habits- “Teach our children to love that which is lovely”. In your house, what gets pushed to the side that you desire for them to learn and know?

**Ideas on how to implement:**
“Deep Dive Mondays”- (or pick your day) Start with each child, or all at the same time- have this day be the focus for your family, such as: a Bible truth, passage, or character topic your family needs for the week, add memorization time, communicating about the week, the view of lessons, hearing each child on how they are doing, or possibly discuss some current issues, etc.

For our family, Monday morning is our main “dive in day”, I call it “the wall”. I sit down with my MS son and we walk through our day- I have a schedule printed out of what we typically do for the week. We walk visually over what is ahead, so we can plan the week of studies. We go over several subjects together, work through co-op HW for the day and then he goes and does the assignments. Then later- we group back together and go over it. This gives us to make sure we are both on the same page before we start our main learning. It also gives time to talk about practical application from Sunday at church, or the youth book he is reading. We talk throughout the week, this just gives me the one main day where I am intentional on getting across important truths, or the plan for the week.

For our youngest- We go over her “wall”- it is ABC’s, counting, calendar, days of the week, months, phonics, and Bible verse. Then we begin our lessons. As her mom, I fill her love tank up before we start up with our daily work. Since she is younger, our dive in day is pretty much every day, so she can learn good habits with me as we learn.

Our older teens have been developing their “habits” all through their homeschooling years, so it is drastically different from their siblings. They are going off in different directions and the time I sit down with them varies throughout the day. Usually our discussions on ‘how are you doing today, how’s this subject going?’ and our main discussions are at night. The season they are in is how THEY are going to apply what they have been taught and learn to manage their schedules. We give advice and redirect where we see they need help in balance of their school, work and outside activities.

Margin, a valuable word to learn on how it can be applied to our lives. As you go through tweaking your homeschool day, consider how to leave wiggle room and not fill to the brim. Try it, you may find, this concept brings some peace and some breathing room your family needs as you school and in daily life.

See you soon!

In Christ Alone,

Jyl Griffin