




Talking through the message during the week helps you turn what God is saying to you into action steps.


How do you respond to an amber (yellow/orange) light?

 **Proverbs 7:1-5** and **1 Thessalonians 4:1-12**

The answer to this question is a clue to how we lead ourselves in all parts of our life.

In this country the amber light is seen on the fuel gauge of a car, the vehicles repairing the road, traffic signals and car indicators. They all have one message: take care, your margin is reduced. Do you continue to run the car on the amber light for as long as you can, hoping there is just enough petrol left? Do you cut the deadline as fine as possible to get to work or complete that task so that if anything goes wrong you'll be late? Jetstar has taught travellers that when they say *be checked-in 30 minutes before departure* they mean it and one experience of being late teaches the traveller to allow more time to get to the airport. Life can be like that!

Do we have built in warning systems?

 **Psalm 4:8 & 23:1-3** and **1 Kings 19:1-8**

The most brilliant creator in the Universe, God, created us so we know He has put into us warning systems to alert us when we have stretched our life too far. These are not just in our physical bodies, but also our emotional, mental and spiritual being. We have an amazing body, we can go for ages running at maximum capacity but if we don't rest our body one day it will shut down and force us to rest. This is often called burn-out if we mentally collapse or we have physical sickness as the immune system becomes weakened. In extreme cases the result is death. God expects us to learn about these warning systems. He expects us to grow up and take responsibility for caring for our body and minds. The life and death question is do we know our warning systems and do we act appropriately when they activate *constant tiredness, stress, anger, frequently sick, panic, frustration, rushing*

What are the warning systems for our moral and spiritual margins?

 **1 Timothy 1:5-7** and **Romans 2:12-16**

This is far trickier to learn. When we fall into sin and ignore the warning systems of our own conscience, other believers, the Word, the Spirit and our training then we are usually blind to further warnings and disaster is sure to follow. Jentezen Franklin describes it like we have to drive down a 10 km road with over 250 warning signs saying things like 'turn back' or 'danger ahead' and we ignore them all. This aspect presents the greatest risk to us as it has eternal consequences for us and others we know.

NEXT STEPS

Stop and think about your life.
Where on the line do I fit on the line?



Work and Christian ministry commitments

40hrs/week 80+ hrs/week

Relationship & family time

lots of undivided attention fragments only

My finances

surplus each week maximum debt

Time spent with God

continual intimacy only Sunday service

Moral choices (books, movies, TV, internet, people)

No secrets/clear conscience secrets/guilt

My health and rest (sleep)

fit/sleep 7-8hrs/night unwell/short poor sleep

These are simple ranges for our normal daily life and don't take account for the effects from trauma, serious illness or choices of other people.

Margin

One of the dictionary definitions for a margin is "an amount allowed or available beyond what is actually necessary". We like such margins to be present in the design of airplanes, buildings or bridges. Margin has also been described as the space between our current performance and our limits. As margins reduce stress levels go up, focus narrows and relationships suffer.

It has been observed that our intimacy in relationships happens in our marginal time. Consider how most of our week (65% on average) is spent sleeping or working. Eating, housework and everything else we do has to fit into nine hours a day. It sounds like a lot but most of us know that doesn't seem to be enough time. It is this pressure which can rob of us of time for relationships with friends, neighbours, children, a spouse, our relations and God.

Someone once said that God has given us enough time to do all that He has asked. If we don't have enough time, is this an indicator that something is out of balance? Another person observed that lack of margin in our life can be an indication of a lack of faith in God or idolatry when we place other priorities ahead of Him. Challenging comments worth thinking about.