

# Break Free...

*A Thought for the Week From Patrick Kemper at  
No Strongholds Ministries*

*Week #4*

## Reapply Liberally

*Romans 5:20 (TLB)*

*<sup>20</sup> The Ten Commandments were given so that all could see the extent of their failure to obey God's laws. But the more we see our sinfulness, the more we see God's abounding grace forgiving us.*

More pressure = better results... do you ascribe to this logic?

As parents of eight children, my wife and I often find ourselves in the position of administering discipline and reiterating established structure with a higher-than-normal frequency compared to families who have fewer kids. More often than I'd like to admit, I have found myself applying the above-mentioned mentality of pressure and results.

Is that perspective really a healthy one?

If we are the ones who are supposed to be teaching and instructing, "... in the way that he should go," (Prov. 22:6) what should our attitude and motivation be? After years of being a parent, and a manager of bigger people, the more I have come to understand that my job as a parent, my job as a leader of people in ministry and my job as a Christian, is to help others grow and become better for *their* benefit – not mine. If we as leaders (as parents, friends or business associates) are truly leading, then our tolerance level for the mistakes of those we hope to influence needs to take on a well-defined set of parameters and must remain consistent.

### *Application*

As leaders, as influencers of people, we can take on the mentality of the king who initially forgave the debt of a servant who owed him more than could be repaid. This scenario started out well, but ended disastrously. When the servant acted brashly towards another (who was remiss in covering obligations to the servant), the king then

crushed the servant. There are times when this assertion of authority and message needs to be sent, but most of the time the severity of a situation does not call for such action.

This should be a rare occurrence.

For all the other situations, we can choose to offer grace to those we wish to influence and be prepared to reapply, liberally, for as long as is necessary... and for as long as the grace, and we, are not being exploited.

How do we do that? I believe we need to establish our motivation for acting. Whether we are raising kids or developing a staff, we always have to maintain a firm grasp on *why* we are doing *what* we are doing.

If the benefit of others is truly our motivation, we need to consistently check ourselves as we interact with our people and be sure any decision for increased pressure is still in line with the objective of raising up that individual – instead of getting results we want, no matter what the cost.

We need to remember that God doesn't choose to sit on His throne in heaven and cast out lightning bolts to zap us into shape when we make mistakes. He has chosen to come down to us (where we are), resides in our innermost place (to be as close as possible) and works patiently to affect us at the deepest levels. As long as our intention is to improve in obedience and increase in our knowledge of His desires, His efforts will continue to reciprocate and His interactions in our lives will focus on making us better through gentle encouragement and instruction.

If, at any point, our attitude seeks to exploit the situation, God will adjust His interactions. He may always have our best interest at heart, but if we dare to presume He isn't aware of our true intentions (and we attempt to take advantage of His generosity and grace), we shouldn't be surprised when the attention we receive from Him takes on an approach designed to dutifully get us back on the right track.

God will not be mocked.

***Galatians 6:4-7 (HCSB)***

<sup>4</sup> *But each person should examine his own work, and then he will have a reason for boasting in himself alone, and not in respect to someone else.*

<sup>5</sup> *For each person will have to carry his own load.*

<sup>6</sup> *The one who is taught the message must share all [his] good things with the teacher.*

<sup>7</sup> *Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows he will also reap...*

As you progress through your week, pause as often as is necessary to examine your motivation for the actions you take. As you seek to influence people (whether kids, co-workers or fellow Christ-followers), cling to a commitment to make a positive difference for *their* benefit... and reapply grace liberally.

# Homework for the Week...

1.) How do you interact with those you seek to influence? Do you need to apply more grace... or less? Are you more interested in achieving overall results, or concerned about the methods by which you achieve them? Do you need to make changes in your methods to reflect a mission of benefitting others over achieving results? Do your choices in leadership reflect how you view God as your superior? Do you attempt to please Him in order to avoid disciplinary action, or do you seek to live in obedience out of respect and admiration? Write down what needs work and what methods you will use to begin accomplishing this. Ask God to help you identify your modes of operation and to discern whether or not you need to make some changes. Who can you contact to help you?

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2.) Mid-week check. List the opportunities you have had and how you responded (this is your obedience indicator). If you are still posting a doughnut, more than likely you weren't all that truthful when you asked God for chances to respond and improve. Check your heart; be authentic. Ask God to show you the way through what is blocking you from submitting in obedience.

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3.) How are you doing compared to the way you started the week? If you still need improvement, refuse to move on to the next session. Stay here, submit, and choose to be obedient no matter what it takes. Explain how you have improved, or make a commitment to continue working. When you are operating in obedience in this area of your life... turn the page and move to the next session.

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