

# Break Free...

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

*Week 5*

## Spiritual Road Pizza

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (TLB)**

<sup>24</sup> *In a race everyone runs, but only one person gets first prize. So run your race to win.*

<sup>25</sup> *To win the contest you must deny yourselves many things that would keep you from doing your best. An athlete goes to all this trouble just to win a blue ribbon or a silver cup, but we do it for a heavenly reward that never disappears.*

<sup>26</sup> *So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step. I fight to win. I'm not just shadow-boxing or playing around.*

<sup>27</sup> *Like an athlete I punish my body, treating it roughly, training it to do what it should, not what it wants to. Otherwise I fear that after enlisting others for the race, I myself might be declared unfit and ordered to stand aside.*

Road pizza... our kids' sarcastically disgusting (and hysterically funny) euphemism for the remains of an animal that has been run over in the road.

In the rural Midwest, where we currently live, the sight of dead animals (while driving) is more common than a country road that actually has striping down the middle to separate the lanes. Every time I have to dodge a carcass in the road (or swerve to prevent from making one), I think about what a waste it is.

There it is... just lying there.

It will never breathe again; never see another sunset. Cars and trucks continue to roll over it until there is nothing left to even scrape off the road. The creature's usefulness is over, never to return, and the activity steamrolling over it (until it is completely obliterated) shows that not a single soul, anywhere, is affected by the loss of a life that once was.

Some of you are thinking I must be a bit squishy if I get all worked up about dead critters. I may be a little too philosophical about a squashed squirrel, but there is no denying the validity of the observations I have made. A life that once was, is now no longer... and will never be coming back. Nothing – and no one – is stopping to even notice. The procession just keeps on rolling until there's nothing left to salvage

I bring this to light because the world is filling up with people who may not be clinically dead, but a quick examination of their connection to God (or actually, the lack thereof) qualifies them as *spiritual road pizza*.

Let's see if I can explain what I mean.

When it comes to having an impact for God's kingdom – anything to do with obedience to what God is asking (so the purpose in their life can be fulfilled) – these folks are as useless as the squirrel doing its manhole cover impression in the middle of the road.

Their funerals will be attended by only those who were related and maybe a few, miscellaneous others who shared a workplace, a common interest... a jail cell. There won't be a single soul whose life was rescued, forever, because of their interaction or example. There will be no void created in their absence because everything their lives ever produced somehow circled back around for their own satisfaction.

I believe the welcoming committee, upon their arrival into eternity, will be only God – no one else will be there because of them – and He will only have bad news to deliver. Depart from me, I never knew you...

## *Application*

We have a son whose name is Eric. Eric is, chronologically, 18 years old but because he was oxygen deprived during abdominal surgery as a toddler, mentally and emotionally, he will always be about 6-7 years old.

*He...* did not get to choose.

He did not get to vote on how his life would unfold. He does not quite understand *why* things are so different for him, but he knows things are not how they should be. There is one thing that can be said about Eric, though - he works harder than any other kid we have... at everything he does.

His level of achievement will never reach what his potential once was, but somehow, he always puts out an effort that far exceeds what one would deduce as possible for his scientifically established I.Q. He knows down deep inside something is not the way it should be. He does not understand *what* it is, but he knows there is something blocking his progress to what others seem to easily accomplish around him. Even though Eric did not get to choose his lot in life, he has decided, within himself, he is not going to roll over and become road pizza.

*You...* do get to choose.

Chances are you are not mentally handicapped like Eric. You are probably very capable of navigating the world in which you live. Do you share Eric's determination to not be held (spiritually) at a level you find unacceptable? Maybe you have given up. Everyone has to be in the race, but have you already decided you cannot win, so what's the use of trying?

“It’s too uncomfortable to talk about God to people where I work.” Is this a familiar excuse? Do you understand this is you, lying in the road getting run over by the enemy because you don’t understand it doesn’t have to be this way? What would it take for you to start living out the days assigned to you with all the passion and conviction you can gather on a daily basis? Do you believe such a thing is possible?

We live in the Information Age. Information is power.

You may not be like Eric, academically, but do you know what your *spiritual* I.Q. is? It’s time to find out if you don’t. Identify where you are and, if necessary, do something about it. Read the following questions and see how many times you can nod your head with understanding and recognition:

- Do you understand that highly-functioning (non-victim) Christians, who hear and obey God, are able to do so because they have non-negotiable, authentic worship time and conversational prayer?
- Do you understand that “highly-functioning” is not synonymous with full time ministry? This status is a privilege anyone can experience – no matter what color your collar.
- Do you understand it is possible (and *expected* of you) to strive against the forces you cannot see (the forces that exist to proactively block your way) by humbly placing yourself before God and waiting, expectantly, to hear from Him... just so you can be obedient?
- Do you understand God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him? (Hebrews 11:6)

How did you do?

If you nodded at (0-1 point), you have been hit by a car... at least twice. *Road Pizza* status is immanent, but if you will pay attention... we can rebuild you. If you nodded at (1-2 points), you haven’t been hit yet. You are, however, running crazy and sporadically in the middle of the road. You better pull it together and listen if you expect to survive and see another sunrise. If you recognized (2-4 points), you are sitting on the side of the road with extremely valuable information.

If you nodded your head in understanding, but your relationship with God is not your highest priority, it is obvious you have done nothing with the information. This has two implications: 1) Your usefulness is not over, it’s worse... it’s unused (pathetic) and, 2) Sidelines, no matter what the context, always indicate you are not in the game. The longer you sit there, the more comfortable you will become and the easier it will be to believe it is okay to stay there.

There is a vast chasm between having valuable information (capable of changing your life) and actually using it to make a real difference in your life.

Are you content to waste the one life you have, hiding out along the side of the road? When you have to actually cross the road, are you so helpless you just hope to slide under the enemy’s car without being squashed? Do you think it is okay to show up for church on Sunday and then go about the rest of your life on the Selfish Channel, never digging or searching for that which will make your life useful and bring others into God’s kingdom?

With this kind of mentality, you might as well lie down in the road and roll over yourself with the car – but don't spend a minute wondering if anyone will ever stop to scrape you off the street. With this approach to impacting the world, you will never make a dent sufficient for anyone to stop and contemplate the void created by your absence.

If this is how you function, you have already resigned your commission. The enemy has you sidelined and is keeping you from being effective. Don't kid yourself, though, you aren't ducking anyone. You may be avoiding the firing lines now, but what will be your status when your days on earth have passed and you find yourself standing before God?

**Mark 8:37-38 (NIV)**

<sup>37</sup> "... or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

<sup>38</sup> *If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.*"

It's time to decide you are no longer okay with being spiritually handicapped, pretending to participate but perfectly satisfied with last place – *dead*, last place – because it is just too hard. It's time to become a contributor to the game and, like Eric, refuse to be satisfied with settling for false limitations imposed on you by the enemy.

Remember, you get to choose.

Will you volunteer to be road pizza and allow the enemy to roll over you until there is nothing left to salvage? Are you going to let them pass you off as dead, not even worth stopping to consider?

If Eric can rise above and refuse to be held hostage by tangible, physical boundaries *outside* his control, don't you think it's time you made a stand against false, spiritual boundaries *within* yours?

Take some time right now and ask God (who gives generously to all, James 1:5), for the wisdom you may be lacking. Ask Him to show you what is keeping you from being the winner He designed you to be from the first time He ever whispered your name.

Choose.

Highly-functioning, making a difference and useful... or road pizza?

# Homework for the Week...

1.) What is your spiritual I.Q.? Are you surprised at where you are? Are you flattened in the road, sitting on the side in apprehension, or waiting it out holding the information, unclear what you are to do with it? Are you tired of living within false boundaries? Identify what they are and write them down. What will it take to destroy them and move forward in freedom? Take some time right now and ask God (who gives generously to all, James 1:5), for the wisdom you may be lacking. Be specific. 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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