

The Kindness of God Frees Us to Lead

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This year at Grace, we're exploring the reality that God's kindness allows us to repent. We can stand before Him in confidence, even as we share our failures, shortcomings, and sin, knowing that He will treat us kindly as His children and not as our sin deserves (Psalm 103:10). Like a good Father, God is looking for children with hearts that desire Him and repentance (not perfection) is the true indicator that we want to be close.

In his book, *The Ideal Team Player*, Patrick Lencioni uses three terms to describe a well-rounded leader, whether in church, business, or at home: **humble, hungry, and smart**. Let's consider how God's kindness enables us to fully embrace these traits.

- 1 **HUMBLE:** True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.
- 2 **HUNGRY:** Hunger is a form of self-motivation that compels people to keep growing and improving over time.
- 3 **SMART:** Smart people have a high emotional intelligence and strong interpersonal skills.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-27. As you read, underline the phrases that demonstrate Paul as a humble, hungry or smart leader.

19 Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. 27 No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

- 1 **HUMBLE:** *Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone (v. 19)*

- 2 **HUNGRY:** *No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize (v. 27)*

- 3 **SMART:** *I have become all things to all people. (v. 20-22)*

In these verses, we see Paul displaying these traits. As a good leader he is humble, hungry, and smart – important skills to develop, but more importantly we find the motivation for his relentless pursuit in verses 23 and 27:

I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings...so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

When you consider your leadership, it is important to think about the talents of a good leader and what you are doing to develop them. But you must also ask about the motivation behind your leadership or your character as a leader. Both are important.

In verse 23 we see Paul desires to do these things for the sake of the gospel, but also his desire to share in the blessings of the gospel. In verse 27, he expresses his desire to finish well rather than being disqualified. **His motivation is effective, long-term leadership that results in personal and kingdom blessings.** His talent as a leader is being pursued and supported by his strong character.

*How would you define your motivation for leadership whether at church, at home, or in your workplace?
What drives you to grow in your leadership?*

It's terrifying to think that we can lead for the sake of the gospel, while not personally experiencing the blessings of the gospel.



Has there been a time in your life that you felt closer to Christ or that you were more fully experiencing the blessings of the gospel than you are right now? If so, what was different in that season? If not, what is different in this season?

Take a few moments and rate both your talent and character as a leader:

TALENT: 1 2 3 4 5
☹️ 😐 😊

CHARACTER: 1 2 3 4 5
☹️ 😐 😊

Why did you rate your talent at that level?

Why did you rate your character at that level?

The truth is, no season lasts forever. As Pastor Mike often says, “Time and truth go hand in hand.”

If your talent is greater than your character, you are in danger of failing morally.

If your character is greater than your talent, you are in danger of becoming ineffective.

As you ponder these truths, pause to think about how God’s kindness invites you to grow in both your talent and character as a leader.

Take a few moments to write a prayer of repentance confessing your failures and sins as a leader knowing that He will meet you as a good and faithful Father.

Now write a final prayer, expressing your desire to grow in both talent and character. Tell God the leader you want to become and ask Him to show you your next steps in becoming this person.

