



# LIVE GUILT FREE

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## YOU ARE NOT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

By Tanya Curren

Do you feel like your phone number is 911? It is with a big hug that I want to remind you this month that you are NOT the fire department! We all know what the purpose of the fire department is, right? It is to provide immediate response services for emergencies. When someone has a fire in their home, a car accident or a medical emergency, the fire department is dispatched and comes in to rescue the person in distress.

Do you have a friend or a loved one who picks up the phone and calls on you every time they are having a crisis? Too often we live our lives carrying this type of burden for another person, and this is unnecessary and unbalanced for your life. God doesn't want you to run around putting out everyone else's fires - racing in every time they are in distress. Let's face it, you won't be able to sustain this amount of rescuing long term and guess what this leads to? You guessed it: exhaustion and guilt.

As you read today, I want you to think of your life objectively and see if you have been responding as a rescuer to someone else's emergencies.

I am a very passionate person and I am drawn to other vibrant, passionate people. But one thing I've noticed about myself and personalities like mine is that we don't do anything halfway. (My mom has always described me as either 100mph or complete zero. I'm always going at 100%, and when I crash, I crash hard!) Being a 100% person includes loving someone or being very loyal to a person and the things that they care about.

While there are great qualities about being an "all-in" type of person, one of the negative things is that we transfer a lot of someone else's burdens onto ourselves. When you couple that with being a problem solver, you have really got to be careful to try not to rescue the ones you care about because burnout and emotional overload become imminent.

Of course God wants us to care for each other! In fact there are many great Scriptures about caring for others, such as Philippians 2:4, "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." James 1:27 says, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." And Galatians 6:9-10 encourages us by saying, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

God wants us to have true compassion, sympathy and even empathy for those in our lives and others who are hurting in our world. But nowhere in these Scriptures or in others does God ask us to transfer their burden to our heart and mind. In fact, there is no need for this because God already sent His Son, Jesus, to

pay the price for the sins of mankind. In doing so, He gave us a way to give our burdens to Him and have the ability to accept the power of release from the Holy Spirit.

I want to be really honest with you right now and tell you that this is not easy. Even as I studied for this and am writing this to you, I continue to struggle with balancing caring about someone, while being careful not to transfer their emotional burdens to myself. This involves continual boundary setting on my part, and continual prayer. (I'll be sure to let you know if I ever master it!)

I would also love to tell you that God instantly takes away all of your burdens and pain when you pray and release them to Him. Oh, how I would LOVE for that to be true! But this is not how our loving God operates, is it? His desire is to shape us, mold us, and toughen us up so that we can be used in the most effective ways that He created us for during our short time here on Earth.

Sometimes God has instantly answered my prayers and released a burden, and other times He has not. Our job isn't to question Him or think that He's being mean. Our job is to continue to trust Him and know that He only has our best interests in His heart.

Let me share a couple of examples of both in my life. When we first went into ministry, I received a call about a woman who was in a coma with a story similar to mine. She was completely unresponsive and the chances of her coming out of a coma alive were very low. I didn't feel emotionally ready to go back into an ICU, but I prayed really hard and pushed back the waves of fear and nausea that came over me as Rick and I entered the hospital. We brought our anointing oil and put on the protective gloves, robe and mask.

As we entered the room with 2 other nurses, we circled around her bed and put our hands on her unresponsive body. We anointed her with oil and started praying out to God - asking Him to intervene in a miraculous way and save her life. I felt the power of the Holy Spirit so strong in that room - like the most comforting warmth you can imagine. Do you want to know the coolest thing?!? She moved her leg as we started to pray!!! Go God!!! Throughout that week, she got better and better and was able to go home and function normally. What an awesome way to witness God's instant answer to our prayers!

While I have experienced awesome situations like these, I have experienced even more times in my life where I tried to release a burden to God, yet still felt its weight heavily on my heart. My best friend went through a very difficult time several years ago and I cared so much for her and her emotions that I literally couldn't sleep some nights from being so concerned. She didn't ask me to rescue her, but my loyalty and love for her as a friend kept me in a state of deep concern. I kept trying to give it to God, but I hadn't learned how yet to set that healthy boundary of caring deeply for her and her situation while maintaining a healthy emotional state for myself.

Another time, my aunt was in a great amount of anxiety and stress over daughter and I found myself staying nervous and anxious because I cared so much for my cousin. But in both of these situations, I had to learn the difference between caring without carrying. Does that make sense? I hope so.

If you have a best friend, husband or child that you deeply love and want to rescue, ask God to show you ways that you can help them without transferring their problem to yourself. I know this isn't easy, believe me. But, I know that with intentional effort and God's strength, you will be able to support the one you love in a positive and healthy way.

I am currently experiencing how God has not answered a prayer yet for a friend of mine who is in continual immense physical pain. I know God could heal her immediately - I have seen His healing power firsthand! I connect so well with her and others who are in immense physical pain because I had so much for such a long time. So, you can imagine how it hurts me to watch her suffer so much. But what I have learned is that I cannot take her pain away. Instead, I can stand beside her, encourage her, empower her with life-sustaining Scriptures, offer to help her in any way I can and pray daily for her.

Does it make me mad at God that He is allowing her to suffer? No, I am not mad at Him. I have accepted that I will never understand every quality and aspect of God, and I respect Him and love Him enough to trust Him even when I don't like what He is allowing to happen. So, what I choose to do is to intercede and pray for my friend because I know the power of prayer and how it changes things.

I encourage you to do this for someone you love who is hurting. Stand beside them, pray with them, send them encouraging emails and notes and look for ways to remind them that this season will end. All seasons end; that's why they are called seasons. It isn't your job to make their season end, and once you release yourself from that job, you will have more time and energy to help them in positive ways.

Often when we taken on someone else's burden, we become worn out, physically and emotionally tired, and are unable to help them when they need our strength the most. Wounded cannot help wounded and exhausted can't uplift exhausted. You know the saying, "You can't get blood from a turnip." Likewise, you can't pour into others when you are emotionally spent from being a rescuer.

Just remember as you encourage and support others in your life: there is a BIG difference between supporting and sustaining! God wants us to encourage one another and support each other within healthy limits and with Godly boundaries. Allow God to do His job of sustaining the ones you love and watch how much lighter the load on your heart and mind becomes.

I'm so proud of you for making these positive changes in your life! Remind yourself everyday that your life is worth living guilt free!

In Him,

*Tanya*



Tanya Curren is the co-founder of Boundless Limits International, a ministry of encouragement and empowerment. In 2004 Tanya Curren was in a life threatening coma for 8 days as a deadly infection ravaged her body. Given two hours to live, she survived only to face the ordeal of a painful three year recovery. She is the author of Broken Places, The Proverbs Devotion Guide, Embracing Change & Conflict, and several other CD's. In her conferences and seminars, Tanya shares with others the life-lessons she learned through her journey to restoration. Tanya travels and speaks at local, regional and international venues, and is passionate about guiding others to have a personal, real relationship with Jesus Christ.