

# Chronicles of Diversity

Your leadership weekly



Future Wonder Springs  
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## *Fractured Rapture Tales*

### Tale 18: Adjusting your brakes

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I woke up Saturday morning and said to my self, “Self, you know that cardiology fellow was right, when the brakes no longer are engaged it seems that you never have ridden before.”

Now that makes no sense to you without some context, so let me elaborate. But before I do, think for a minute about brakes on how they keep vehicles from getting out of control during certain conditions, and how they can save you from accidents in other situations.

Good brakes and the grace of God saved that motor home driver in the “30,000 pounds of bananas” message a few weeks ago. In the song, brakes were not enough, you also needed to obey the sign that said, trucks use a lower gear. Safety or death depends in this life on obedience to the road signs and functioning brakes. It is that simple.

This week I would like to compare God’s grace with the brakes in our lives that keep us from destroying ourselves and others. The reason we haven’t already crashed and burned is nothing more difficult than God’s brakes in our lives that He gradually has applied many times for years, to train us, to restrain us, from the folly of utter depravity and evil. When we don’t understand the context of obedience, graceful braking is the journey of our lives.

My cardiology fellow was an M.D. training to be a cardiologist. I forgot to ask, since he was a fellow and not a woman, what he would be if he were a woman, but with the other things that were happening we just didn’t get to that thought. Doctors who work in cardiovascular medicine tend to keep themselves in good shape, they know the benefits of proper diet and exercise, and more importantly they have the self discipline to follow up on their knowledge.

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Dr. Sutcliffe had a quite muscular build for a medical doctor and as he quickly lead our discussion into a story about Lance Armstrong, I could see that he may have had the cycling ambition had he not chosen medicine.

The story says that in preparation for a race, the mechanic on Lance's bicycle inadvertently had adjusted the brakes so that they didn't fully release properly. During the race Lance was having trouble performing at the level required for him to be the winner that he had proved he was capable of being. His team members noticed it also and they were concerned that something seriously might be wrong.

After the race they discovered the problem, and that during the race Lance had worn out the wheel through the added friction. But during the next leg of the race, Lance more than made up for his previous showing. After that race when ask about his superior performance, Lance said that without the brake problem, it now seemed that he could pedal more easily than he ever could before.

Now Dr. Sutcliffe and my conversation was about how much better I felt after my operation than before. Before the replacement of my aortic valve and almost three inches of my ascending aorta, I had really know idea that God had kept the brakes applied to my life to keep me from wearing out those parts until both the technology and time were present, so that I could truly appreciate His graceful gift.

My real goal during our Friday conversation was to get off my loproressor, or betablocker medication. Since they first discovered my physical problem over fifteen months ago, I have been taking medication to lower my heart rate and my blood pressure. These are the same medications that many take daily for the same purpose.

Because there really is no known traditional heart disease or high blood pressure in my family, and before, during, and after my operation they had found none in me, I reasoned that it would be acceptable for me to quit taking the low dosage they had prescribed. Especially since I could now really notice when my blood pressure and heart rate were low. In addition, in the context we are now discussing, I felt that the brakes were always on, and I had to really crank up the revs to get to any level of physical performance I needed to attain.

Therefore, I awoke Saturday morning for the first time in months feeling as if the brakes were truly off my physical body, perhaps for the first time in my life. On just the sixth day after completing Bloomsday without training for it.

Betablocking medicines compete at the beta nerve sites many places in the body with the hormone epinephrine, more commonly known as adrenaline. Depending on the drug dosage that adrenaline reaction is depressed by the betablocker to keep the brakes on your heart rate and blood pressure. So today many people are taking these drugs thinking it is just a result of lifestyle or heredity, when it really is just a method God uses to keep the brakes of grace on in their lives, to give them a longer opportunity to know Him personally in a deeper manner.

I had the opportunity to understand my new life without these betablockers Sunday, when some people were trying to disrupt a baby dedication. I was surprised how quickly the adrenaline hit me, and how long it took for it to dissipate. I kept thinking amusingly for like two hours, I can still feel the adrenaline kick, this is something I am going to have to watch carefully.

Being a student of athletic competition, especially in defensive basketball, the goal is to push your opponent mentally and physically so that adrenaline takes over to such an extent that they are unable to control the fine aspects of their game, such as shooting and fouling. It's really not about bumping and bruising, as much as never letting them know what to expect from you and your team.

I think I am still adjusting to going without this drug. Nothing serious physically, but kind of like being in a basketball game with a well coached opponent, only this time it is your own body not letting you know what to expect next. However, I am quite grateful for not having to take this drug any more and not to have to go back for another two years for a check up. Praise the Lord.

Are you ready for the brakes to come off, do you feel that you are wearing away the rims on your physical or spiritual bicycle? How about that job, or? The scary thing in that context is that you are being prepared to ride your own race, or drive your own car. What is even worse, is the concept that you are being prepared by the grace of God to run your own life.

The error in doing what is right in your own eyes is that you think you run and manage your own life for the good, when it is really playing with your own folly. True godly wisdom teaches you that you are all folly, but by God's braking grace, He is transforming you into a true child of God, who knows the difference between good and evil. The promise of Christianity is that you will one day be able to make those choices unhindered by the oppression of sin and death.

The episode in the Garden of Eden when the serpent "deceived" Eve really was not a lie, but the truth taken out of life's context. Eternal life, the raptured life, is knowing that this temporal existence is a training facility for when God says, "My son and my daughter, you no longer need to be restrained by My brakes of grace in your life, enjoy the true freedom to be who I created you to be."

So is eternity the ultimate egalitarian state? This is the fallacy of modern western evangelicalism. Getting saved is not all there is, it is only the beginning. The beginning of eternal life. The Bible clearly teaches a system of rewards based on what the redeemed do in this life with the gifts they have been given. So the living water you can enjoy in heaven is based on the way you rode your race in this life. It is your choice, a plastic communion cup, a glass, a pitcher, or a whole reservoir of living water.

Personally, I want one of those lake front pieces of property. To a certain extent my lake is determined by convincing you, that God has reserved a lake for you too. It isn't multilevel, or network marketing, it is the unsearchable depth of God's grace and love. Something you will never grasp as long as your eyes are only on yourself and your situation, good or bad.

Are you willing to pedal against the brakes of God's grace? Are you going to say, "God, I'm going to keep pedaling in this race, and if I wear out this set of rims, you are going to have to give me a new set. You set the course, you gave me this bicycle, and you promised that I would one day finish the race."

Lance Armstrong almost died of testicular cancer and now is a five time champion of the Tour de France. So what's your problem? It has nothing to do with your bike and its brakes, it is that you would rather be a sluggard and lazy than do the training your position in Jesus Christ calls you to be.

"Many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:14) The modern evangelical preacher can dumb that down to not offend your slothfulness, but until you truly recognize you are your only problem, God will let you sleep or ride to nowhere. Believe me, I've got a whole dresser full of nowhere shirts.

Bringing this back to something we mortals can relate too, many years ago, I met a woman missionary to Africa. She was back in Seattle to sort of commemorate her journey. At that time in her mid sixties, she looked and acted like someone in their late twenties, or early thirties. That was about the age she was when she lay dying of cancer in a hospital here in Seattle. She had been told that she never would get out of that bed again, but she also knew that God had called her to be a missionary to Africa.

In that solace of pending death, she knew that if God truly had called her to Africa He would make a way, the best thing that could happen to her would be to die trying. Her testimony was simple, someplace between that hospital bed and Africa, God healed her cancer and gave her a new life in service to Him.

Many are called but few are chosen. Trust God to control the brakes, your job is to ride and train for the race until he tells you to begin to ride on your own. Only until you are determined to ride for God's team, and do the training, will you be amazed that the gifts God will give you only for trying.