

# BROKEN TILE

By Tony Guerrero

**C**omplaining. Almost all of us do it. It seems to be in our nature that no matter how great things are going for us, we will always be sure to point out, and even dwell on, the negative. I'm sure that if I were forced to lie on my back and stare at the most beautiful and intricately tiled mosaic above me, I would spend most of the time noticing the one broken tile.

We know how God feels about our grumbling. It must be old news for Him to bless us and then have to listen to us point out all the negatives. Manna is simply never good enough for us.

## A FULL CUP

Recently, I've been fortunate enough to be given a new position at church. Of course, it requires much more of my time and energy. I've been writing and producing a Christmas show and had the opportunity to take multiple trips around the country and overseas. But with all that, I've found that my studio projects have piled up to the point that I have to say "no" to projects more than I'm saying "yes." Also, one of my loves is playing jazz, and there are always plenty of gigs, including another overseas tour that I'm preparing for. And to top it off, my wife and I are preparing for a baby in February. Never mind all the normal things I should be doing (hold on... I had to take out the trash). The word "margin" is quickly fading from my dictionary. And I try, but it just seems that whenever God blesses me with new and exciting opportunities, the responsibility of margin—making time for the important things—is usually the first victim.

I'm sure many readers share this feeling. There is so much to do, and even though we may love our ministry, our jobs, our pastimes, our families, it's hard to not feel overwhelmed once in a while. Or even all the while. And then the complaining starts.

## THE LEVEE BREAKS

With all that's going on for me these days, I find myself grumbling more than usual. Sometimes I'm too tired, sometimes the task at hand is not the preferred one and sometimes dealing with all the people involved just gets to me. It's a common occurrence to release the stress, to vent our frustration with outbursts on the situation: "Oh, I don't want to do another service!"

Any time we get overwhelmed by ministry, not only is it

important that we examine our ability to achieve margin, but it's also important that we remember how little most of us truly suffer for the Kingdom, especially compared to what so many others have suffered.

## BIG PICTURE

My wife's involvement in mission work has given me new eyes into what it means to be in service of the Lord. On a recent

trip to Thailand, we saw the graves of the first missionaries in the country and were told about the grueling trip they took to get there, spending the better part of a year trudging through the jungles on foot. While there, we also met Christians from all over Asia who are continually exposed to persecution. I have seen and read of others as well—Christian martyrs in Ecuador, Christians in Communist countries who have faced severe beatings, Christians who have given up lives

of comfort to live in poverty, so that they can be a light in the world.

I find that almost everyday I have to have a perspective reminder. I have so much more to be thankful for than I do to complain about. I don't think I ever forget this fact; I just let it slip away every now and then. With that in mind, God has been extra gracious to me lately. Instead of taking away all the things I love but still complain about, He simply keeps reminding me of the blessings. I've begun to make it a point to verbalize these blessings every day. I thank God, out loud, for what He's blessed me with. When others start grumbling, I try and be the gentle voice reminding them of their blessed lot in life. "Yes, the pastor has changed the message again, and the drummer didn't show up for rehearsal, but can you believe we get to do this?"

I have never really suffered for the Kingdom. Instead, I've had it pretty easy. I'd venture to say that's the case for most of us. Sure, ministry comes with headaches, but look at what we get to do. God has chosen us to serve Him where we are. I'm embarrassed that I find any reason to complain at all.

---

*Tony is the Director of Creative Arts for Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, CA. He is also an active composer and producer as well as an established jazz trumpet player.*

[www.tonyguerrero.com](http://www.tonyguerrero.com)

**"I'M SURE THAT IF I WERE FORCED TO LIE ON MY BACK AND STARE AT THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND INTRICATELY TILED MOSAIC ABOVE ME, I WOULD SPEND MOST OF THE TIME NOTICING THE ONE BROKEN TILE."**