

RECLAIM YOUR POWER

Week #2 of a 4-Week Series Inspired by the Book, "The Let Them Theory"

Rev. Richard Maraj

Sunday, June 29, 2025

A priest and a pastor of local parishes were standing along the roadside holding up a sign that said, *"The end is near. Turn yourself around before it's too late."* And they had planned on showing this sign to every passing car.

"Leave us alone, you religious lunatics," yelled the first car that sped by. And as he turned around the curve, the tires screeched, and they heard a big splash.

And then the priest said to the pastor, *"Do you think we should change the sign from 'the end is near' to 'the bridge is out'?"* [Congregants laugh]

So, how many people have ever felt a bit stressed in your life? Anybody ever feel? You know, there are all kinds of things in our lives that stress us out: finances, debt stress us out. There are all kind of work stresses, relationship and family stresses; health stresses.

But one of the things I think we might be surprised at that causes a lot of stress in our lives is the amount of worrying that we do about what other people think. Excessive concern and being preoccupied with what other people say and think and do -- especially when we're seeking approval; especially when we feel judged or criticized or compared. That stress has a huge impact on the quality of our lives; our overall well-being; our ability to enjoy our lives; and especially to feel good about ourselves.

Dr. Aditi Nerurkar from Harvard Medical School said that stress is a bigger problem in our lives than we realize. It leads to self-doubt, procrastination, a lack of focus, burnout. It increases our negative self-talk. And it's hard to feel happy and to keep up our self-care. She said that stress is a physiological state in the brain; that, when we are stressed, it actually hijacks the normal functioning of our brain. That, normally our brain is controlled by the prefrontal cortex, which is there for higher learning and creative things like what our goals will be or how to bring out the best in ourselves. But when we get stressed, it switches from the prefrontal cortex to the amygdala, the reptilian brain where it houses our responses to stress.

So, stress really kicks us from creative thinking to survival mode. You know, I mean it is amazing how things shift. And it really depletes our power and our energy and our abilities when we are in "fight-or-flight" mode. And "fight-or-flight" is good if you're being chased by a lion or a bear or something serious. But in this modern world, that doesn't happen as often. And yet, we still get triggered by all kinds of stress.

Most of the stress that we feel is actually created by ourselves. How many people would agree that most of the stress you experience in life is in your own head and by your own creating? It is incredible how much! To the point, she says, that seven out of 10 Americans are living with chronic stress! And so, one of the ones that causes the most stress, again, is what we think about what other people are thinking or saying.

So today, we are in Week #2 of our four-week series on the book, *The Let Them Theory* by Mel Robbins. And this is really about how to deal with relationships and situations with people we don't like and who don't like us. People who don't agree with our decisions; our choices; how we live our lives; how we parent our kids; how we dress; who we date. You know, there are all kinds of things with people and relationships in our lives that we don't see eye-to-eye about: political views, religious beliefs. Within our families, our friends, our communities, we have a lot of stress related about our relationships and what other people think about us.

And inevitably, that's always going to be a part of life. Because they're always going to be different people with different values, different views and perspectives. And the more that we worry about what other people think, the more we give our power away. The tougher it is for us to feel peace and happiness.

Mel Robbins says the thing that frees us -- and the real answer and solution to what other people think controlling our lives -- is to just ***let them***. If they don't like you, let them. If they gossip about you and talk behind your back, let them. Because she said if we really want to achieve our goals -- if we want to be more present, more self-confident, and happier -- we need to stop allowing other people from stressing us out.

You know, saying "let them" is really a philosophy and a mindset and a practice that reminds us about four things. Number one: when we say "let them," it really acknowledges that we don't have control over everything, particularly other people and what they say. So, it really helps us realize, *"I can't control that, so I may as well let go; let them."*

The second thing is: it releases the energy and stress and annoyance that we get pent up. It is our ability to say, *"No; I'm not going to take that on. That is not a weight and burden that I'm going to carry. That is not mine to do."*

And then the third thing: when we say "let them," there's an element of trusting God and trusting life. Trusting that things will work out. To "let" means to allow. So, when we "let them," there's an element of letting go and trusting that it's going to work out.

And then the fourth one: when we say "let them," is to give others the freedom to live their lives, because it's *their* lives. It's *their* choices. You know, it's *their* decisions.

Mel Robbins says the more you let people live their lives, the better your life gets. Think about that! Are there any people in your life that you're kind of trying to live their life for them, and you're connected to that? And if you would just let them live their life, realizing, *"My life's going to get better."* In fact, *their* life's going to get better, as well.

You know, when we are stressed, saying "let them" is like signaling your brain and saying, *"Hey, it's going to be okay. Everything's going to work out. There's nothing to really stress or worry about."* You know, you can't control any of this anyway, so just let them. It really calms and kind of resets the brain. Let them. Let them. Let them. Whatever is going on, let them. Because "let them" really is about peace. It's about letting go, and it is about freedom.

The second part of it: from "let them," it's "let me." And "let me" is about reclaiming our power; it's about controlling the things that we can control. It's about participating and shaping our own lives. It's about reconnecting to the power that we've given away, and allowing ourselves to live the life that we want to live and are meant to live.

So, this morning we're going to look at three things we can do to "let me" -- to reclaim our power.

And the first thing to reclaim our power is to ***KNOW GOD***, because that's the source of all of our power. To know God is to know our true nature, which is to know our true power. That we are amazing, powerful, spiritual beings.

But if we, you know, really want to claim all of it, we've got to know God. We've got to know the source. In Scripture it says, *"Be still and know that I am God."* If you really want to reclaim the power, the place to start is the very foundation of our existence. And that is Spirit. That is God.

Paul said, *"Let the same mind that was in Christ Jesus be in you."* So we need to ... the way we become our power is to immerse our mind in the Mind of God. To just be still. Stop the crazy for a bit; let go of all the stress; and just be still and feel and know the presence of God. We are one with God.

The question -- we're not always present to that oneness with God. The more we're still, the more we're centered and calm, the more we reconnect and become more aware of this incredible spiritual power and essence that is in us and is all around us; that is fully available to each and every one of us every day. To *"be still and know that I am God"* is to let God be God in us. To let God fill our hearts and our minds.

Before you could say "let them" and "let me," we need to say *"let God be the center and the focal point of my life,"* because that is where true power comes from.

And so, what I find really, really amazing is that we're one with God -- this power comes from God -- and yet sometimes we think we're powerless. Even though Jesus said, *"You are the light of the world" ... "You shall do the things that I've done and even greater things than these" ... that "You are created in the image and likeness of God" ... "You have been given a dominion authority over all things" ... "You are the temple of the living God" ... The kingdom of God is within you."*

Even though Paul said, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,"* it's stunning how we believe that we're powerless. It's stunning how we act like victims. It's stunning how we try to blame other people for our own unhappiness. It's stunning how much we worry. It's stunning, how much we live in fear. It's stunning that we think we're not enough. It's stunning that we think we're capable.

And so, the important thing for us is to reconnect. If you really want to reclaim our power; we need to know God: to know the very source out of which all things are made possible, including love. So, we're made of love. We are told that God is a Creator. That means we are creators, and we need to retrain our minds to reconnect with that Power.

"I am the light of the world."

Together: [with congregants] *"I am the light of the world."*

"I am a child of God."

[Congregants:] *"I am a child of God."*

"I am the love of God."

[Congregants:] *"I am the love of God."*

"I am a powerful spiritual being."

[Congregants:] *"I am a powerful spiritual being."*

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

[Congregants:] *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

"I am a powerful spiritual being."

[Congregants:] *"I am a powerful spiritual being."*

"We are here to let our light shine."

[Congregants:] *"We are here ..."*

[Laughs] I love your enthusiasm, though!

We are here to let our light shine. We are here to make a joyful noise. And it's not dependent on somebody else's opinion. It is not based on someone else's judgment. You know, our own worth is not negotiable or something to bargain or something we need to get approval for. That is our nature! To know God is to know our nature! It is to know our power. It is to know the truth of who we are and who we came here to be.

The fact is: you are a radiant, divine, soul-filled being. We all are! That is the truth of who we are! And so, one of the things we need -- by the fact that we do think we're victims and powerless at times -- is to reconnect with that truth and to be still and know our oneness with God.

You know, I wish we could just do one prayer and we're good for 60 days or something like that. Wouldn't you? Wouldn't you like that? But if you noticed, Jesus -- every single day -- he prayed in the morning; he prayed midday; he prayed in the evening; he prayed at night, every single day.

And so, it's not to make us feel guilty or ashamed, or that we don't feel completely whole every single day, and feel our oneness. But it means that we need to consistently practice and to consistently be still.

Could you imagine making a commitment -- if you really want to reclaim your power -- to do five minutes of being still and knowing God three times a day? Would you be willing -- for your life, for your joy -- to connect with God for 15 minutes a day? Three times five of just being still and knowing that I am God; knowing your oneness; knowing the presence and the power of the living God ... of this incredible Intelligence that made the sun and the stars and the oceans -- that made every cell of our being -- is within us. And that we are an expression of that amazing Spirit.

Jesus said, *"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* That, when we connect with the truth of our spiritual magnificence and our oneness with God, we will be free from thinking about other people's opinions. We will be free about letting what other people think -- or what we're afraid they might think -- affecting on how we choose to live our life and be who we came here to be.

If we want to reclaim our power, the first thing is to know God: to be still and know God so we can know our true nature, our true self, and our true spiritual power.

The second thing to "let me" and to reclaim our power is to **MASTER YOURSELF**. You see, when we obsess about what other people are thinking, or blame other people or think it's their fault, we unknowingly are handing them the remote control to our lives. And the way we get back that power is not by controlling them; it's by mastering ourselves.

Self-mastery is why we're here. To achieve the Christ consciousness requires self-mastery. To achieve self-realization -- or enlightenment, or to know our oneness with God -- requires self-mastery. Every time we say, "Let me," we are saying, *"I want to control the things I can,"* which means, *"I want to master myself. I want to express a level of self-mastery; that no matter what anyone says that I get to choose how I show up. I get to choose how I live. I get to choose how I react."*

You know, every time we have a "let me" experience, it is an opportunity for self-mastery. It's an opportunity to develop self-mastery and how we show up. But we have to accept 100% responsibility for our lives for that self-mastery to actually take place.

Because the fact is: every single one of us are 100% responsible for every word that comes out of our mouths; every thought; every action; every response; every attitude or mindset; every choice we make; every result and outcome we have. The only way to develop mastery is to accept full responsibility for any and everything going in our lives: how we show up, how we behave, how we treat other people. For *everything*: we are responsible.

When life is unfair, we are 100% responsible. When we get the short end of the stick, we are 100% responsible. When life doesn't go our way, we are 100 % responsible.

That sounds unfair. It sounds like a punishment. It sounds like a burden, but the truth is: 100% responsibility is liberating. It is empowering. Because it says: no matter what, you're the one that has the choice and the power to make things better. You're the one that affects your own happiness and your joy. You're the one who picks how you will respond. And that is the path to mastery. It is the path to spiritual genius.

Sometimes we think, *"Oh man, I'm stuck; I can't do anything."* That's a lie that we tell ourselves. And it's not true. Every part of our lives we are responsible for. In every part there is something we can take control of, even if it's just our perspective or our attitude.

How many people watch *America's Got Talent*? How many people know the host's name? Terry Crews. Anybody know him? Okay. Terry Crews was a football player. He was an NFL player for about five years. He -- in the '90s -- was trying out for the Washington Redskins. As a part of the tryout, he worked out with them for six months and he got paid \$200 a week. But he was sacrificing everything for his wife and his two kids. And so he's practicing with them for this time.

And he finds out on that Monday morning that he made the team. So, he called his wife and said, *"Honey, I made the team. You can sign up the kids for private school."* And so, they had a long practice; it was exhausting. He comes home. They ate; they celebrated a bit. As he's about to go to bed, he gets a phone call from the Redskins that says, *"Hey, you got to come back to the facility and bring your playbook."*

And so, he went in late at night to find out he was, in fact, cut; that they were going to bring in somebody else. He was absolutely devastated. But he said, *"My kids; my day ..."* That's running all in his head. And he was just so upset. He was so devastated.

And what he found was: you can't move very quickly. When you get cut from a city, you just can't get up and move, short of going and living with his parents. I mean, it was tough. So, he called his friend and said, *"What are you doing?"* He said, *"I'm getting ready for this week's game."* So, he felt left out. All his friends were like, *"We're on the team."* And he and his wife just felt really lonely, you know, because it was just them isolated in this town.

And then, he said he was really fighting depression. And he had to take these jobs. He was sweeping the floor. And he said he really struggled. Like, he felt like he lost everything. He was a failure. And so, then while he was sweeping the floor, he said, *"What would it be like if somebody paid me a million dollars to sweep this floor? How would I sweep this floor?"* And he started putting all his diligence and effort and intention into it.

Then he got another job -- he got a series of other jobs -- of filing papers at the VA. And he said, *"How would I file these papers if I was being paid a million dollars?"* And he started noticing that he started forgetting about his problems because he was fully investing his spirit and his heart into everything he did, and doing it at such a value.

He was a security guard at some movie sets and he said, *"How would I show up if I got paid a million dollars?"* He pressed his uniform; it was pressed every single day. He had his flashlight, he had everything. He was on his game every day. He said doing that practice of showing up his best as if someone was paying him a million dollars -- that absolutely changed his life. It changed his attitude. You know, he became a better football player. He became a man. He became better at every single area.

He has been the host of that show, I think, for five or six years. He's been in lots of different movies and TV series. And if you notice what he did: he was saying "let me": *"They cut me. I lost my job. But let me take control. Let me control what I can do. Let me bring out the very best in myself."*

And because he did it sweeping floors, it was like a domino effect for every air of his life. And he is the success he is today because he took control and demonstrated his own personal power.

You know, to say "let me" is about mastering ourselves ... and mastering our ability to balance the let them – Let them; let people have their freedom to think -- and let me: *"Let me take control of what I can take control of. So let them ignore me and let me love myself more. Let them gossip, but let me stand grounded in my truth. Let them cut me, but let me put my spirit into everything that I do."*

No matter what happens, "let me" says, *"I can respond positively and powerfully and bring out the best in myself."*

Think of a situation in your life that isn't going as well as you want, where you might need to say "let them." But what about your "let me"? What do you want to do with your "let me"? *"Let me show up positively and with great joy. Let me treat people well. Let me learn and become a better person. Let me be more masterful in the way that I interact and show up."*

It is a powerful thing to master ourselves. That's how we reclaim our power. That is how we say let me is by mastering ourselves, accepting full responsibility, and showing up as if somebody was paying us a million dollars to do whatever it is that we do.

And the last thing to reclaim our power and let me is to **CHOOSE OUR NEXT MOVE**. Calvin Coolidge said, *"We cannot do everything at once, but we can do something at once."* How many people ever feel like you have to have all your ducks a row before you start? Anybody ever be like that? You don't need to have all your ducks a row. You just need to know your *next* duck. [Congregants laugh] Your *first* duck.

You know, it's like one thing to say, "let them." But when you say, "let me," it's: *"What's mine to do? What is the next best thing I can do to bring myself peace and happiness? What is the next best thing I can do to better my relationship or this current situation?"* We don't have to know everything, but if you listen and tune in: *"What is the next best thing for me to do?"*

I love what it says in Proverbs 4. It says, *"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."* The way to know what your next duck is -- your next move -- is: go to your heart. Trust your heart. Listen to your heart to say, *"What is the next best thing for me to do?"*

A woman in her 40s was trying to win approval from her family all the time. And every gathering -- family gathering they had -- she left there drained, because she would get questions like, *"When are you going to get married? When are you going to get a real job?"* She loved her family, but she hated feeling judged and criticized.

And so, then she found, "Let them." And she was able to just let them complain; let them ask her all the questions. And she chose the "let me," which was to live life on her own terms; to do the things that brought her joy and happiness.

Instead of focusing on them, she focused on herself; of, *"How can I make myself better? How can I add more joy, even into this relationship? What can I do on my end to be more understanding and caring of them? What do I need to do to be more positive and have a better perspective on this?"*

And she asked herself, *"What is the next most positive move I can make for my life?"* And so, she signed up for a course. She loved the course. And then she started a business; her own business. And then, she just started practicing showing up with more love and joy for her family, and it absolutely changed her

family dynamic. That shifted it. And then, the things that didn't change, she was more calm and handling those patterns and being able to enjoy her life more than she ever had. She said, *"The thing I liked most was I was able to take charge and live a life that made me proud."* Live a life that was authentic and who she was here to be.

Mel Robbins tells a story of her walking her two dogs in a park. And then the park ranger came and petted her dogs and reminded her, *"Please keep your dog and your dogs on a leash and please remember the poop-and-scoop; we're getting lots of complaints and it's getting to the point, if people keep doing that, we're going to have to close the trails."* She assured him that she was not someone like that.

And so, she went for a walk. About a hundred yards in front of her, she saw a woman whose dog was off the leash. She was running all over the place and jumping on people. And immediately she got upset and she got really annoyed. She kept walking and looking at this lady and what she was doing. Then her dog has a poop, and then all she does is kick some leaves over them. Oh, well, she was livid! Her amygdala was on fire! And so, she was just upset, like crazy. *"How could this woman do this? How could this woman do it?"*

And she remembered: "let her." She wants to let her dog run; let her. You know, she doesn't poop-and-scoop; let her. And she kept having to calm herself down, saying it multiple times.

But then she thought, *"Okay, let me."* And then she realized that she had some choices. She could have caught up with a woman and given her one of her plastic bags and said, *"Hey, please do this; you know, there are all kinds of implications. We'll all lose our dog trail rights."* And so, that was one option.

Another option was: she could have just "let her," and know that it wasn't worth her time; she didn't have enough time to go chase her down. And just find peace in herself. That was an option. Another one was to take one of her own bags, walk up to that poop, pick it up and remove it. And knowing it wasn't her responsibility, but she wanted to be a good citizen would feel good about herself if she did that. Fourth thing she said she could have done is go to the park ranger; you know, go back to where she was and saw him, and just made a report.

And the point is: in every "let me," there are many options to what we can choose. And we need to choose and decide what is the next best thing for us to do. We need to decide how to spend our energy. What's important to us? Is this worth my time? Is this worth my energy? But, regardless of whatever different response we have, the one thing that is 100% clear is: we always have the power. We have the power to respond in some way.

And maybe it's to say, *"Let me follow my path. Let me listen to my inner voice. Let me be kind and compassionate in how I interact with everybody in my life today. Let me live a life that I can be proud of."*

A Baptist couple decided they wanted a dog. So, they were walking in town. They saw the pet store and it said, "Christian puppies for sale." [Congregants laugh]

So, they walk in; they're intrigued. And they said to the guy, *"Christian puppies; what do you mean?"*

He said, *"Well, let me show you."* So, the owner says, *"Fetch the Bible."* The puppy goes and fetches the Bible; brings the Bible; puts it on the floor.

And then the owner says, *"Find Psalm 23."* With its little paw, flicking through; finds it.

The couple is so amazed and impressed, they buy the dog. That night they call over some friends to show this. So, their friends are there and then they say, *"Fetch the Bible."* The dog fetches the Bible.

"Find Psalm 23." The dog finds Psalm 23.

One of the friends says, *"Does he respond to normal commands?"*

He said, *"Well, I don't know. We never did that before. Let me check."* And then the owner says, *"Sit."* The dog sits. He says, *"Lay down."* The dog lays down. He says, *"Roll over."* The dog rolls over. And then the owner says, *"Heel."*

And then the dog runs up on the couch, puts both his paws on the forehead of the owner, bows his head. And the wife says, *"Oh look; it's Pentecostal."* [Congregants laugh]

Okay. Whew. Life can be stressful, especially when your jokes don't get much of a laugh, I'll tell you. [Congregants laugh] Feeling some stress right here. What are they thinking? [Laughs]

And we can all get caught in that trap of, you know, getting stressed about what other people think. It really happens a lot! But the truth is: we're all creators. We're all powerful, amazing spiritual beings. We don't have to keep creating more stress. You know, we can create joy. We can create peace. And we can create a life that we're proud to live. We can create a life of joy and spirit.

Repeat after me: *"I am a powerful spiritual being."*

[Congregants:] *"I am a powerful spiritual being."*

"I am responsible for my life."

[Congregants:] *"I am responsible for my life."*

"I release what is not mine to hold."

[Congregants:] *"I release what is not mine to hold."*

"I can focus on what I can control."

[Congregants:] *"I can focus on what I can control."*

"I let them."

[Congregants:] *"I let them."*

"And I let me."

[Congregants:] *"And I let me."*

That's the end of the affirmative part of the project. [Congregants]

So, we got to remember: if we want to reclaim our power, we really need to know God, because that's where our true power really comes from. Because to know God is to know our own nature; to know God is to know our own power. Secondly, master yourself. No matter what other people or life gives you, you choose. Accept 100% responsibility and choose to be the very best of yourself. And, finally, choose your next move. Listen to your heart. You don't have to know all the answers, but you just need to know: What is the next best thing I can do? And that is how we learn to "let them," "let me," and reclaim our power.

God bless you all.