

LimitLess- Crown Me!

James 1:2-12

Purpose of series: The purpose of this series is to assist you in taking off the limits of God's expression *through* you and *in* your life and His blessing *on* your life. This series provides us with a practical view of how to live a life of spiritual impact and personal fullness in a difficult world under pressure. We will learn to be limited less by the things that can distract us from our real purpose and our true potential as believers on this earth.

Purpose of this message: The purpose of this message is to give courage and direction to families, and especially men on this Father's Day. There is a need for leadership of homes and impact on the lives of our community amid all the oceans of controversy, detraction and destruction. For those who never really were able to rely fully on God, today you will find the grace of God to give you strength to take a step of faith in that direction. There are many targets that Satan is firing at but one I know that he is attempting to destroy is the men of our churches and society.

Here is the question I believe God is saying YES to,

“Is there still hope and opportunity for the Kingdom of God to make a difference in the lives of men, women and children in our society?”

What Would You Do?

If you were a missionary from another country and you came to America to make a difference, where would you start? I believe the answer would be to help establish loving and healthy families in Christ.

See, wouldn't it be cool if someone was to say, “Hay, I have a hard time believing in God but I am just as much having a difficulty in explaining you and your family. You make me think that there must be something else to live for. Something worth exchanging my life for.”

One of the stunning statements mentioned by someone recently said,

“If your church was somehow moved out of your community would anyone know you were gone?”

We should live in such a way that if our church decided to move to another community there would be all kinds of non-believers who would approach us and tell us, “Please don't move, we need you here, you are making a difference here.”

I believe that one of the greatest impacts a church can make in their community is the product of their families. Just as important as it is that we speak a message and send it into all the world, it is just as important that our lives sends as loud a message. If the message of Jesus Christ doesn't change the hearts of the ones within the church, then why do we believe it will change those outside it? Look with me at what Malachi writes of God's Word to Israel in Chapter 4:

“But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.”

Malachi 4:2

But on down Malachi prophecies,

“See, I will send you a prophet *Elijah* before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

Malachi 4:5-6

What will God strike the land with? A curse, just because I don't get along with my kid? No, not exactly, it's because we don't turn our hearts toward our kids. Listen to this next thought before this thought before you get carried off too far, the *children* have to turn their hearts back toward their fathers. It goes both ways!

“For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. He who has ears, let him hear.”

Matthew 11:13-15

What Was The Message of John The Baptist?

This Elijah or Elias as it is recorded in the Greek, is found in the first and second books of Kings. He was a distinguished prophet, and was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire, 2 Kings 2:11. Here, the prophet Malachi, (Malachi 4:5,6) predicted that Elijah should be sent before the coming of the Messiah, to prepare the way for him. By this was evidently meant, not that he should appear in person, but that one should appear with a striking resemblance to him; or, as Luke 1:17 expresses it, "*in the spirit and power of Elijah.*" But the Jews understood it differently. They expected that Elijah would appear in person.

John's message was a message of repentance, of turning from your sins and submitting to the Word of God. The baptisms that he did was symbolic of the cleansing work of God's power and the commitment of man's obedience. Because of the response to this Elijah it says that it will turn the hearts of the father to the sons and the sons to the father.

I have to be honest with you today, **there is an aggressive pounding that parents are taking based upon secular opinion that parents have to make their children “happy” or we will scare them for life. In response to that, we read every book we can find to help us make sure we raise “happy” kids.** And not only that, we have books upon books of the specific kids.

- How to rear children in single-parent families
- How to rear children in step-families
- How to rear children in blended families
- How to rear a child with attention deficit disorder.
- How to rear the child with learning disabilities
- How to rear the adopted child
- How to rear the gifted child
- How to rear the strong-willed child
- How to rear the difficult child
- How to rear the only child
- How to rear the middle child
- How to rear the stepchild
- How to rear the child born to older parents
- **How to rear children in a double-blended, single-sided, half-gainer-with-a-**

double-back-flip step-families. Aaaagggrrrrhhhhh!

For the first time in history, parents began consciously trying to maintain their children in a state of bliss. See, we interpret little Eric's screams to mean we had made yet another mistake, which we immediately corrected, thus making him "happy" again. The sychobabble that too many parents are swallowing is, "Where there is a child with a problem, there is a mother or father who is not giving the child enough attention and praise."

Dr. John Rosemond writes in his book, *A Family of Value*,

"Today's parent has been led to believe that in order to rear a child properly, you must first find out what kind of child you have. If you cannot figure it out on your own, you can pay a "helping" professional upward of one hundred dollars an hour to make the determination. Once you have discovered what category of child you are rearing, you go to the bookstore and buy every book available on the category in question, and then *walla'* you now have your very own customized child-rearing kit which you then share with your child's teachers so that they will have sufficient appreciation of his "special needs."

He goes on to say,

"Professionals have taken the "whole" of childhood and sliced it into ever-thinner sections, then held each section up to the light of psychological scrutiny and analysis. In the process of all of this dissecting, theorizing, and intellectualizing, professionals seem to have lost sight of the fact- and have cause American parents to lose sight of it as well- that **a child, regardless of prefix, is first and foremost a child.**

But American parents no longer think in terms of "child." They think in terms of categories of "child." (John Rosemond, *A Family of Value*, Andrews and McMeel, Kansas City, 1995, pp. 21, 22)

What A Mess

Dr. Rosemond said that in hundreds of meetings with mothers and moms and dad's together he would ask what they thought **was the root cause of their child's problems in school, with peers, or whatever.** He asked the question knowing what was likely to happen. The repeated behavior and answer was, the child's father would turn toward his wife as she began to talk. He said that never in all his encounters did the father, unless he was the only parent present, answer this question. He said that a sentence or two into her answer, the mother's voice would become strained and begin to quiver. Then it would crack; then the floodgates would open. Her body would begin shaking with muffled sobs and this answer in so many words, would burst forth:

"I just know it's all my fault!"

She was certain, that she was...

- failing to give the child enough attention
- causing him/her to question her love
- giving him reasons to believe she was partial toward a sibling
- yelling too much
- over-focusing on his bad behavior, thus giving the impression that he was

- nothing but a bad seed
- causing him to feel that he wasn't "wanted," or all the above.

Back In The Game

I believe that we have swallowed all the responsibility, and you know what, if the kids hearts don't turn back to the fathers...the curse is still on the land!

I believe there are four clear, right off the top reasons for this:

1. **Resentful mothers are transferring their anger, aggression and disrespect of their husbands or ex-husbands onto their children.**
2. **Children are not being held accountable for being respectful or honoring their father, no matter what kind of man he is.**
3. **Men have slowly moved into receiving the role of being the blame and therefore excuses themselves for their role as a father and dropping out.**
4. **Men have no accountability in their life that would cause them to live on a higher plain and find courage to resist the attractions of destructive forces.**

All I know is that if there is no restoration or responsibility toward honor, respect and relationship on both sides, ladies and gentlemen, our land is cursed.

I believe that our impact as believers in this generation are some of the only things giving purpose and future to many communities. The sea of confusion is absolutely destroying homes, businesses, and individual lives on a daily basis. **Our church should make an impact on this city. This city should feel the impact of the love of God through this church. But they should be able to see the impact of God on our families.** We are called to be givers of hope, the servants of the lost, the passionate for the rejected. We have a destiny and no one person is of no little importance in God's Kingdom. But for the family, God demands unity! God demands relationship, not blame. God demands repentance and not oppression. God can use you where you are and develop something in your family that revolutionizes your home, your family, your outlook on life and your passion for life.

Turn It Around

Naviget

As I was preparing this message there was a Christian magazine that I had recently received and felt strongly that I should look through it. My eyes landed on an article by Christian author, John Ortberg. He wrote books like, *Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them*, *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*, *The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People*

In his article, he mentions that he has a rock that sits on his desk with a single Latin word painted on it: *naviget*. His wife gave it to him during a dry and difficult time in his life, when it felt like his past was crumbling and was not sure what his future held. John first came across the Latin word *naviget* while reading an article by **Gilbert Meilander** called "*Divine Summons*." The article was about the notion of God calling on your life and the direction that He is calling you to take. Meilander takes the word *naviget* from the writings of Virgil's *The Aeneid*, (which was considered the Roman

Empire's national epic which is a lengthy, revered narrative poem, concerning serious subjects containing details of heroic deeds and events significant to a culture or nation).

The story was about **Aeneas**, an ordinary Trojan who traveled to Italy, where, by the divine call of the God's, he became the ancestor and founder of the Romans. After Aeneas was confronted with the high calling of having the burden to create Rome, Virgil gives Aeneas words in response, *"I am the man whom heaven calls."* But building Rome is not what Aeneas wants to do. He is forced to give up his love and his attachment to the past and surrender to the call, to die to the past and move toward the future.

Aeneas does not want to leave his home to follow his calling; it means leaving old dreams and old loves. But there is a larger and better destiny to which he is called to submit. So one of Virgil's gods, Jupiter, says of Aeneas, **"That man should sail,"** or in Latin, ***nagivet***. Here is a quote from John's article,

"Sailing means embracing the pain of leaving behind what he thought was his comfort and fulfillment. It means trusting that somehow he is not just moving into the future; he is being led. It is Abraham leaving Ur for he knows not what. It is Moses leaving Egypt for a land he will never enter. It is Jesus walking the Via Dolorosa toward a hill he does not want to climb."

It is a high calling to *nagivet*, to set sail. But there is a destiny, a journey that we have been called to as men and families. God has given us a divine call to live a life pleasing as unto the Lord.

⁹For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. ¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Colossians 2:9-14

I know that we live in difficult times, but I can't help but think of a more difficult time in history than **during the life of James' when the Jews were not only finding the love and grace of God by the thousands and thousands, but also the many of thousands who murdered and martyred for their faith. It was a great revival paired with a great Holocaust. James is writing for us in one of the most turbulent times of spiritual seas. I would have to say that we are sharing some of that difficulty here in America. The seas are rough, the waves are high and the cost is great.**

The scripture that we will be reading today is divided up into four sections,

Four Statements of Every Father if we are going to maneuver our families toward safety and

fulfillment:

1. The Statement of **Fact** (James 1:2-4)
2. The Statement of **Faith** (James 1:5-8)
3. The Statement of **Foundation** (James 1:9-11)
4. The Statement of **Forever** (James 1:12)

Let's look as James writing and deal with the first Statement:

1. **The Statement of Fact**

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

James 1:2-4

These simple three scriptures are a huge revolution of words. You cannot run quickly through this scripture without being challenged. It is important that we understand the terminology that James chooses to use here. **See, if we are going to be the life leaders of the home, though we take some of the same journeys as the world does, we cannot take on the same terminology!** This is what I mean by having a statement of faith. And listen, we must all agree about this in the family or it will never work.

Look at the terminology that James makes concerning world situations. He uses words like, “consider” or think, joy, trials, testing, faith, developing, perseverance, mature, complete, not lacking anything. James has a different view of the world...it's as if he were called here for a purpose.

Mike Breaux, in his book, *Making Ripples* stated that we live in a “*whatever*” world. A recent survey of American high school students found that nearly **80% of them said they don't believe there's such a thing as absolute truth**. In other words, they **don't believe that there is a right or a wrong, it is what you believe at the time of your situation that determines the truth...“whatever.”**

- 67% of students regularly cheat on exams...“whatever.”
- 66% of students regularly drink alcohol...“whatever.”
- 56% of students said they regularly shoplift...“whatever.”

At the Bureau of Justice Statistics, (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>) gives us some interesting facts about violent crime:

Steven Malanga of The Manhattan Institute and City Journal makes this point in a recent essay, “*City Without Fathers*,” that looks at the collapse of order within Newark, New Jersey. Malanga points to one central factor behind the problems of urban youth in Newark and a crime wave that threatens civic order -- the absence of fathers from urban households.

Malanga explains:

“The horrific, execution-style killing of three teens in Newark last weekend has sparked widespread outrage and promises of reform from politicians, religious leaders, and community activists, who are pledging a renewed campaign against the violence that

plagues New Jersey's largest city. But much of the reaction, though well-intentioned, misses the point. Behind Newark's persistent violence and deep social dysfunction is a profound cultural shift that has left many of the city's children growing up outside the two-parent family--and in particular, growing up without fathers. Decades of research tell us that such children are far likelier to fail in school and work and to fall into violence than those raised in two-parent families. In Newark, we are seeing what happens to a community when the traditional family comes close to disappearing."

According to 2005 figures from the U.S. Census Bureau, only 32 percent of Newark children are being raised by their parents in a two-adult household. The rest are distributed among families led by grandparents, foster parents, and single parents--mostly mothers. An astonishing **60 percent of the city's kids are growing up without fathers. It isn't that traditional families are breaking up; they aren't even getting started. The city has one of the highest out-of-wedlock birthrates in the country, with about 65 percent of its children born to unmarried women.** And 70 percent of those births are to women who are already poor, meaning that their kids are born directly into poverty.

- **A child born to a single-parent family has more than a one in five chance of living in poverty. A child in a two-parent home has just a one in twelve chance.**
- **70 percent of long-term prisoners in the U.S. penal system grew up without fathers.**
- **Cal Farley-** "A boy is the only thing that God can use to make a man."

Listen to these stats:

- **Good News:** From 1994-2003 the violent crime rate in the U.S. Steadily declined. In 2005, it reached its lowest rate ever- all the way down to 5,341,410 acts of violent crime for the year!
- **Bad News:** Although the crime rate dropped for adults, among twelve-to fifteen-year-old kids, violent crime has skyrocketed in the past twenty years- by a staggering 156%.

Too Close To Home:

On June 18, 2008, in Ottawa, Canada, the Justice Suzanne Tessier of the Quebec Superior Court lifted a 12-year-old girl's grounding, overturning her father's punishment for disobeying his orders to stay off the Internet.

He refused to allow her to go on a school trip for chatting on websites he tried to block, and then posting "inappropriate" pictures of herself online using a friend's computer. The disciplinary measures were for the girl's "own protection" and is now in court attempting to appeal the ruling.

The layer was quoted as saying, "She's a child, at her age, children test their limits and it's up to their parents to set boundaries."

He continued to say, "I started an appeal of the decision today to reestablish parental authority, and to ensure that this case doesn't set a precedent, otherwise parents are going to be walking on egg shells from now on." (Ottawa, AFP, Wed., 2008/06/18)

(http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20080618/wl_canada_afp/canadachildcourtoffbeat;_ylt=A gHuas32AM2xHTnw41I_djVNYhAF)

God's Original Plan

The scripture is God's blueprint for how the family is to function and how to maneuver through the “whatever attitude of this world. Biblically, the father is the head of the family. Together with his wife, he raises his children in a home where Jesus Christ is the focus. **The Bible is the most important book in the home.**

If you are a father or a husband, you are at war. If you didn't know it, war has been declared upon the family, on your family and mine. Leading a family through the chaos of America culture is like leading a small ship, not on the open seas as much as through narrow canals of water, winding in every direction with jagged, rocky cliffs on the sides and boulders that have fallen in the water that could potentially rip the belly of the ship to shreds.

- One out of two marriages end in divorce.
- The median age for divorce is thirty-four for men and thirty for women.
- 1960, one out of every ten households were maintained by a woman with no husband present
- 1996, two out of every five households were maintained by a woman with no husband present.
- Tonight, enough teenagers to fill the Rose Bowl, Cotton Bowl, Sugar Bowl, Orange Bowl, Fiesta Bowl, and the average Super Bowl will practice prostitution to support drug additions.
- One million teenager girls will get pregnant out of wedlock this year.
- Five hundred thousand of those girls will abort their babies.
- Of all the fourteen-year-old girls alive today, 40% will become pregnant by their nineteenth birthday.
- Every seventy-eight seconds, a teenager in America attempts suicide.

Peanuts

Lucy walks up to Charlie Brown, who is leaning against a wall with his head in his hands.

She looks at him and says, “Discouraged again, eh, Charlie Brown?”

“You know what your trouble is?” she asks when he doesn't respond. “The whole trouble with you is that you are you!”

“Well, what in the world can I do about that?” he responds in desperation.

Lucy answers, “I don't pretend to be able to give advice. I merely point out the trouble.”

There are many “Lucy's” around us who continue to dump problems on our backs and then go away and look for more problems. I like those who are more like **Henry Ford**, who said,

“Don't find a fault; find a remedy.”

James Has A Remedy

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

James 1:2-4

You've got to make a statement of FACTS, not STATS! James tells us that we have got to look at life differently, thought we go through the same thing we do not define it the same way! Instead of calling it a political problem, a financial problem, a social problem, a problem with our schools, a problem with our judicial system, a problem with the Tali ban, a dysfunctional, co-dependent, ADD, hyper-extended knee problem, James says, lets look at it this way.

- **Consider- THINK!** Put this in your head. Make this your point of reference! **Consider-** *hayg-eh'-om-ah-ee* 2233- to consider, deem, account, think: Should the emphasis be on what should be on our mind? What we are thinking about?

*“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not **think** of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather **think** of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”*

James 12:3

The question here is: What are you thinking?

- Pure/All- *pas* 3956- individually: each, every, any, all, the whole, everyone, all things, everything; and collectively- some of all types.

Are we looking at each situation differently? Do we see them as God does? Satan took Jesus to a very high mountain in **Matthew 4:8** and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and not only that, but he showed Him all their splendor. Satan didn't only show Jesus nice pictures of the countryside but he showed him the latest establishments, the five star hotels and the Mercedes Camels. Jesus saw all of them. See, **we have never truly yielded to Christ if we have not fully resisted Satan!** **Jesus had to pass the test and resist Satan in all categories.** This “all” we are talking about here is finding a place for every situation of your life and tag a response of “joy” onto it.

Do we get frustrated with one trial and the other we see as a blessing in disguise? It is important here that we are not constantly asking, “Why is God doing this to me,” but rather, “What can God show me in this trial.” It is not biblical to think that we are inoculated from the pains of life. God is not a cure to the affects of sin in this world, but He is the cure to the curse of most of it. Does that make us less prone to suffer? Absolutely and then no! There are trials of all kinds that we do and will face, but the blessings of obedience, the joy of the fruit of our obedience is unmeasurable. You cannot begin to describe the blessings of a believer who has pursued God with all their heart...in all the areas of their life. God is not a portion of their life, their life is fully God's and they will not do less.

We get confused because of trials. Life happens, will you learn from it? We

have a saying, “If we do not learn from history then history is bound to repeat itself. Our trials, *all* of them, every one of them, not selectively or pending on the mood, but are all of our trials faced with an attitude of joy? **The question here is: Are you selective with how you respond to life?**

- **Joy-** *khar-ah'* 5479- joy and gladness: Should the emphasis be on our attitude, how we should express ourselves when going through difficult times? When Jesus tells the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 He shares some powerful information,

¹⁴“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, **who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.”**

Matthew 25:14

Notice two things here:

1. **Who's servants are these men?** His servants. These are not unfamiliar men that He picks up on the side of the road. They are considered someone that He would call His own. His servants.
2. **They were given God's property, possessions, goods and wealth.** We are not asked to go in our own strength and power to do the work of the Lord. We are not asked to do all of this in our own knowledge. We need supernatural strength and God is wanting...no, God has demanded that we take what He has and is giving us as to what is needed as we step out in faith.

Here are three guys, one gets five talents, one gets two talents and one more gets one talent...**each according to his ability.** The word for ability here is the Greek word for ability is *dynamis*, (1411), this is where we get our word dynamite from. It means strength, power and ability residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth.

I was listening to a father tell the story of playing basket ball with his eight year old son in his driveway. They had picked different teams as if they were playing in the college play-offs. The dad described how he was trash talking his son and every time he would make a shot he would say, “I'm on fiiiyyyaaaahhhh!” He was letting his son make a shot on the outside of the court as he counted down, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. His son shot and popped the net. The dad made sounds like the crowd was roaring and the buzzer going off. And all of a sudden his son ran into the house. The dad was just standing there wondering where he went. And as quick as he went in he came out with a bottle of Gateraid and he gave it to his dad and said, “Pour it on me dad, I'm on fiiiyyyaaaahhhh!”

God has given us, each to our ability, our dynamite, our fiiiyyyaaaahhhh!

There are a few things about ability that is worth making note of:

1. **Personal Development:** Ability can always be developed. There is always something that can improve in a persons ability to do what ever they do. Facing unknown situations always is a great learning opportunity, but so is books, classes and teachings.

2. **Influenced Development:** Ability can be trained in an individual's life. Placing yourself in the tutoring of one learned can improve one's ability. Coming under accountability is not for control but development. Accountability is not for the purpose of stopping you from doing wrong, that is parenting or policing the individual. But accountability is for the purpose of succeeding at a particular goal or standard. It is not for the purpose of pointing out the wrong as much as patting on the back for the right.
3. **Supernatural Development:** There are supernatural abilities given to man that he could not manifest otherwise. This is the power of God giving supernatural strength, knowledge, faith and demonstrations for the good of man.

In the final minutes of Super Bowl XLII David Tyree assisted the New York Giants in stunning the New England Patriots 17-14. This win is considered one of the greatest Super Bowl upsets along with one of the greatest catches in Super Bowl history.

But it was not always like this for David. He started drinking at age 14 and was allowed to smoke marijuana in his home as a teenager. He said,

"I was like a captain for the devil's army. My house was a safe haven for craziness. Smoking, drinking, that's where it all went down. By the time I got to college, it got real destructive. I was fearful of getting caught with a drug test, so I left marijuana alone for the most part through the most part through college. But alcohol, that was it. Then I started having trouble with blackouts."



Just three years before this claim to fame, because of his alcohol abuse and drug use he found himself sitting in the Bergen County Jail in New Jersey. He remembers bowing his head and praying for another chance even though he had no idea who he was praying to. After David was released on bail, like so many just out of jail went to church and sat on the back row of that church crying for 20 minutes and then stepped forward and turned his life over to his new faith in Christ Jesus. He says he hasn't touched drugs since his arrest and drank alcohol twice within two weeks of being jailed and hasn't drunk since.

He took his girlfriend who was pregnant with their second child and married her. Here's what he said,

"At that point, I knew I wanted change and I wasn't fearful about what anybody else thought," he says, "It was my time."

David's chains were broke without drug rehabilitation or Alcoholics Anonymous. He said,

“I used to wonder what I'd be like if I wasn't smoking weed, drinking, partying every week and putting all these toxins in my body, but at the end of the day. I'd be right back doing the same thing....

...Obviously, you feel better about yourself when you know you're not destroying yourself.”

Look at this quote in USA Today,

“Tyree believes his breakout Super Bowl moment was divinely provided to allow him a platform. He sees himself as an example of the impact of submitting to a holy life, hopeful that he can save others.”

(Taken from USA Today, Wednesday, June 11, 2008)

David Tyree was a backup wide receiver during the regular season and only **caught four passes total...all year long before this event.** I would agree, I think his breakout Super Bowl moment was divinely inspired, and we need the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to give us the edged, not only to help us win but to give us a platform that the world might see God!

We are to set sail, *naviget* boldly, venturing in into the presence of God, (Hebrews 4:16), seeking the FACE and HEART of God, (I John 2:3; 5:20). By doing this we are declaring the facts to one another, to God and to the nations and to the powers that reign on this earth, (Ephesians 6:19). Do you understand that we cannot do this call of God, walk this walk without the help of the prevailing work of the Holy Spirit in us. We cannot do it. Here are a couple of key statements concerning this:

- **We exist to do what cannot be done without the Supernatural grace and work of the Holy Spirit.** I've come to some challenging Theological conclusions in the last few days:
 - **We do not exist to preach and share the good news!** No, we exist to to preach and share the good news of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Because without the power of God's Spirit upon the words of our mouth the words will fail and bring no fruit! With the power of God upon our words it will draw people toward Christ. But without the power of God on our lips the words will become dead, even a stench to those who hear them. They will not be drawn nor convicted but repulsive and turned off. We exist to preach and to share the good news of God through the Holy Spirit so the harden hearts of men and women who are dead to God will come to the life found in Christ.
 - **We do not exist to worship!** We exist to worship in the

power of the Holy Spirit. We desire that every Sunday when you walk through the back doors of this church the power of the Holy Spirit starts penetrating your hearts and minds and He nurtures your brokenness, brings unity back to your family and the families that come to be restored. We worship so that the Holy Spirit will so illuminate our hearts that dead areas in our heart are awoken, areas of doubt and unbelief are cast out and faith to believe for the impossible are birthed. We worship so that the Holy Spirit will give us a new affection for Jesus Christ, God the Father and the reality of a lost world. We exist to worship through the Holy Spirit so that Sunday's are not the only time that God shows up but on Monday's and Wednesday's there is a heavy presence of the Holy Spirit still shaping, guiding, encouraging, revelating our hearts. This does not happen by mere music or a worship leader or really cool worship songs. This happens because God's Spirit is released upon His people.

- **We do not exist to be missional!** That means, we do not exist to obey God's commands and do the work of the church in reaching, teaching and sending out which is represented by our four banners on our walls. We exist to be a missional people empowered by the Holy Spirit so we can take Jesus Christ to the whole world with the whole Gospel! To this city, to Kansas, our nation and the world! We are called to a hard, disbelieving people. Our existence is not to become logically smarter than the lost so that we might outwit those who refute God, but they cannot explain the love of God, not the logic of God! We can only offer a social gospel to the world without the help of the Holy Spirit. Look what Paul says:

²Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Colossians 4:2-4

Paul knew that it had to be the work of the Holy Spirit to work in the souls and lives of men and women for them to really get a grasp of God. God uses us as a means to release His Spirit but we cannot do it if the Spirit is not in us to be released. We exist for the Holy Spirit to totally invade us, our homes, our church our community. Without the work of the Holy Spirit we are doing nothing but fighting a moral battle. We are nothing but being prejudice. We are nothing more than intolerant people because people without the

Holy Spirit cannot understand the things of God and are offended in the Words of God!

We can do nothing without the power of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing that takes place in our church that is of any eternal good if we are not inviting the Holy Spirit to have His way in it all. We cannot change a stinky diaper in our nursery without the power of the Holy Spirit or we will just have child care. We cannot teach our children's church and classes without the help of the Holy Spirit or we are just taking up someones time.

Everyone has an ability, everyone has a “ffffiiiiiyyyaaaaahhh,” but it must be discovered. This discovery must then be developed, very seldom do abilities come outside the package of capabilities. There is potential that lies within you to complete and fulfill a call to the best of your potential, what lies within you.

Many people feel like God is not fair, that He puts more on us than we should tolerate and to be honest, we take on more than we should at times because of our desire to serve, love and care for God and others. We are always in potential of finding our limit because of a passionate heart. But God gives us according to our *ability*, what He knows that we can handle. The church would be unlimited if it could find it's potential. And I'm not talking about supernatural abilities alone, even though I believe that we all hold abilities in that area as well. But there is a God given ability to every man that allows them to assist the whole, and each should find what it is that he does well and do it well, do it often as unto the Lord.

If you are familiar with the men who were given talents, the one had five talents had doubled them and now had ten, the same with the man with two talents. When the master returned he said to both of them,

“...Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. *Come and share your master's happiness!*”

Matthew 25:23

The KJV puts it this way, “...enter thou into the *joy* of thy lord.” (Matthew 25:21c,23c) These men set sail!

The question here is: Will you maintain joy not matter what the condition?

- **Trials-** *pi-ras-mos'* 3986: an experiment, attempt, trial, proving, temptation. Trials are attempts at life with Christ. Often, a sermon message can emphasis what we are going through, trials. Should we dissect, cross examine and catalog each one? Maybe we've been taught that you must have trials or we would never see the rainbow. Come on, give me a break! It is not about the trials as it is the response in the trials. **The question here is: Are you suffering and how are you responding to it?**

Jerome (ca. 347 – September 30, 420) whose real name in Latin was Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus. He was an average but curious man who schooled himself in the language of Greek and by his own hand translated the Vulgate, (Old Testament) from Hebrew to Latin. He was accused of having Protestant views -- the denial that the Roman Church is infallible in her faith and the necessary centre of Catholicity, because of his understanding of the Word of God and the influence of a Jew converted to Christianity. Because of this, Jerome was persecuted and eventually thrown in prison.

This denial that placed him in a despicable prison cell, deprived of daylight and almost starved to death for three hundred and forty days. But despite all of this history records that his spirit soared, he was sharp and fluent with teachings and quotations of great teachers. Because of this there was fear of an open trial because of his eloquence and the possibility of persuasion during his defense. Eventually he was given an open floor to defend himself and it is said that his words moved the hardest heart with conviction. He observed that the greatest and most holy men had been known to differ and he clearly presented his case and addressed the conduct of the court. Finally the court was over.

Jerome received the same sentence that had been passed upon his martyred countryman Huss and Wycliff. He was handed over to the civil authorities and they placed a paper cap on his head painted with red devils on it and he was recorded as saying, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, when He suffered death for me a most miserable sinner, did wear a crown of thorns upon His head, and for His sake will I wear this cap."

They gave Jerome two days to recant testimony; in which time the cardinal of Florence used his utmost endeavors to bring him over. But he would not recant and he was willing to die for what he believed. (<http://www.godrules.net/library/martyrs/martyrsch8b.htm>)

As we was being led to the place of his execution he sang several hymns, and when he came to the same spot where John Huss had been burnt to death, he knelt down, and prayed fervently. It is recorded that he actually embraced the stake in which he would be tied to with great cheerfulness, and when those who intended to light the fire that would take his life came up behind him he said, "Come here, and kindle it before my eyes; for if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to this place." After the fire had been lit, he sang a hymn, but was soon interrupted by the flames; and the last words he was heard to say these, "**This soul in flames I offer Christ, to Thee.**"

Interestingly enough, Jerome, or St. Jerome is recognized by the Roman Catholic Church as a canonized Saint and Doctor of the Church, and his version of the Bible is still an important text in Catholicism. Somehow the events of his protests and his martyrdom is swept under the carpet as a mishap and a matter of bad communication. It's sad that he is a reigning misrepresented Saint in Catholicism and an unknown hero to the Christian realm.

- **Testing-** *dok'-ee-mon* 1383: The proving to be accepted- In the ancient world there was no banking system as we know it today, and no paper money. All

money was made from metal, heated until liquid, poured into molds and allowed to cool. When the coins were cooled, it was necessary to smooth off the uneven edges. The coins were comparatively soft and of course many people shaved them closely. In one century, more than eighty laws were passed in Athens, to stop the practice of shaving down the coins then in circulation. But some money changers were men of integrity, who would accept no counterfeit money. They were men of honor who put only genuine full weighted money into circulation. Such men were called "dokimos" or "approved". (Donald Barnhouse). Sometimes messages on this scripture emphasizes the testing, what we pass through in life. **The question here is: Did the situation prove who we believed we are said to be?**

After fifteen years of ministry I came to the point of wondering if I was serving as a pastor because it was a job or if I was truly called of God and I was passionate toward Him. I had often wondered that if I resigned the church I was in and had a secular job that I could remain as passionate and committed to Christ as I ever had been standing before the congregation, at weddings and church socials. In 1995 I did resign my church and we went through many difficult trials losing many of our possessions in a car accident while making the move from the town I pastored to our new location. I searched for two weeks for a job, dressing up each day and having interview after interview. I eventually took a job that I did poorly in and was released only after two weeks. My confidence could not get lower but my relationship with God grew more passionate. Through difficult but wonderful challenges I'd have to say that I was for real, my trials proved that Jesus was Lord of my life and I could not have known my true commitment without the trials. **There is always a since of feeling "fake" without a service of testing "trial."** **The question here is: Did the situation prove who we believed we are said to be?**

- **Faith-** *pis'-tis* 4102: conviction of the truth of anything, belief; Should the emphasis be on faith, that every trial and test only come to prove your faith level? On each occasion that you are tested should the emphasis be on the trial or the test or on the score you got on your faith. **The question here is: Are you growing in your faith?**
- **Develops-** *kat-er-gad'-zom-ah-ee* 2716 to perform, accomplish, achieve; to work out i.e. to do that from which something results. Or is the emphasis on personal development, not necessarily on faith, but the life of faith that causes you to endure trials and testings and the focus is more on the big strong muscles that you eventually end up with. **The question here is: Did you grow? Did you learn? Did you improve your quality of service toward God? Did you develop?**
- **Perseverance-** *hoop-om-on-ay'* 5281 steadfastness, constancy, endurance: Perseverance is the emphasis on keeping on, past the trials, past the test, put your nose to the challenge of life, never look up, don't worry about your grade, don't worry if you've had any improvements, don't worry if you are doing the right thing, just stay at it, fervent, passionate...to the end. Persevere? Is that the focus? **The question here is: Are you still passionately perusing after the things of God?**

- **Mature-** *tel'-i-os* 5046- a full grown adult, of full age, mature who has come to its end, finished wanting nothing necessary to completeness who is perfect. **The question here is: What is your spiritual age and when was the last time you had a growth spurt?**
- **Complete-** *hol'-ok'-lay-ros* 3648- complete in all its parts, in no part wanting or unsound, complete, entire, whole: There is no area of my life that this has not penetrated. It has found its way into every crevice of my belief system. How I treat the person at the store. How I handle money. How I raise my kids. How I respond to my spouse. How I speak about others. How I respond to the government and those in authority over me. Trials prove every area of your life and expose the areas that are not submitted to God's Word. We say we are Christians but there are little unredeemed pockets of self-ownership that we cradle and protect refusing to give up. Satan attempts to bring up fear that we will lose our identity while the Holy Spirit is prodding us toward faith that we are gaining a new identity. Being complete is not just about winning, it is looking like Jesus in every area of our life. If we are staying with it, keeping on keeping on and then one day you will turn around and say, "Wow, look at me, my voice changed!" **The question here is: Has God permeated every area of your life?**
- **Not Lacking Anything-** Lacking *li'-po* 3007- to leave, leave behind, forsake, to be left behind; to be wanting, to fail; Anything *may-dice'* 3367- nobody, no one, nothing :

"And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life."

Matthew 19:29

It is realizing that you are not giving up anybody or anything but that you will be gaining something more eternal and more rewarding, more blessed! What is the emphasis of not lacking anything? If I don't attempt to sow a seed then why should I anticipate a harvest? I lack nothing because when it is said and done, what I have to offer is nothing in reflection of what is to be. If I'm going to get kicked in the head for attempting to live this way...why would I try?

"⁷But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."

Philippians 3:7-11

The reason I live this life is so in my giving and even suffering I lose nothing that cannot and will not be replaced by the grace and promise of God. **The question here is: Am I arriving?**

C.S. Lewis wrote,

“To follow the vocation, (the call of God), does not mean happiness, but once it has been heard, there is no happiness for those who do not follow.”

Steve Farrar stated in his book, *Point Man*, **Satan has two specific goals** in his war on the family:

- 1. To effectively alienate and sever a husband's relationship with his wife.**
- 2. To effectively alienate and sever a father's relationship with his children.**

Father's, It's Time!

I believe that there is a demand to bring this culture to its appropriate place, that men make the appropriate moves in a corrupt society, to *naveget*, to set sail! I believe that the reason why I want to invest so much into the men here at Cornerstone church, is not that I don't appreciate and approve of women, but I believe that God has placed a heavy responsibility upon the shoulders of men. It doesn't matter what society says, it is what God's Word says!

As we yield to set sail, *naviget*. Our families will gain great benefit as we lead them through the narrow canals which are filled with the jagged edged walls of our society. See, there is something that is sure...our God is not a “whatever” God. He wants you to know Him in a personal way, to experience His love, His grace and His plan for your life! He wants you to set sail. Look what He says about you:

“For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord. 'Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.”
Jeremiah 29:11

The truth is, at this very moment, most of us don't have the choice concerning the way life is around us, it's just there. You can call it the bottom, you can call it the pits. You can call it the end of the world, but **you DO have a choice in the matter** and **there is a tremendous reason to navigate your family through the narrow canals of this life. But this job is not for those who want to sit around and let it happen to them. You must go out and get it. You must be willing to tackle the problems that come with the territory that others are too proud or too frightened to take on.**

Zig Ziglar said, “There are no traffic jams on the extra mile.”

I happen to agree with that statement more and more every day. God has a plan and purpose for you and your family and this family of God here at Cornerstone Church. Extra effort is expected, there is extra responsibility, and extra thinking...but there is an extra return!

Bill Purvis, the senior pastor of a large church in Columbus, Georgia, said,

“If you do what you can, with what you have, where you are, then God won't leave you where you are, and He will increase what you have.”

We must be up for the game. We've got to get in the game! Somebody has got to steer the ship and the men need to step up.

1. The Statement of **Fact** (James 1:2-4)

Next Week:

2. The Statement of **Faith** (James 1:5-8)
3. The Statement of **Foundation** (James 1:9-11)
4. The Statement of **Forever** (James 1:12)