

LimitLESS- Live It Out Loud! Part 1

James 1:19-27

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. The book of James reveals many practical duties and activities of Christian, that is not heeded will hinder God's expression through them and blessings on them, especially during difficult seasons of our life. This series will provide us with a practical view of how to live a life of spiritual impact and personal fullness in a difficult world under pressure.

Purpose of this message: Today, as we step through this portion of James' teaching we are challenged to not only know more about God but to learn how to respond to Him and His Word. We will also learn that there is a blessing that comes with our response to His Word. Our Goal is to take off the limits, the limits of what keeps us from being blessed, the limits of what keeps us from living out loud. This is a needed teaching for anyone who wants God to have all of them...rather than just having part of Him.

As we prepare our teaching today it is good to remember where we are in this letter from James. It was written to those converted Jews who were scattered all over the middle east because of the persecution and horrible things going on in Jerusalem. He stresses the importance of staying focused during difficult times. In his letter he writes down his observations and addresses issues that we have during those difficult times.

In James 1:1-18 he tells us the three T's of difficult times, it's a time of **trials**, (Vs. 2), a time of **testing**, (Vs. 3) and a time of **temptations**, (Vs. 9-18). But now he takes a turn. He takes his focus off of the geographical challenges of difficult times to the personal challenges of difficult times. And this is where we are going to find answers and direction for our lives today. If you don't know it, we are actually going through difficult times:

- We are attempting to determine who will lead our nation for the next four years and ultimately who will affect the world for the next four years.
- We are going through a fuel challenge like nothing we have ever experienced before
- According to the findings of an unpublished World Bank report published in The Guardian newspaper in London on Friday, biofuels have caused world food prices to increase by 75 percent.
- Crude oil futures reached a record high of \$145.85 in New York this past Thursday
- Starbucks currently operates about 7,000 stores nationally. The company said this week that 70 percent of the stores opened just two years ago are closing. WHAT'S OUR WORLD COMING TOO! (Ha!)

But we are living in difficult times. This was interesting, I had recently read a thirty year old newspaper article from the New York Times that in hindsight today, we now view the economy to have been at it's best and investing was at it's highest and America was good. After reading down this article and noticing those dates, and you know what I read? "We are living in difficult times."

I was surprised at how many articles thirty years ago painted a drab and difficult picture of those present times and our future. Here we are thirty years later making statements of, "Man, wasn't life good back then?" I'm not trying to minimize what is happening right now in our nation or world, but I was surprise to find out that what we interpret as difficult times is

often inconvenient times. But one thing is for sure, we are, in the least, living in inconvenient times if not difficult and unpredictable times.

But we are also living in familiar times. Right now in America, Bibles are everywhere. You can find them in grocery stores, bookstores, motel rooms, everywhere. They're available in all sizes, shapes, colors, translations, versions, and listen to all these bindings, "**Simulated Leather**", "**Imitation Leather**", "**Leather-look**", "**LeatherLike**" and "**Leatherflex**" and then there is "real" leather bound, and paperback.

Every year the Bible out sells every other major bestseller. Last year there were 500 million Bibles published in the world in 18,000 different languages. Here in America we are flooded with the word of God on the Internet, radio, TV, books, magazines, billboards, plaques, and religious paraphernalia. It's everywhere. Still, with all of this saturation, millions of people still miss the blessing of the Bible. Why? Because it's blessings are not automatic. The Bible is a book of blessing. It promises comfort, strength, hope, wisdom, joy, power, and purpose. But just because you have a Bible doesn't mean you're going to get the benefit from it. James, being his practical self, gives us insight to our typical personal response to difficult times and three steps on how to be blessed and live God's Word out loud...by the book, by the **Bible!**

Living It Out Loud

"But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does."

James 1:25

Psalm 119 declares that this Word of God is a perfect Word and it is exactly what I need. As a matter of fact, if I read this and apply this into my life it promises me freedom, wisdom, a future directed by God Himself and blessings from His very hand. When I learn to begin to live this Word out loud, according to James, I will be blessed in what I do. James mentions three ways to respond to God's Word so that we can be blessed and live it out loud.

Three Ways To Respond To God's Word If We Are Going To Be Blessed By It

1. I Must Receive God's Word If I Am Going To Be Blessed By It

"...accept the word planted in you, which can save you."

James 1:21b

If you have your Bible open to James 1:21, take your pen and circle the word, "accept."

- **Accept/Receive-** *dechomai* 1209- to take with the hand, to take hold of, take up
 - 1) to receive hospitality
 - 2) to receive into one's family to bring up or educate

This Greek word here is one that represents hospitality, one that welcomes and one that receives. If I am going to be blessed by God's Word, first I must take hold of this Word, receive it and welcome it into my heart and life. It can't work in your life if you can't take it in your heart.

Word Picture: Planted Seed

James gives us a word picture for us to understand what he is saying. He says that the Word of God is “planted” in you. The picture is a garden, that represents your heart. Then there is the seed, that represents the Word of God.

Jesus gives us a parable in Luke 8 that the Word of God is a seed and it is planted in the hearts of men and women. In His parable the sower takes the same seed and plants them in four different soils: 1.) Along the path, 2.) shallow soil with a rock underlay, 3.) thorny soil, 4.) and good soil.

Crop Failure. Now that's a terrifying two words to hear right here in Kansas. Nothing would be worse...but there is something worse, it is the inability to have a crop because the soil cannot produce! Notice that the sower used the same seed but he had different results. Our true problem is not natural disasters, like our friends up north are experiencing, it is a soil problem. It is the inability to accept/receive/welcome the Word of God into their life because there are obstacles that get in the way!

James says that we must receive the Word of God with the right soil or we are guaranteed crop failure. He gives us four attitudes that assist us in living out loud. They are essential for a life unlimited and blessed by God.

1. **Be Careful**

“My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak...”

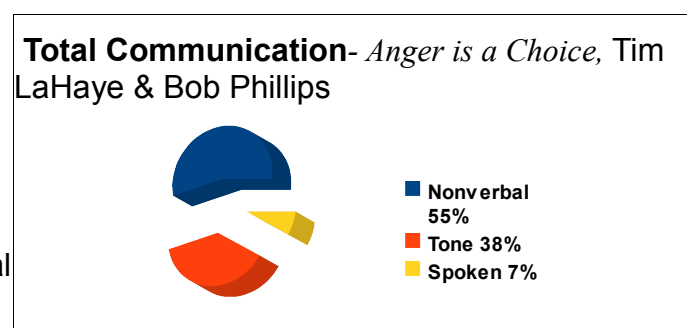
James 1:19a

Word Study

- **Dear-** *agapētos* 27- beloved, esteemed, dear, favourite, worthy of love
- **Brothers-** *adelphos* 80- a brother, whether born of the same two parents or only of the same father or mother; having the same national ancestor, belonging to the same people, or countryman
- **Every-** *pas* 3956- **1)** individually: each, every, any, all, the whole, everyone, all things, everything; **2)** collectively: some of all types
- **-one-** *anthrōpos* 444- a human being, whether male or female
- **Quick-** *tachys* 5036- quick, fleet, speedy
- **Listen/Hear-** *akouō* 191- **1)** to be endowed with the faculty of hearing, not deaf, **2)** to hear **b)** to attend to, consider what is or has been said **c)** to understand, perceive the sense of what is said
- **Slow-** *bradys* 1021- slow; metaph. dull, inactive, in mind
- **Speak-** *laleō* 2980- to utter a voice or emit a sound, talk, utter a sound

Total Communication

According to Tim LaHaye and Bob Phillips' book, *Anger is a Choice*, there are three basic factors make up the majority of communication: Nonverbal behavior, tone of voice and actual spoken words.



Two Questions Worth Entertaining:

1. What percentage of the conversations that you hear on a daily basis are anger motivated, full of expressed frustration, demeaning or criticizing?
 2. What percentage of the conversations that you speak on a daily basis are anger motivated, full of expressed frustration, demeaning or criticizing?
- **“Speaking Evil” keeps sin in our lives**
 - **“Evil Listening” puts sin in our lives**

Evil Report- When an individual maliciously injures, damages or discredits another's reputation or character through the use of words or attitude.

Evil Reporters

1. Will look for support from you for her/his beliefs, attitudes or actions.
2. Will try to distract you from a God-given focus or course of action.
3. Will attempt to create disunity and division.
4. Will often show anger when disagreed with.
5. Will violate your spirit as they drag you into their inability to figure something out. (Could I ask your opinion on something?)
6. Will flatter you and praise you.
7. Will often embellish and exaggerate a situation to make it seem worse than it really is.

James doesn't want us to rush past the thought he is attempting to establish here, “Be Careful!”. He takes the time in his writing to attempt placing a caution sign on our road which reads, “Slow down with caution, the road ahead has many dangerous details.”

The Jews actually had this saying as a common statement: quick to listen and slow to speak. They are also noted as saying this:

- “If a word is worth one shekel, silence is worth two, or worth a precious stone”

Carol and I learned a few years back three questions we ask ourself when hearing information from someone else:

Is it true?

Is it necessary?

Is it my responsibility?

How does one distinguish between one who communicates with others to contribute to strife and division and one who communicates for unity and vision? You can know so by asking these four questions:

1. Does the person generally have a submissive attitude?
2. Does the person recognize that not all matters are equally important?
3. Is the person willing to accept the possibility that he may be wrong?
4. Has the person followed all existing channels or process to resolve his issues before making strong statements or taking any other action?

If we are going to receive the blessings of God, then we have got to receive, welcome His Word into our life. Many of our problems are caused because we're quick to speak rather than being quick to listen. Be careful in your attitude. Be ready. Be intent. Be ready to receive God's word. Be careful.

2. **Be Calm**

If we welcome God's Word into our lives, we will be blessed by it, but we have got to be calm.

"...slow to become angry..."

James 1:19b

Four Turns:

1. **Turn A Statement Into A Question-** Many times arguments arise because of the means of the conversation. When a statement is made, it is already a proven, accused, opinionated guilty perspective. A question on the other hand gives the person a fair opportunity to respond, not defend!
2. **Turn A Problem Into A Solution-** It is important to know what the problem is so you can know where the starting point of the solution lies. But only continuing to talk about the problem will eventually dull any positive outcome and you will lose the purpose of any resolve at all. You will want to throw your hands up and quit, breaking relationships, ruining trust, stopping progress.
3. **Turn A Critique Into A Clarification-** Too many times we are trying to be right about our perspective than finding out what's right about the problem. When we are too involved in criticizing a person or situation we are advancing our purpose to assassinate their character or humanity. But when you are intentional about clarification you assume nothing. You go to the source and find out the facts, you don't scatter your opinion. One of the best things you can ask a person who is critical and criticizing another is, "Have you talked to them?" The second thing to say is, "Let's go talk to them."
4. **Turn A Feeling Into A Function-** If something is scratching or irritating my skin I either take my arm away or remove the object creating the pain. We have a natural response to the feeling of frustration and pain. We want to follow our feelings and withdraw or push back the object creating the uneasiness. It is important to become aware of those feelings, or actually the actions from those feelings. When you see yourself not wanting to talk to a certain person or avoiding them, there is a feeling motivating it. It could be anger based, but in the least it is an unsafe feeling. That is when you have to turn that feeling into a function, you need to confront the situation and take action. You have to ask, "Why did you say that?" or, "I was wondering when you did that, were you angry with me?" or, "Have I done something that has bothered you?" If you don't turn your feelings into positive action you will live a life of response to feelings, never resolving anything.

Your opportunity to get connected with other people have a lot to do with how you handle life. If you are relaxed, more than likely people around you will feel relaxed. A relaxed individual is more approachable, more meaningful conversation can take place. But when anger rules we miss great opportunities for connection. We misinterpret the moment, we don't hear what is being said and it builds walls that will later have to be tore down.

An article from the Reader's Digest said that when you listen, it actually lowers your blood pressure. When you speak it raises your blood pressure. James says be calm, be slow to anger.

Family Feud

There are two primary times that *family* arguments occur, one is a half hour before everyone leaves in the morning and a half hour before dinner in the evening. In the morning, the pressure of leaving on time is a major factor. In the evening, everyone is tired, hungry, and irritable.

What is your emotional state, normally, when you come to church on Sunday morning? Do you come with a calm attitude? In many homes on Sunday morning it's kind of hectic. Then we come in at the last minute and expect God to speak to us. What preparation? You need to be calm. Maybe you need to get up a little bit earlier.

Many arguments between husbands and wives occur later in the evening just before going to bed. As a rule of thumb, discussions that begin after 9:00 P.M. Have a strong tendency to go downhill. Both are tired and are transitioning for the next day.

- **Angry/Wrath-** *orgē* 3709- anger, the natural disposition, temper, character; movement or agitation of the soul, impulse, desire, any violent emotion, but especially anger
- One of the most respected biblical counselors, Henry Brandt, has suggested that 80-90% of all his counseling involves anger.
- One study indicated that 80% of couples who verbally abuse each other ended up in physical combat.
- Every year, two million women are beaten by their husbands.
- Approximately 40% of all women murdered were killed by their their angry husbands.
- More than five children a day die at the hands of their angry parents or caregivers.

Bob Hutchins, a former judo champion for Southern California and now a missionary in Mexico stated, "I was just an above-average judo performer until I learned how to make my opponent angry. Then I could use his force against him. That's how I won the championship."

We are easily toppled when we are out of control. Our opponent, Satan wants you off balanced. He wants you to become limited in your relationship with God and the blessings you are able to receive from Him. This is a real need that must be dealt with if you want the blessings of God in your life.

3. Be Clean

“Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent...”

James 1:21a

I was reading one commentary this past week that made a great observation. The author said something like this,

“To have a wonderful and beautiful garden, you don't only need to have a love for the garden but also a hatred for the weeds.”

- **Filth-** *rhyparia* 4507- to make filthy, befoul, to defile, dishonor
- The word "filth" that you've got to get rid of is actually the Greek word that means "**earwax**". When you have a sin in your life it blocks your hearing God.

You cannot hear God because of the build-up in your spiritual ears. It is robbing you of your blessing. How do we clean out our ears?

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

I John 1:9

The Message translates James 1:21 this way:

“So throw all spoiled virtue and cancerous evil in the garbage. In simple humility, let our gardener, God, landscape you with the Word, making a salvation-garden of your life.”

James 1:21 (The Message)

We want to get rid of all the garbage, pull up any weeds, clean out any unwanted grass and anything else that is attempting to grow so that the blessings of God can be released in your life and you can live limitless for God!

4. Be Compliant

“...humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.”

James 1:21b

Notice that James didn't say “shamefully” accept the word, nor did he say, “boldly” accept the word. But he used the word humbly. The King James Version translates it this way:

“...receive with meekness...”

Meekness *praÿtēs* 4240- mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness

Meekness toward God is taking on the disposition of spirit that we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting.

In the OT, the meek are those wholly relying on God rather than their own strength to defend against injustice. Thus, meekness is knowing God has a plan for your painful past and the injuries that was inflicted on and in you. Meekness is knowing that though you are going through trials and test, your God will never tempt you and He is using them to purify and prepare you. He will deliver His own in His time (Isa 41:17, Luke 18:1-8). Gentleness or meekness is the

opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest. It stems from trust in God's goodness and control over the situation. The gentle person is not occupied with self at all. This is a work of the Holy Spirit, not of the human will (Galatians 5:23).

The picture of receiving this Word, planted in us with meekness is not to receive a gift that you will put passively on your shelf, but it is one that you have spent your last dollar on, like the pearl of great price, (Matthew 13).

In this thought, you are yielded to God's definitions of sin and life. When God's Word is not penetrating your heart you humble yourself and cry out, "God, do what You need to do in my life. I am yours, do with me as you will."

If I am going to live my life out loud and have a blessed life, first I have to receive God's Word. I've got to open my heart and deal with the four attitudes that rob my blessings, I must... 1.) Be careful, 2.) Be calm, 3.) Be clean and 4.) Be compliant. These are essential if I am going to live a limitless life, a blessed life in Christ, a life lived out loud!

Conclusion:

1. I Must Receive God's Word If I Am Going To Be Blessed By It

- **Be Careful**
- **Be Calm**
- **Be Clean**
- **Be Compliant**