

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Stop Kidding Yourself James 1:19-27 Part Fifteen

The theme of James is “Tests of Living Faith!” This epistle was written so that we might know whether or not we are saved. The first test that we find in this epistle is the “The Response to Trials test.” This test is found in **James 1:2-18**. We are now considering the second test which is “The Response to the Word test” in **James 1:19-27**. A proper response to the word involves a “proper reception” in **VV. 19-21** and a life characterized by “active obedience” in **VV. 22-27**.

As we have explored this area of “active obedience,” we have looked at the “demand for it” in **VV. 22-25** and we are now looking at specific “illustrations of it” in **VV. 26-27**. The very first area that we have looked at is the speech area. Let us look at **V. 26** **“If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man’s religion is worthless.”** One area that active obedience must be manifested in is the area of our speech; the way we talk, the way we communicate. But if we find ourselves being unchanged by the Word in this particular area, we are in trouble. James in essence in **V. 26** is saying to us, “A so-called faith that does not transform our speech is, in the sight of God, worthless.

What does it mean practically for us to bridle our tongue? Certainly it would involve putting off certain speech patterns while putting on others. Over the past several months we have considered certain areas of speech that need to be put off or abandoned. The areas of speech that we mentioned were blasphemous speech, filthy speech, lying speech, complaining speech, boastful speech, angry speech and careless speech. After considering these particular areas of speech, we have now begun to consider areas of speech that need to be put on.

To help us in this area I have been using an ACRONYM ACTS. As we have considered each letter of this ACRONYM; I have made an application to our speech patterns as it applies to God and then I have made a similar application as it relates to man. We are now on the very last letter of the acronym, the letter S. And this morning we will be considering the last speech pattern that needs to be added as it relates to God.

Not only do we need in our communication with God, to make sure that we are taking time to express adoration, confession, and thanksgiving as we seek to bridle our tongue, but we need to also make sure that we our taking time to make SUPPLICATION. This is the last and final speech pattern that we will consider as it applies to God.

SUPPLICATION

Let us begin by defining “supplication.” Supplication is any speech directed to God that makes a request of Him.” You might think that we need very little if any encouragement as believers in this particular area but this is just not so. Just as, I believe, we have much to learn in the area of adoration, confession, and thanksgiving, we have at least an equal amount to learn in the area of making requests of God. This weekend I would like to address the question, “What does God want from us in this area of supplication?”

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GOD WANTS US TO COME TO HIM WITH OUR REQUESTS

Many years ago before Lynn and I were married, we were at a Greyhound bus depot in LA trying to get a ticket for her to go north. We were planning to pay for the ticket with a personal check. They refused our check. They wanted it to be paid with cash. So we went out on the streets of LA and asked people to pay for her ticket in exchange for the very same type of check that Greyhound refused. You may be surprised to hear that we eventually found someone who would do this. But I can tell you unequivocally that none of the people we approached gave us the impression that they were excited about us coming to them. People, generally speaking, do not like being put in that position. But this is not true of the Lord. He wants us to come to Him with our requests.

Heb. 4:16, “Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.” How are we to approach the Lord with our requests? We are to approach His throne with “**confidence.**” Others may be unwilling or unable to help, but this is not true of the Lord. When we approach the Lord, we can be confident that He will not only receive us but that He will bless us for having come to Him.

The Lord wants us to come to Him when we are in need. We must not allow our impression of the world to become our impression of God. We must see God as a benevolent Father, who will never respond to our requests with anything other than kindness. **Mt. 7:9-11** gives us the following reassurance, “... **what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will he give him a stone? (10) Or if he shall ask for a fish, will he give him a snake, will he? (11) If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him?**” Let me ask you a question: Do you at this very moment in time have an awareness of any need in your life? I would have to think that the answer to that question would be, yes. Now let me ask you the next question: What are you doing about it? You might give a number of good answers to that question but all those potentially good answers must include prayer.

Are you living with a man who figuratively lives in the garage and takes very little interest in the children? You may lovingly talk to him about your needs and the need of your children, you may suggest that he read this book or that book, you may encourage him to go to some family conference, you may threaten him, you may seek to cajole him, but if you have failed to pray for him and for your family then you have failed to do the one thing that God has called you to do. And in failing to come to the Lord, asking Him for His help and intervention, you may very well have forever locked your family into the very situation you are trying so desperately to escape.

James 4:2 tells us, “**You do not have because you do not ask.**” There are blessings awaiting all those who come to the Lord in prayer. But if we do not come to the Lord with our requests we must understand that those blessings may never be realized.

If this is true then the key to increasing blessing is what? Increasing prayer! We need to be careful that we do not limit prayer. Some people choose not to pray for some things because they are too “BIG.” Others choose to not pray for some things because they are too “SMALL.” But the scriptures teach us that we should be praying about “everything.”

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What does **Phil. 4:6** say? **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”** Everything is a whole lot of things.

Before we were Christians we might have prayed a foxhole type of prayer once in a while when we were in some grave crisis saying to the Lord, “If you really are up there and you get me out of this I will never doubt you again.” But when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior and come to know God as a loving heavenly Father who wants us to come to Him about everything so that he might bless our lives, things will dramatically change in the area of supplication. Certainly this is an area in which we as Christians need to bridle our tongues. But there is another thing that God wants from us in this area of supplication. Not only does God want us to make our requests known to Him but He wants them to be humbly made.

God WANTS US TO COME TO HIM WITH OUR REQUESTS HUMBLY

What do I mean by this? I mean that when we pray that we are figuratively bowed before the Lord desiring that His will would be accomplished rather than ours. Let us consider the Lord’s prayer for a moment. Listen to the opening words of this prayer, **“(9) Pray then in this way: ‘Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. (10) Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.’** The purpose of this prayer is to glorify God’s name, and to ask for help to accomplish His will on earth. This prayer begins with God’s interests, not ours: God’s name, God’s kingdom, and God’s will. Robert Law has said, “Prayer is a mighty instrument, not for getting man’s will done in heaven, but for getting God’s will done on earth.”

Some Christians might protest and say "Didn't the Lord say to us that He would give us the "... desires of our heart" in **Ps. 37:4**? "And of course that is true but it is not the whole truth. What does the whole verse say? **“Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”** Let me ask you a question: If you are delighting in the Lord, whose will do you want accomplished, His or yours? I would think that you would want His will accomplished and that certainly would be the **“desire of our heart.”** Yes there are many prayer promises in the scriptures. And upon first reading it might seem that we might have been given in prayer a blank check to get whatever we might want. But the scriptures are clear that this is not so. **1 John 5:14** makes this very clear, **“And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”** For our prayers to be answered we must be praying in accordance with God’s will. And for those that come to the Lord humbly, this is all that they want.

As we seek to bridle our tongue as God’s children, one area that we will begin to see dramatic change in is in the area of supplication, not only in respect to the volume of that supplication as we learn to make our requests known to God in everything but also in respect to it’s content. Before we became a believer, our prayers may have been very self-centered, but as we grow in our faith our prayers will become more Christ-centered.

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This certainly does not mean that we will not pray for certain basic human needs. We have already learned in **Phil. 4:6** that God wants us to bring everything that is a concern in our lives before Him in prayer and certain basic human needs will always be a concern. But certainly as we grow in the Lord there will be more additional concerns.

Before we became a Christian we might have prayed something like this when our unsaved mother or father became ill: “Please heal my dad and make him well again.” Certainly that desire to see our father healed would be a legitimate concern and we can and should pray for that. But after becoming a Christian and understanding that prayer is a means by which God’s will is to be accomplished and not our’s, additional concerns will be added. Therefore we might amend the prayer which would go something like this, “Lord, please heal my dad. But not my will but thine be done. Give me the grace to trust you even in these most difficult hours. When I am able to talk with him, fill me with your Spirit that I might have the boldness and the courage to once again share with him the message of the gospel. Lift the veil of darkness from his eyes and his heart that he might see Jesus as His Lord and Savior. Use this illness in my Dad’s life and in my life to glorify Your name. If that is by raising him up and making him well again, we will praise You. And if it is not we will still praise You. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.”

When we begin to understand this truth, that prayer is a means to accomplish God’s will in and through our lives rather than our own will, hopefully we will not respond by saying, “Why pray?” Rather, I would like think that you and I would become excited, understanding that God has placed in our hands a key that unlocks the door to His power. What does **Jer. 33:3** tell us? **“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”** What are those things? It is all those things that can presently and ultimately bring glory to God.

What does God want from us in the area of supplication? He wants us to come to Him with our requests. He wants us to come to Him humbly with our requests. And finally He wants us to come to Him persistently with our requests.

GOD WANTS US TO COME TO HIM PRESISTENTLY WITH OUR REQUESTS

One of the very most difficult things to do in prayer is to keep praying for the same request over and over again. This is another area in our supplication where we need to bridle our tongue. We need to keep on keeping on in respect to those things which we believe to be God’s will even if we have prayed them a hundred times before.

Consider the parable we find in **Luke 11:5-8**, **“and He said to them, “Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; (6) for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; (7) and from inside he shall answer and say, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ (8) I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.”**

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The key word in this parable is “persistence.” The word literally means “shamelessness.” **“Yet because of his shamelessness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.”** The cause that brought on this shameless behavior was not a self-serving cause but a just cause to provide hospitality for a friend.

Jesus was saying if a grouchy friend can be forced by his friend’s shameless insistence to give what he ought or in other words what was right to give, how much more will our loving God respond to us as we come boldly to his throne of grace to receive mercy and grace to help in the time of our need?

Building off this parable, Christ went on to say in **Luke 11:9-10** **“And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. (10) for everyone who asks, receives, and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened.”** The Lord’s language is unusually compelling because the three verbs - “ask,” “seek,” “knock” - indicate an ascending intensity.

We should not over time when pursuing something that we believe is good and in accordance with God’s purposes and design, grow less intense in petitioning but rather more intense. The stacking of these words is extremely forceful, and the fact that they are present imperatives gives them even more punch. The text actually reads: “keep on asking, and it will be given to you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.” The man in this picture just will not stop knocking.

Persistence is an indication of our soul’s confidence. When children repeatedly ask for the same thing it is not because they don’t believe that their persistence will not be rewarded. They persist because they believe that it will in fact pay off for them. Jesus says, **“it will be given ... you will find.... and the door will be opened.”** Those who **“ask”**, **“seek”** and **“knock”** are people who believe God will answer. Their prayers are not works, but acts of faith not ritual but reliance.

CONCLUSION

We have been considering "The Response to the Word test." In considering this particular test, we have now considered the importance of active obedience as it applies to the bridling of the tongue. Those who are truly born again will be striving to discipline their tongue to put off certain speech patterns and they will also be striving to discipline their tongue to put on certain speech patterns.

Those patterns that we have considered that need to be put on in respect to God are adoring speech, confessing speech, thankful speech and now we have added supplication. As we considered this area there are there three specific areas that God wants us to do:

God wants us to bring our requests to Him.

God wants us to humbly bring our requests to Him.

God wants us to humbly and persistently bring our requests to Him.