

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Stop Kidding Yourself

James 1:19-27

Part 14

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 have now begun to consider 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 is in 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. A religion that does not transform the heart, and thereby the tongue, James tells us, is totally worthless in the sight of God.”

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 weeks 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 A.C.T.S. As we have considered each letter of this ACRONYM, I have made an application to our speech as it applies to God and then I have made a similar application as it relates to man. We began with the letter A.

The letter “A”

As it applies to God, the first area of speech that needs to be added is ADORATION. Adoring speech is the outflow of our redeemed spirit contemplating God’s holy perfections addressed to him in prayer (Ps.100).

As it applies to man, the first area of speech that needs to be added is APPRECIATION. Appreciative speech is any speech that communicates to people that we value them for who they are (1 Pet. 2:17). We then went to the letter C.

The Letter “C”

As it applies to God, the second area of speech that needs to be added that begins with the letter “C” is CONFESSION. Confessing speech is any speech directed to God that acknowledges our sin and agrees with Him concerning it.

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As it applies to man, the second area of speech that needs to be added that begins with the letter “C” is conciliatory speech. CONCILIATORY speech is any speech directed to man that seeks to overcome hostility. We are now considering the letter T.

The letter “T”

The letter “T” refers to THANKSGIVING. Thankful speech is any speech directed to God or man that expresses gratitude for something good they have done, are doing or will do. We began by considering thankful speech as it applies to God. What we discovered is that we are commanded in the Bible to give thanks to God in everything. This morning we want to give some time to think about what the Bible communicates to us about giving thanks to man. We want to begin by considering the practice of expressing thankfulness to man directly.

Expressing our thankfulness to others directly

Let us begin by asking ourselves the question, are we called to express thankfulness to those who have done something that has impacted us personally in some positive way? I believe that the answer would be, Yes! What does **1 Pet. 2:17** tell us? **“Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.”** We are called to honor all men. Notice the word, “honor.” What does this mean? The word translated “honor” (TIME) primarily means “valuing”. We are being called in essence to value all men. Certainly there is no single action on our part that is being specifically commanded for us to perform in this particular verse. Therefore we have a number of different options open to us in order to fulfill it.

Earlier we used this verse to support the practice of expressing appreciation for men. We defined appreciative speech as any speech that communicates to people we value them for who they are. This weekend we can also use this verse to support the practice of expressing thankfulness to men.

We have defined Thankful speech as any speech directed to God or man that expresses gratitude for something good they have done, are doing or will do. What is the difference between appreciation and thankfulness? For the sake of this discussion, the difference I am making would be that appreciation recognizes a positive quality that characterizes that person’s life while thankfulness recognizes a particular specific positive action.

Are we called to express thankfulness to those who have done something that has impacted our lives in a positive way and the answer I believe is “yes”. We are therefore, as parents, on very firm biblical footing to teach our children to say “thank you” when someone has shown some kindness to them whatever that kindness might be. We also should do the same.

Do we see people expressing thanks directly to the person for whom they are grateful in the Scriptures? The answer is, rarely. But we do see it **2 Sam. 14:22**. In this particular passage David had just granted Joab’s appeal that Absalom be permitted to return to Jerusalem after a three year

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absence as a result of his execution of Amnon, one of the sons of David. It says, **“And Joab fell on his face to the ground, prostrated himself and blessed the king; then Joab said, “Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, O my Lord, the king, in that the king has performed the request of his servant.”** This is how the NAS read but the KJV actually says that “Joab thanked the king”. And the KJ translation seems to convey clearly what in fact took place.

Simple “thank you’s” being expressed to people directly are rare in the biblical text. But though they may be rare in respect to the biblical text, I don’t believe that they were rare in respect to the everyday practice of the people. In **Luke 17:7-9** there is a very powerful parable that Jesus shares with his disciples. Listen to the words of Jesus, **“... which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come immediately and sit down to eat’? (8) But will he not say to him, ‘Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me until I have eaten and drunk; and afterward you will eat and drink’? (9) He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he?”**

What is this parable teaching? **V. 10** makes it clear, **“So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.’”** What is the point that Jesus is making? Obedience is not to be looked at as a cause for merit but as a fulfillment of duty. When we do what is expected as a slave of Christ we should not expect to be thanked. When we are obedient to God, who is our master, we have only done what is required. (Luke 17:7-10)

Now let us take this very same basic truth concerning the master-slave relationship and think of it in terms of our relationship with our fellow man. If we view ourselves as a person’s master, then certainly we would feel no obligation to thank them for whatever good thing they may have done for us, because what they have done for us was expected. But if we view ourselves as their slave rather than whatever kindness they may choose show to us would not be expected and our expression of gratitude certainly not only would be appropriate but right. Certainly this would be the implication from the parable in **Luke 17**.

So let me ask you a question: As the disciples of Christ, should we view ourselves as masters or slaves in respect to our fellow man? Clearly we need to view ourselves as slaves.

Rom. 12:10 “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor”

Rom. 15:1-3 “Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. (2) Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. (3) For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell upon Me.”

Gal. 5:13 “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

Phil. 2:2-5 “Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. (3) Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself.”

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We are not masters either in respect to our relationship to the Lord or to others. We are rather their slaves or their servants. And this has significant implications. A servant does not expect to be served but rather he expects to serve. Because a servant does not expect to be served but rather to serve, he will not be upset by any slight but will rather be very grateful for any favor.

Husbands, we are the servants of our wives and not their masters. We should therefore purpose to bridle our tongue to express thankfulness to them for all the good that has come to our lives through them.

Wives, you are the servants of your husbands and not their masters. You should therefore purpose to bridle your tongue to express thankfulness to them for all the good that has come to your life through them.

Parents, you are the servants of your children and not their masters. You should therefore purpose to bridle your tongue to express thankfulness to them for all the good that has come to your life through them.

If our speech pattern is such that we DO NOT bridle our tongue for the purpose of giving thanks to the Lord and to others, our heart is more like the heart of a master than the heart of a servant.

Express our thankfulness to others indirectly

Even though it is rare in the Bible to see someone saying “thank you” to another person directly we frequently see thanksgiving expressed indirectly by way of prayer or references to prayer.

Phil. 1:3 “**I thank my God in all my remembrance of you.**” Paul is not saying “thank you” to the Philippians directly but rather indirectly. Rather than choosing to say to them “thank you for your participation in the gospel from the first day until now” he says, “I thank my God in all remembrance of you in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.”

1 Thess. 2:13 “**And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God’s message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.**” Paul again is not thanking the Corinthians directly but rather indirectly. Rather than choosing to say to them, “Thank you for receiving our message not as the word of men but for what it really is, the word of God,” he says “we .. constantly thank God that you received our message not as the word of men but for what it really is, the word of God.”

Let me ask you a question: What would you rather hear? Would you rather hear someone say, “Thank you for being so generous to me” or would you rather hear someone say to you, “I thank the Lord for your generosity to me?” I believe that for the believer we would much prefer to hear the latter.

Listen to **Ps. 95:1-7**, “**O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. (2) Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. (3) For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods,**

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(4) In whose hand are the depths of the earth; the peaks of the mountains are His also. (5) The sea is His, for it was He who made it; and His hands formed the dry land. (6) Come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. (7) For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand....". The heart of a true worshiper is one who wants all men to give praise to God. This is why we are alive.

Should we therefore, any time we perceive a person as a channel through which good has come to our lives, go up to them and tell them that, "we thank God for them ..." no matter what? I don't think so. I believe rather we need to do this when we believe it would be edifying; when we believe that it would in some way become a source of blessing for the person we are sharing with.

And of course what group of people would be most ministered to by this indirect expression of thanksgiving? Christians. When someone in the world somehow encourages me I want to purpose to bridle my tongue and honor them by saying thank you to them directly. And if they are a believer I want to purpose to express my thanksgiving for them indirectly when appropriate.

CONCLUSION

WE HAVE NOW FINISHED THE LETTER "T". AND WE HAVE LEARNED THAT AS WE SEEK TO BRIDLE OUR TONGUE, A SPEECH PATTERN THAT NEEDS TO BE PUT ON IS ONE OF THANKSGIVING; THANKING THE LORD IN ALL THINGS AND THANKING OTHERS EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY FOR THEIR KINDNESSES TOWARD US, DEPENDING ON WHAT WOULD BE MOST EDIFYING. IF WE WOULD BY THE GRACE OF GOD PRACTICE A LIFE CHARACTERIZED BY THANKSGIVING, YOUR LIFE WILL BE WITHOUT A DOUBT A HAPPY LIFE.