



Shoe Leather Christianity

A Study on the Book of James

Lesson 5A | June 25, 2015 | James 5:7 – 12

Lesson Overview

The theme of this week's lesson is *patience in suffering*. Most of us would have to admit that patience is not our strong suit. Not only is it a challenge for us as human, our American culture has practically removed patience from our vocabulary. Most business, especially restaurants, have transformed themselves to offer us food and services any way we want them as fast as we can get them. Even worse than restaurants is the electronic industry. How often do we get new computers, iPads, or smart phones because they "are just too slow"?

One of my favorite (and indicting) stories that illustrates my lack of patience occurred about 10 years ago when we were still living in Cypress. I had taken our girls to Wendy's for dinner when they were about 6 (Ashley) and 3 (Anna). The staff members working that evening in the restaurant were not the sharpest knives in the drawer. It took longer than usual for us to get our food and the girls could tell I was irritated. After we had eaten our cheeseburgers both wanted a smoothie for dessert. I got in line and after about 5 minutes of not getting served I had had enough. I told the girls we were going to get in the car and go through the drive-thru because it was just taking too long. We loaded up in the car and I proceeded to get in the drive-thru to order our dessert. We had been in line for about one minute when I heard a back seat comment from the 3-year old that pretty much summed up the evening. "Daddy, you know, you're not very patient." I said, "Anna, I hate to admit it, but I think you're right."

How many of you have similar stories? We are so wrapped up in getting what we want and not being inconvenienced that we fail to realize there is a world around us that is crying for attention. To make matters worse, I literally think there are times when the Lord allows events to transpire to slow us down to make us take note of what He is doing in our lives and the lives of those around us. All too often, we plow right through these experiences and rush on to the next event or task. As men of Christ, let's not miss the Divine opportunities before us because of our impatience and desire to accomplish feats at the expense of not impacting those around us. Remember that God is far more concerned with our transformation through the journey than our arrival at the destination.

Series Overview

Success comes from training, not trying. As we study the book of James, we will find a cause and effect relationship with regards to the choices we make in life. There is always a pattern associated with success or failure. The key is to determine areas in our life where we are weak and seek the Lord's guidance in making lasting changes, not the temporary changes often associated with today's "boot strap" self-help approaches.

Throughout this series we are going to focus on the following flowchart that represents the "progressive" phases of our Christian life; each phase of the Christian life is associated with the previous phase. **Environment** leads to beliefs; **beliefs** lead to thoughts; **thoughts** lead to actions; **actions** lead to habits; and **habits** lead to **lifestyles**. A phrase to help us remember this progression is *Every Boy Thinks About Hunting Lions*. Try and commit this flowchart to memory as it will be useful throughout the series.



Figure 1: Progressive Phases of the Christian Life

