



## ***Shoe Leather Christianity***

### **A Study on the Book of James**

Lesson 5B | July 2, 2015 | James 5:13 – 20

#### **Lesson Overview**

This is the last lesson in our James series. In one sense I have been very encouraged (primarily because of the men in the MBC Men's Group), while on the other hand very convicted of how far I am from where I need to be as a Believer. The good news is we worship a God of second chances who offers forgiveness, grace, and mercy. As I battle through the "process of sanctification" I sense God's call for holiness. Jesus said that He came so that we can have an abundant life. He meant it and was willing to give His life to prove the point.

As James wraps up his epistle, he calls on fellow Believers to pray earnestly and have faith in God's ability to do amazing things in our lives. It is interesting that prayer is his next to last subject in his letter, although I think he knew that a strong prayer life is the hallmark of a committed follower of Jesus. Along the same lines, *a weak prayer life is a Declaration of Independence from the Lord*. Men of God know and have experienced the power of prayer; they understand that without God's involvement only failure can and will occur.

The parting thoughts from James focus on the critical role we have in helping our fellow Believers "stay the course." Sometimes being a Christian is messy because it involves getting involved in the lives of others, even when it hurts. One of the most difficult aspects of being a Christian is exhorting and encouraging fellow Believers who are not walking with the Lord to remain focused on Jesus and serving Him. We have a tremendous privilege in being used by the Lord to encourage others in this capacity.

As we wrap up this series I hope the Lord has spoken to you through the book of James; I know He has spoken to me. May the Lord continue to bless our efforts at MBC to lead others to Him and challenge men to passionately pursue our calling in Jesus. As followers of Jesus, we do what we do because it matters in our lives and the lives of others. The alternative only leads to death and destruction.

#### **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**

1. James exhorts us to pray in verses 13 through 16. Jesus also exhorted us to pray and provided a model prayer for us to consider and use. Provided below is the Lord's Prayer as found in Matthew 6:9-13. Identify three (3) important characteristics of the Lord's Prayer and what they mean to you.

After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Characteristic #1:

Characteristic #3:

Characteristic #3:

2. Few of us have great prayer lives. The challenge for us likely exists somewhere between the need for instant gratification and wondering if God really hears us. There are certainly exceptions, but I think many of us struggle with having a strong prayer life. What difference do you think it would make in your life if you were to spend more time with God in prayer and what would you ask of Him?

3. Can you think of a time in your life when a fellow Believer encouraged you to "get back in the game"? Had this not happened, how do you think your life would be different today?