

# Handling Lifes Challenges

A Series of Sermons Outlines  
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## HANDLING LIFE'S CHALLENGES: *AGING*

TEXT: Psalm 90:10

### INTRODUCTION:

- A. There was a time that I wouldn't have made jokes about aging:
1. I would have been afraid that, in my youth, I would have been perceived as insensitive or mocking of older folks.
  2. I don't have the same hesitation now, however – not after that surprise 40<sup>th</sup> birthday party you all threw me last year: getting me glow-in-the-dark toilet paper and preparation H, Centrum silver vitamins,
  3. I have to admit you weren't too mean to me: *you didn't say "you're so old that ..."*
    - a. You sit in a rocking chair and can't get it going
    - b. You know all the answers but nobody's asking you the questions.
    - c. When you sink your teeth into a big juicy steak, they stay there.
    - d. Your back goes out more than you do.
    - e. Your get-up-and-go has got-up-and-went.
- B. Aging is a real matter – I know it been said that growing older beats the alternative – I mean we are either going to grow old or die young (there are no other options!).
- C. But seriously, ours is a "youth oriented" culture, and that's probably not good.
1. Other cultures place greater emphasis, more profound respect, on older members of society.
  2. We could probably learn much from that!
  3. Lev. 19:32, Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord.
- D. They say you're only as old as you feel (25 some days; 110 others!!!)

TS: Some questions and Bible answers about aging:

### 1. IS THERE WISDOM TO BE GAINED IN OLDER AGE?

- A. Yes, indeed – life, time, and experience should teach us valuable lessons.
1. Prov. 16:31, The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.  
(note the condition: "if")
  2. Job 12:12, With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.
- B. Young people – you make a mistake in seeking all your advice from your peers – we don't gain by seeking advice from those who don't know or haven't done any more than we – we gain by seeking advice from those who have had experience!

## 2. CAN OLDER PEOPLE STILL CONTRIBUTE?

A. Yes, indeed! It is a myth that “seniors have nothing more to do.”

1. Joshua 14:6-11
2. Philemon 9, yet for love’s sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

B. Great things have been done by those of advancing years:

1. Vanderbilt added \$100 million to his fortune between the ages of 70 and 83.
2. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote *Over the Teacups* when he was 79.
3. Lamarck completed one of the greatest zoological works when he was 78.
4. Tennyson wrote the famous poem “Crossing the Bar” at age 83.
5. Goethe was 80 when he completed *Faust*.
6. Titian completed his historic painting, “Battle of Lepanto” at age 98.
7. Jamison Handy still plunged into the water for a half-mile swim at 94.
8. Verdi was still writing famous operas in his mid-80’s.
9. Michelangelo was still painting at 80.
10. John Wesley was still preaching at 87.

## 3. CAN OLDER & YOUNGER WORK TOGETHER?

A. We hear about the “generation gap” – but it doesn’t have to be!

B. Young and old can work together and accomplish great things!

1. Consider Naomi and Ruth – Ruth 1
2. The couple that converted me were in their seventies (they seemed really old then, I was in high school) – but had it not been for their influence, I wouldn’t be standing before you.

## 4. CAN OLDER PEOPLE LEARN NEW THINGS?

A. It’s been said “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.”

B. But you know – we’re talking about people, not dogs!

1. Do any of us really want to emulate the characteristics of dogs anyway? I think not!
2. 2 Pet. 3:18, But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## 5. IS OLD AGE A TIME OF FEAR?

A. Each age/time of life has its own particular challenges, trials, troubles, disappointments, even fears.

B. But God’s people are not to be governed by fear!

1. 1 Tim. 1:7, For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.
2. Psalm 71:9, Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth

v. 18, Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.

## 6. DOES THE BIBLE GIVE ANY SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO SENIORS?

A. Psalm 92:13-14, They that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our

God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.

B. Titus 2:1-5 (READ)

C. We need to learn good lessons in youth that we may apply them in later years!

*ILLUS: An old man was approached by a visitor who said, "I have observed your old and happy life – how did you attain it?" The old man replied, "Do you see the fine trees and orchards I possess? I have them today because I planted them as a young man. So in youth I laid the foundations of my life. I did not wait until I was old to begin to build for this day."*

## 7. ARE THERE ANY ADVANTAGES TO GROWING OLDER?

A. Growing older helps us recognize our dependence on God!

1. Sometimes in youth, people are too busy, to active to recognize their need for God.
2. But as years go by, and we begin to look toward a time when life shall have ended, surely we can then clearly see how much we need God – for time and for eternity.

B. Growing older provides additional opportunities.

1. Sometimes in the busyness (and often carelessness) of youth, we don't take time for prayer, for Bible study, for other good works.
2. But as life slows down just a bit, perhaps more opportunities for godly service can present themselves, and we will have the time and wisdom to take advantage of them.

C. Growing older makes heaven more real.

1. As you grow older, do you find yourself thinking more about the place called heaven?
2. *ILLUS: When I first became a Christian, I used to think about the songs we would sing about "meet me there," "I'll meet you in the morning," and so forth – and I used to think "But who am I going to meet? I don't know anyone over there" – BUT TIME HAS FIXED THAT! Now, I have known many, many people who departed the walk of this life, and whom I have a hope of seeing again.*
3. Doesn't that make heaven more real?

## CONCLUSION:

A. God told Abraham he would be buried "in a good old age" (Gen. 15:15).

B. The Bible says of David, "he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor" (1 Chron. 29:18)

C. What of us?

1. Let's remember our Creator in our youth (Ecc. 12:1)
2. Let's continue to depend upon God and thereby have a "good old age."

## HANDLING LIFE'S CHALLENGES: *MODESTY*

TEXT: 1 Timothy 2:9-10

### INTRODUCTION:

A. ILLUS: *Just a few weeks ago, sister Janet Rose came into the foyer and told me I must not be doing my job as the preacher here. I asked why? She said she heard a preacher on the radio say that "if the women at church are wearing make-up and jewelry, then your preacher must not be doing his job." Well, she and I both had a laugh about that!*

B. That, of course, is an exaggeration that we deny the Bible teaches.

C. But if we were to turn the coin over, does the Bible say anything about modesty? Yes, indeed!

D. While we reject "man-made rule and regulations" that the Bible doesn't teach, we recognize at the same time that the Bible DOES address the subject of modesty.

Genesis 3:7, And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Genesis 3:10, And [Adam] said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

Isaiah 47:2-3, ... uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thighs, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, ye, thy shame shall be seen [Babylon would be humbled – this is pictured as her being made naked and ashamed]

TS: Let's consider what the Bible says about this matter.

### I. 1 TIMOTHY 2:9-10

A. The instruction to Christian women:

"adorn" = Gk, KOSMEO, "to arrange, put in order, make ready"

"in modest apparel" = "decent and orderly"

"with shamefacedness" = "modesty; the avoidance of extremes" – a woman with shamefacedness doesn't go beyond the bounds of that which is proper.

"sobriety" = lit, "having a sound mind and good sense" – inner self-control

"not with broided hair, or gold or pearls or costly array" – ostentation is discouraged

"But...with good works"

B. I see three thoughts here:

Women are to adorn themselves with modest apparel.  
Women are to avoid the extremes that characterize the artificial glamour of the world.  
Women are to make sure they are covered with good works - *the true beauty of a godly woman is not in superficial things like apparel, jewelry, or cosmetics, but in a life that reflects true godliness and Christian service.*

## II. 1 PETER 3:1-6

A. Wives are to be in subjection to their own husbands.

“Subjection” –from a word that was a military term, meaning “to place under rank.”  
All who have been in the military can understand “rank” or “chain of command.”  
It’s not a matter of one being “better” – *would any sergeant say that a major is “better” than he? No, but the sergeant does recognize the major has authority over him, just as a colonel has authority over the major, and so forth.*  
The idea in the text is not subjugation, but subjection.  
Notice also the motive: *“In like manner” refers back to Christ being submissive and obedient to the Father’s will (2:21-25).*

God has ordained various levels of authority:

In society, we are to be subject to the laws of government: Romans 13; 1 Peter 2:13-20)

In the family, Christ is the head of the man, the man is the head of the woman, the parents are in authority over the children: 1 Cor

B. Their adorning:

NEGATIVELY:

Not the outward adorning of plaiting hair, wearing gold, putting on of apparel.  
It’s not the outward appearance that makes a godly person.  
The Christian woman is not to major on external decorations, but on internal character – the emphasis is not on glamour but on godliness.

POSITIVELY:

The hidden man of the heart – the inner person

A meek and quiet spirit

C. The illustration: SARA (verses 5-6)

## CONCLUSION:

A. No one doubts immodesty characterizes our age: we see it on television, in advertising, in movies

B. But we as God's people are to be different: a peculiar people (1 )

1. We don't look to society, but Scripture, for our instruction in this matters.
2. We don't look to Hollywood, but Heaven, as our example.  
We are not seeking that which is popular, but that which is right.  
We seek to glorify God, not flatter or inflate ourselves.

C. So, we must we take care to be modest, and not immodest:

1. We don't want to be responsible for causing another to lust:
2. We don't want to advance pride, which is behind much immodesty.
3. We don't want anyone to doubt the sincerity of our Christian conviction.
4. We don't want to reflect worldliness in our speech, our actions, or our dress

## HANDLING LIFE'S CHALLENGES: *DEATH & DYING*

TEXT: Psalm 103:13-16

### INTRODUCTION:

A. Death and decay are written on everything in this material universe, including our own lives:

*It's not a matter of "if," but when? Where? How? Why?*

B. Ours is a culture in which death is almost hidden and discussion about it shunned.

1. Not in Appalachian perhaps – but in much of the country.
2. ILLUS: group in California who will come and take a body – dispose of.
3. ILLUS: I read of a man (theologian and philosopher) who said he would often bring up the subject of death at dinner gatherings, just to observe the stunned and shocked looks on the faces of the guests (*bet he was the life of the party, huh!*)
4. We are interested in fun and frolic, and don't want to discuss "death" – we want to shield ourselves and our children from death – *but we need a Biblical perspective!*
5. The prospect of death – particularly if it is untimely – brings anger, denial, grief – but for the Christian it can also bring acceptance and the hope of heaven.

TS: Consider, the certainty of death, the description of death, and the need for preparation.

### I. THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

A. The Bible sets forth the certainty of death:

1. Job 14:1-2, Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.
2. Job 30:23, For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.
3. Psa. 89:47-48, Remember how short my time is: wherefore has thou made all men in vain? What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?
4. Eccl. 3:1-2, To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die...
5. Hebrews 9:27, And as it is appointed unto man once to die...
6. James 4:14...For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.
7. 1 Peter 1:24, For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.

B. But whether man has read the Bible or not, he knows death is sure!

1. Walk the cemeteries and look at row after row of monuments – enter into these cities of the departed, look at the headstones which serve as silent sentinels, and learn the reality of death.
2. Pick up a daily newspaper and note the obituary columns – see man’s life here is but for a season, and sometimes a very short season at that.

## II. THE BIBLE DESCRIPTION OF DEATH

A. Physical death is the separation of the spirit of man from the fleshly body:

1. James 2:26, “the body without the spirit is dead”
2. That’s why the Bible describes it as “giving up the ghost” (Gen. 25:8; 35:29; Lam. 1:19; Acts 5:10).

B. How does the Bible picture death?

1. It is as a requiring of the soul: Luke 12:20
2. It is going the way whence there is no return: Job 16:22
3. It is returning to the dust: Gen. 3:19; Psa. 104:29
4. It is being cut down and fleeing as a shadow: Job 14:2
5. It is departing to be with Christ: Phil. 1:23
6. It is putting off this tabernacle: 2 Pet. 1:14
7. It is night coming: John 9:4
8. It is as sleep:
  - a. Job 7:21, Now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.
  - b. Acts 7:60, [Stephen]...he fell asleep.
  - c. 1 Thess. 4:13-14, Paul discusses “them which are asleep...which sleep in Jesus”

## III. THE NEED FOR PREPARATION

A. In view of the certainty and finality of death, *shouldn't we make preparation?*

1. 2 Kings 20:1, In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.
2. Ecc. 11:7-8, Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun: But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many.
3. Rom. 14:8, For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.

B. Death is coming – are you ready?

## IV. VICTORY OVER DEATH

A. Is there going to be victory over death?

1. Do we as Christians have to live in morbid fear of the grave? Do we stand in terror before the tomb? Do we follow the funeral procession to the cemetery in expectation that all is lost?
2. NO, indeed!

B. We don't have to live in fear about death because Jesus Christ gives us victory over it!

1. Hebrews 2:14 (READ)
2. 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 (READ)
3. We grieve; we mourn (Jesus did!) – but we don't grieve hopelessly! READ 1 Thess. 4:13-18

C. That's why the death of God's people is beautifully described in the Bible!

1. Psa. 23:4, Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
2. Psa. 116:15, Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.
3. Phil. 1:21, For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
4. 2 Tim. 4:6-7, For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I Have fought a good fight...
5. Rev. 14:13, Blessed are the dead...

### CONCLUSION:

A. Death is not something morbid or something to ignore: it is reality, it is a part of human existence –

to be “mortal” means to be capable of death.

B. What if you know someone who is dying?

1. Visit at a good time – just be there to talk and listen.
2. Sometimes nothing can be said – but your presence may bring great comfort – often I have regularly visited those who were dying – don't have to comment how they look, just be there.
3. Don't ever condemn emotions – when people are facing death, they face a variety of emotions – allow them to express themselves.
4. Offer to help in any ways, including small ways.

C. So, we ought to live by faith in such a way that the prospect of our own death brings hope and anticipation – we may die, *but we can live forever!*

## Handling Life's Challenges: *HONESTY*

TEXT: Philippians 4:8

### INTRODUCTION:

A. Is honesty a “life challenge”?

1. Dishonesty abounds in our society – it is even socially acceptable in polite society in certain circumstances.
2. So, in view of society and culture, yes I would have to say that honesty is a challenge we must confront and successfully meet!

B. What is honest? *Honorable; respectable; credible; commendable; sincere; truthful; straightforward; genuine; frank; not gaining by lying, cheating, stealing*

### I. THE BIBLE DEMANDS HONESTY

A. OUR TEXT: Philippians 4:8

B. Romans 13:13, Let us walk honestly, as in the day...

C. 2 Corinthians 13:7, Paul told the Corinthians to “do that which is honest”

D. 1 Thessalonians 4:12, That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without...

E. 1 Timothy 2:2, ...that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

F. 1 Peter 2:12, Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

### II. WHERE WE SHOULD BE HONEST:

#### A. IN OUR SPEECH

1. Prov. 6:16-17, These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him...a lying tongue...a false witness that speaketh lies...
2. Eph. 4:25, Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor
3. Col.3:9, Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds
4. 1 Timothy 1:9-10 (read)
5. Rev. 21:8, ...all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth...
6. The Bible doesn't “color code” lies: there are no “white lies” and “black lies.”
7. Remember who is responsible for lying: John 8:56

## B. IN OUR BUSINESS DEALINGS

1. Romans 12:11, Not slothful in business...
2. Romans 12:17, Provide things honest in the sight of all men.
3. A Christian is to be an honest employer or employee – it is essential! - in our dealings with the government.
4. ILLUS: Preacher got on a city bus one day, and when he got back to his seat he noticed he had been given too much change – he approached the driver and said “Sir, you have accidentally given me too much change” – “No, that wasn’t an accident,” said the driver, “I knew you were the new preacher in town, and I gave you too much change to see if what you would do would line up with what you preached.”

## C. IN OUR ACTIONS

1. Gen. 12:9-13; 20:2, 12: ILLUS of Abraham and Sarah
2. We must not seek to mislead or deceive in what we do!

## D. IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD: *But who is dishonest before God?*

### 1. FALSE TEACHERS:

- a. 1 Tim. 4:1-3 (read)
- b. 2 Peter 2:1-3 (read)

### 2. DECEIVERS:

- a. 2 Corinthians 4:1-2 (read)
- b. 2 Tim. 3:13, But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.
- b. Titus 1:10-12 (read)

### 3. HYPOCRITES

- a. Job 8:13, ...the hypocrite’s hope shall perish.
- b. The hypocrite is pretending to be something he is not: he is not honest with self, with God, or with his fellow man.

## E. WITH OUR FAMILY & FRIENDS

1. We must be honest with our family and friends, we must be honest with our children: We don’t seek to be cruel or unnecessarily blunt, but we must be careful to build trust in our relationships by honesty.
2. 2 Cor. 8:21, Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

## E. WITH OURSELVES

1. 1 Cor. 3:18, Let no man deceive himself....
2. 2 Cor. 13:5, examine self
3. James 1:26, If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.
4. ILLUS: I read about a long-time professor of mathematics at Vanderbilt University – each time he would pass out a test, he would say, “Ladies and gentleman – I’m giving two tests today, one in trigonometry, and one in honesty. I hope you pass them both!”
5. Honesty with self means we’ll make corrections when they are needed; we’ll change our religious views to conform to the Bible (ILLUS: Heard a preacher say one time, “If a man is honest, but in religious error, when he is taught the truth of God he’ll either cease being in error, or cease being honest”).

## CONCLUSION:

A. Being a Christian is a way of life, and that way includes honesty.

B. The Bible condemns:

1. FALSE WITNESS: Exodus 20:16
2. FALSE WITNESSES: Psalm 27:12
3. FALSE REPORT: Exodus 23:1
4. FALSE BALANCE: Proverbs 11:1; 20:23
5. FALSE WAY: Psalm 119:104, 128
6. FALSE VISION & DIVINATION: Ezekiel 21:23
7. FALSE OATH: Zech. 8:17
8. FALSE PROPHETS: Matt. 7:15; 24:11; Acts 13:6; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 4:1
9. FALSE TEACHERS: 2 Peter 2:1
10. FALSE CHRIST’S: Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22
11. FALSE APOSTLES: 2 Cor. 11:13
12. FALSE BRETHREN: 2 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 2:4
13. FALSE ACCUSERS: 2 Tim. 3:3

B. Some things just don’t go together: *you can’t be a trustworthy liar, or an honest thief, or a filthy clean man, or a profane reverencer of God – likewise you can’t be a dishonest Christian – the two just don’t go together, they are mutually incompatible.*

c. We as Christians must SHUN anything and everything that is false, that we may hold fast to that which is TRUE, RIGHT, and HONEST!

## HANDLING LIFE'S CHALLENGES: PRIDE

TEXT: James 4:6-10

### INTRODUCTION:

- A. We use the word “pride” and “proud” perhaps too carelessly.
- B. The Bible has MUCH to say about pride, and the Bible always issues clear warnings!
- C. Definitions:
  - 1. PRIDE: is defined by our English dictionaries in both a negative and positive light
    - a. “an overhigh opinion of oneself; exaggerated self-esteem; conceit; haughtiness; arrogance”
    - b. “a sense of one’s own dignity or worth; self-respect; delight or satisfaction in one’s achievements, possession, children, etc.”
  - 2. In the Greek New Testament:
    - a. Noun, ALAZONIA = “pride, vainglory; boastfulness”
    - b. Noun, HUPEREPHANIA = “pride; haughtiness”
    - c. Verb, TUPHOO = “lifted up with pride; high-minded” (1 Tim. 3:6)
  - 3. Pride always seems to be discussed in the Scripture in a negative connotation.

TS: Let’s consider the subject of PRIDE:

### I. THE ORIGIN OF PRIDE: What are some things that cause pride?

#### A. SATAN:

- 1. Isaiah 14:12-15 (read)
- 2. 1 Tim. 3:6, ...lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil

#### B. AMBITION: Dan. 5:20-23 (read)

C. EVIL HEART: Mark 7:21-22, For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

#### D. THE WORLD: 1 John 2:16, ...pride of life...not of the Father

#### E. SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS: Luke 18:11-12 (read)

F. WORLDY POWER: Ezekiel 16:49-50, Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abominations before me; therefore I took them away as I saw good.

## II. WARNINGS ABOUT PRIDE:

A. The Bible warns about pride: why? The warnings given indicate the problem with pride:

1. Psalm 10:2-6
2. Psalm 73:6-9
3. Proverbs 6:16-17
4. Proverbs 11:2
5. Proverbs 16:18-19
6. Proverbs 26:12
7. Proverbs 30:12-13
8. Romans 1:22-30
9. Philippians 2:3
10. 1 Timothy 6:3
11. James 4:6-10

B. Why is pride wrong?

1. Because it can cause a person to dethrone God and exalt self (“who’s in charge anyway?”)
2. Because it can cause of person to serve only self and not others (not example of Jesus).
3. Because it can cause a person to become self-willed (“my way or no way”).
4. Because it can cause a person to become self-righteous (not dependent on God).
5. Because it can cause a person to not serve God at all (won’t submit; won’t bow).

## CONCLSUION:

A. Pride is something that can cause one to be lost!

B. Beware of PRIDE!

1. Let us remember that we are made in the image of God, thus we should have self-respect.
2. But let us never stubbornly seek our own will instead of God’s will. Self-respect, YES! Self-exaltation? NEVER!

## Handling Life's Challenges: *PURE SPEECH & PROFANITY*

TEXT: Matthew 12:34-37

### INTRODUCTION:

A. Is “pure speech” a life challenge for the Christian? Indeed – for bad talk, filthy speech abounds in our society.

1. Can you remember a time when certain words were not used in mixed company in public?
2. Now some of those words come right into the laps of our families in our living rooms.
3. Have we become desensitized to some of this?

B. So surely in the society in which we live, keeping our speech pure is a real challenge!

Ts: So let's talk about “pure speech and profanity”:

### I. IS PURITY OF SPEECH IMPORTANT ANYWAY?

A. READ TEXT & COMMENT: MATTHEW 12:34-37

B. Read ROMANS 1:29-30

C. Read JAMES 3:5-12

### II. WHAT THREATENS PURE SPEECH?

1. CURSING: James 3:10, Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be.
2. FALSE FLATTERY:
  - a. Psalm 12:3, The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things.
  - b. Prov. 28:23, He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favor than he that flattereth with the tongue.
  - c. There is a kind of “flattering” that is beneficial and good – there is a false kind of flattery that is insincere and deceitful.
3. EVIL: Ephesians 4:31, Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.
4. TALE BEARING:
  - a. Leviticus 19:16, Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people...
  - b. Prov. 16:27-28, An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire. A forward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.
5. DECEPTION:

Romans 3:13-14, Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.
6. REVILING: 1 Cor. 6:10, “revilers”
7. FOOLISHNESS: Ephesians 5:4, [let these things not be named among you] Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting
8. BLASPHEMY & FILTHINESS: Colossians 3:8, But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, Malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

## 9. LYING:

- a. Prov. 6:17 – God hates
- b. Prov. 12:22, Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.
- c. Rev. 21:8

## 10. FORWARDNESS: Prov. 10:31, ...the forward tongue shall be cut out.

1. Means, “Habitually disposed to disobedience and opposition; contrariness”
2. Word can also mean “perverted” – the contrast in this passage is between the just and unjust, the righteous and wicked.
3. Someone said, “A fool’s tongue is always long enough to cut his throat.”

## 11. BACKBITING: Proverbs 25:23, “backbiting tongue”

1. ILLUS: Old western movies – a man that would shoot another man in the back considered a coward – yet there are some who would shoot another in the back with their tongues!
2. ILLUS: Two people talking, “She told me you told her what I told you not to tell her” – “Why the mean thing, I told her not to tell you what I told her” – “Well I promised her I wouldn’t tell you what she told me not to tell you...” Blah! Blah! Blah!

## 12. MALICIOUSNESS: Prov. 17:4, A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

1. This is the tongue that damages another by false rumors, innuendos, and accusations.
2. Notice who gives ear to the naughty tongue: A LIAR – maybe we can’t stop another who is intent on talking, but we can refuse to give ear to it! We don’t have to be recipients!

## 13. ANGER

1. Prov. 15:1, A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.
2. ILLUS: A preacher walked by a home on Sunday morning – he heard terrible cussing coming from the house – later at worship, he asked a boy who lived in the home, “What was all that cussing going on in your house this morning?” The little boy said, “Of, it was just Pa – he was late for Sunday school and couldn’t find his Bible.”

## III. HOW CAN WE MAINTAIN PURITY OF SPEECH?

### A. Keep our heart pure: from it the mouth speaks!

1. “There is no substitute for brains; but silence does pretty well.”
2. Let’s think pure thoughts in order that we can speak pure words!

### B. Keep our bridle handy: Psalm 39:1, I said, I will take heed to my way, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

### C. Keep away from any evil speaking: lying, blasphemy, gossip, filthiness, cursing, cussing.

### D. Keep alert: watch how we speak! Titus 2:6-8 (read)

1. There is a problem with the “toning down” of language in our culture:
  - a. Adultery is “living together”
  - b. The murder of innocent babies is called “woman’s choice.”
  - c. The terrible sin of homosexuality is an “alternate lifestyle.”

2. Be careful of euphemisms: a euphemism is a mild or vague word or expression in place of a more blunt or crude expression.
    - a. “Darn” is a euphemism for “damn.”
    - b. “Gosh darn” for “God damn.”
    - c. “Blazes” and “heck” for “hell”
    - d. “Judas Priest” is a euphemism for “Jesus Christ”
  3. But we as Christians want to maintain pure speech – we aren’t looking for ways to “cut corners” or “get away with” impure speech under some other guise!
- E. Keep our actions in harmony with our speech! 1 John 3:18
1. Let’s not talk about what needs to be done, what someone needs to do – let’s do it!
  2. “Actions speak louder than words” – maybe not louder, but just as loud!
- F. Keep our speech plain, simple, and pointed!
1. Sometimes, people just talk too much and say too little!
  2. Prov. 29:11, A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.
  3. ILLUS: Someone once said, “You can keep your mouth shut and be thought a fool, or you can open your mouth and remove all doubt.”
  4. We have two ears and one mouth – surely God intended to convey something to us by creating us that way!

#### CONCLUSION:

- A. The tongue is very powerful: Prov. 18:21, Death and life are in the power of the tongue...
- B. Let us determine to keep our speech pure, that our God might be glorified!
- C. Let use the power of our tongues to calm anger, to disperse knowledge, to rebuke sin, to encourage others, to teach the gospel, to exhort the faithful, to warn the unruly, to glorify God!

Prov. 21:23, Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

## HANDLING LIFE'S CHALLENGES: *SICKNESS*

TEXT: James 5:16

### INTRODUCTION:

A. We have all been sick – we have all had some kind of illness in our lives.

B. There are illnesses that are merely nuisances (they kind of aggravate us a bit); there are illnesses that are serious (may require hospitalization or long recovery periods); there are illnesses that are fatal (and lead to one's death).

C. Illnesses mentioned in the Bible include blains, blemishes, blood flow, boils, dropsy, dysentery, epilepsy, fever, gangrene, infirmity, lameness, leprosy, madness, palsy (paralysis), pestilences, scabs, scurvy, sores, and worms.

TS: Let's consider the subject of "sickness" from the Bible, and discuss it by asking some questions:

### I. WHERE DID SICKNESS COME FROM?

A. In the early years of the human race, sickness doesn't seem to have been a problem.

1. I can find nothing about Adam being sick (or Noah, or Abraham, or Isaac).
2. The first mention of anyone being sick is Jacob in Genesis 48:1 (and this seems to be a reference to simply the infirmities of age).
3. The first mention of disease is in connection with Egypt:
  - a. Exodus 15:26 (read)
  - b. Deut. 7:12-15 (read)
  - c. Deut. 28:60-61, Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, whith thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of the law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.
  - d. Amos 4:10, I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt...

B. It appears that as man spread geographically, illness also spread (perhaps differing environments had something to do with it – the diseases of Egypt were put upon her by God).

1. It is interesting to note that though the Egyptians cultivated the sciences (mathematics, astronomy, medicine, metaphysics, anatomy and embalming), they were not as healthy as the Hebrews (God's law helped protect the Hebrews against infections and sickness)

2. Though they were greatly inferior in scientific culture to their powerful neighbors (Egypt, Assyria, and Greece), they had a powerful God upon Whom they depended.

C. Note that Satan has some connection to sickness as well:

1. Book of Job
2. Luke 13:10-17, Jesus heals a woman of a debilitating disease, and says of her that “Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years.”
3. Acts 10:38, Peter preaching about Jesus says that He “went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”

## II. IS ILLNESS A PUNISHMENT FOR SIN?

A. The answer must be “YES” and “NO”!

B. NO, for just because someone is ill doesn’t mean they are guilty of sin:

1. John 9:3 (read and comment)
2. Often the righteous suffer sickness:
  - a. Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1)
  - b. Job (Job 2:7)
  - c. Daniel (Daniel 8:27)
  - d. Lazarus (John 11:1)
  - e. Tabitha (Acts 9:37)
  - f. Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-27)
  - g. Trophimus, whom Paul left sick at Miletum (2 Tim. 4:20)

C. YES, because illness can come upon one as a result of sin:

1. Prov. 13:15, ...the way of transgressors is hard.
2. Gal. 6:7, *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*
3. Man has brought all kinds of illness and sickness upon himself by sinful actions: venereal diseases, aids, destruction of health, loss of family, home, job – all of these can be the consequences of sin.
4. And God has often used sickness as judgment (Exodus 9:10; Numbers 16:47; 1 Samuel 5:6; 2 Kings 5:27; 15:5; 2 Chronicles 13:20; 21:18; 26:19; Acts 12:23).
5. Consider 1 Cor. 11:29-30, *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

## III. IS GOD CONCERNED ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE ILL?

A. The greatest way to answer this question is to look at the life of Jesus upon earth:

1. He healed all manner of sickness and diseases (Matt. 4:23-24; 8:16; 9:35; Luke 7:21).
2. He healed lepers (Matt. 8:3; Luke 17:14)
3. He healed the lame (Matt. 12:13; 21:14)
4. He healed the blind and deaf and dumb (Matt. 12:22; 15:30; Mark 7:37; 10:52; John 9:6)

5. He healed those with debilitating diseases (Luke 13:13; John 5:9)
  6. He healed a man whose ear Peter cut off (Luke 22:51)
  7. He even raised the dead (Matthew 9:25; John 4:50; John 11:43-44).
- B. Jesus' apostles in His name also healed the sick (Acts 3:7; 5:16; 9:34; 14:10; 16:18; 19:12;28:8).

#### IV. SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SICK?

A. Matthew 25:31-36

B. 1 Timothy 5:9-10

C. James 5:16, *Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed.*

*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

#### V. CAN GOOD EVER COME OF SICKNESS?

A. An example: Revelation 2:20-22

B. What sickness can do:

1. Cause us to recognize our utter dependence on God.
2. Cause us to realize the temporal nature of this life.
3. Cause us to become Christians.

#### CONCLUSION:

A. Will YOU ever face serious illness?

1. Some of you already have! Others of us will!
2. ILLUS: Comedian Rodney Dangerfield said he went to his doctor, who told him to lose weight, stop smoking, take better care of himself – He said he realized if he did all these things, he would get old, sick, and die!

B. Whatever the future may hold for us, let us always resolve to put our complete faith, confidence, and trust in our great God!

## HANDLING LIFE'S CHALLENGES: *STRESS*

TEXT:

INTRODUCTION:

A. We live in a complicated, fast-paced, stress-filled, hectic world.

1. Here we are in 2003 – with 2003 things yet to do, and 2003 irons in the fire!
2. Our times are immoderate: *we eat too much, worry too much, spend too much – we go too fast with too much TV, too much music, too much news.*
3. Our age could be called “Lifestyles of the fast and furious” – no wonder we’re tensed up and burnt out!
4. ILLUS: I heard a man say one time, “I’m so nervous, I believe I could thread a sewing machine with it a runnin’”

B. “Stress” = “*strain, pressure, tension – force exerted upon something*”

1. Sometimes stress can be POSITIVE:
  - a. ILLUS: I read once that forest fires which deeply scar the landscape actually help assure a certain composition in the soil that enables the mighty Sequoia, the greatest of trees, to grow and flourish.
  - b. ILLUS: I always did best on tests and assignments when the pressure was on!
2. Usually, stress is NEGATIVE: The head of the Menninger Institute stated that up to 70 percent of minor ailments such as colds and fatigues are psychosomatic reactions to day-to-day stress, and often lead to more serious problems.
3. Very often its not big things, but little ones that create little worries, nagging anxieties, and frustrating annoyances: *ILLUS: Man walked backward across the US – started in California and ended in NY – someone asked him, “What was the hardest part of your trip, the single most difficult thing? Deserts, mountains, rivers, heat?” He answered, “It was the sand in my shoes!”*

TS: So, how do we handle the stresses of modern living?

### I. LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME.

A. Matthew 6:34

B. ILLUS: A clock ticked 31,536,000 times in one year – how could a poor little clock accomplish such a seemingly overwhelming task? By taking just one tick at a time!

## II. CONCENTRATE ON THINGS THAT ARE CALMING

- A. Philippians 4:8, Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.
- B. Sometimes we just have to stop, catch our breath, and relax.
- C. Psalm 46:10, Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.
- D. *Seek to develop the spiritual side of life!* Meditate – concentrate – pray – think!

## III. LEARN TO LIVE WITH INEVITABLE CONDITIONS

- A. Sometimes there are things we just cannot change – we must accept that fact!
- B. Rom. 8:28, And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
- C. Jesus accepted certain inevitable conditions:
  - 1. Many rejected Him, turned against Him, falsely accused Him, sought to entrap Him – He didn't court that rejection, nor did He relish it – *but He lived with it.*
  - 2. ILLUS: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”
- D. Don't swim against the grain – don't try to swim upstream – don't get in a fight you can't win!

## IV. SEEK TO HELP OTHERS

- A. It is amazing how comforting others – helping others – can relieve our own distresses!
  - 1. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (READ)
  - 2. The more we concentrate on self – our own problems or stresses – the larger our problems seem to grow.
- B. Jesus is our great example here: *though He knew He would face the horrors of crucifixion, He still had time to comfort and care for the sick, lame, deaf, blind, and dumb.*

## V. TRUST IN GOD

A. When we feel overwhelmed with the stresses and pressures of life, we must turn to God.

1. Psalm 62:5-8 (READ)
2. God sees, and hears, and love, and cares – even when we don't seem to feel His presence, yet by faith we learn to trust in His promises.
3. Heb. 13:5, ...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

B. Sometimes it helps to travel light.

1. By that I mean, as we put our trust in God, let's concentrate on the things of God, and not expend all our energies on things that are not really that important!
2. Decide what is really important – what is most important – and give energy to that!
3. Let's not spend time in pursuit of the wrong goals!

C. Philippians 4:11-13 (READ)

### CONCLUSION:

A. In all these things, there is a common denominator: TRUST IN GOD!

B. So, when you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed out, stop to think of God and His way: *He is still in heaven, all things are on course as He has them planned, and the minor things over which we fret will be meaningless when in eternity we gather around His throne forever!*

## HANDLING LIFE'S CHALLENGES: WORRY

TEXT: Matthew 6

INTRODUCTION:

A. Do you ever WORRY?

1. ILLUS: I can remember when worry was a minor thing – I could really preach against worry, and lay it on the brethren – then children came along, and you have to deal with sickness, and accidents, and problems – then there are house payments, and electric bills, and property taxes, and relationships, and deadlines, and...etc.
2. “Worry” comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning “to choke; to strangle, to injure” – and excessive worrying will hurt you! It can strangle the mind and injure the body.

B. Some thoughts on worry:

1. “Worry is like a rocking chair – it’ll keep you busy, but won’t get you anywhere.”
2. “Worry has nowhere to go, and gets nowhere.”
3. “Worry can empty the day of its strength, but not of its troubles.”
4. “Worry is the interest you pay on trouble before it comes.”
5. “Far more have died from overworry than overwork.”

TS: Let’s take a look at a passage from the Sermon on the Mount and talk about handling worry:

### I. WE MUST LEARN WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT IN LIFE

A. Matthew 6:25 – “take no thought” from Gk, MERINNAO = “don’t divide your mind; don’t split up inside.”

1. Clothes and food are secondary; we must focus attention on what really matters, v. 33
2. We mustn’t expend time and energy on secondary and unimportant matters – if we do we won’t have strength to face the really big challenges and problems that may come.
3. Have you ever noticed that often what worries us the most are little things? ILLUS: *Dr. Livingston was asked, after returning from Africa, if he was bothered by the elephants. “No, by the insects,” was he reply – it’s often not the lions and tigers, but gnats and mosquitoes that irritate us.*

B. When we learn what is really important, we learn contentment! 1 Timothy 6:6-8

## II. WE MUST LEARN TO TRUST IN GOD

A. Matthew 6:30 states that He “knows.”

1. We have difficulty with the present – can’t remember the past – and can’t predict the future – but God is all knowing.
2. All time is NOW in God’s sight! We must put our trust in Him – His power, His ability, His knowledge!

B. Jesus gives four illustrations from the natural realm that should convince us to trust in the knowledge of God:

1. BIOLOGY: birds, v. 26
  - a. They have to eat constantly to survive – “Eat like a bird” is really a misnomer – for a man to eat like a bird, he would have to eat about 9 lbs. a day – yet God provides!
  - b. If God can and will take care of birds, how about you?
2. PHYSIOLOGY: the height of man, v. 27
  - a. Who can add 12 inches to height?
  - b. There are some things we cannot change – we must just accept!
3. BOTANY: flowers, v. 28
  - a. Flowers cannot move about a field to get food, yet God provides.
  - b. Are we not worth much more than they?
4. GEOLOGY: grass of the field, v. 30
  - a. God dresses the earth four times a year.
  - b. If God will dress a rock or a field, how about us?

C. How are we to conduct ourselves, and on what are we to think? Philippians 4:6-8

1. Don’t be anxious!
2. Pray!
3. Think!

D. We must trust in God! 1 Peter 5:6-7

1. Someone says “that’s hard” – yes, but not impossible.
2. That’s what FAITH is all about!

### III. WE MUST LEARN TO LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME

A. God will give us strength for today, v. 34

1. Many are frustrated because they never learn this lesson: they go back through yesterday's problems or try to import tomorrow's problems, and they have difficulty.
2. Paul knew this: Phil. 3:13-14

B. Always remember that "*today is the first day of the rest of your life.*"

C. Many would find far less things to worry about if they concentrated on trying to help someone else!

D. There are two things never to worry about: *things you can change and the things you cannot.*

### CONCLUSION:

A. Worry is a serious matter because it can become a ROBBER to us:

- a. It can rob us of true spiritual values: Luke 10:38-42
- b. It can rob us of our Christian influence: Matthew 5:14-16
- c. It can rob us of peace of mind: Phil. 4:7
- d. It can even rob us of health: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

B. There is an old song that contains some excellent advice:

*Are you weary, are you heavy-hearted? Tell it to Jesus, tell it to Jesus.  
Are you grieving over joys departed? Tell it to Jesus alone.*

*Do the tears flow down your cheeks unbidden...Have you sins that to man's eyes are hidden?  
Do you fear the gathering clouds of sorrow...Are you anxious what shall be tomorrow?  
Are you troubled at the thought of dying...For Christ's coming daily are you sighing?*

*Tell it to Jesus alone!*

C. INDEED! Matthew 11:28-30

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