

THIS WEEKEND

at The Crossing



Nope: Nope to Impulsiveness
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The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This week we are continuing our ten-week series in the book of James called Nope. This word is one we use to vehemently say “no” to circumstances most strongly! It means “no way in heck!” Here, James, Jesus’ half brother, teaches us how to say no to our impulsiveness and take time to ask God for wisdom. Our human impulsivity can destroy the good plans that God has for us when we are slow to listen, quick to speak and quick to become angry. So, James has some solutions for us that are very practical and very relevant today.

SCRIPTURE¹

James 1:19-25 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word and does not do what it says is like someone who looks in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it – not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it – they will be blessed in what they do.

Psalms 1:1-3 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they do prospers.

Psalms 119:103-105 (NLT) How sweet your words taste to me; they are sweeter than honey. Your commandments give me understanding; no wonder I hate every false way of life. Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

¹ All scripture is NIV translation unless otherwise indicated.

OBSERVATION

None of us is perfect in the area of impulsivity. James wrote about this 2000 years ago because human nature was the same then as it is now. He tells us to “get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent” and to renew our minds with God’s presence. Our culture is no different from the one James lived in. The difference is they rode donkeys and we drive mustangs! Otherwise as human beings, we all love, lust, hate, fear, respond with anger, and on and on, the same ways as they did, don’t we? But we are pulled by social media, television, news reports, negative and sinful people we spend time with, addictions or habits that are so tempting us in the wrong direction.

QUESTION: What in your life is pulling you away from Jesus? What pulls you closer to Him?

QUESTION: What is tempting you the most today?

APPLICATION

Jesus says we will be blessed by what we do. This means He brings us peace and the knowledge that we are in step with what God has planned for us. No amount of money, power, success or status can give us His peace. When we respond impulsively, we are not being guided by Jesus. These are some areas of our lives where we need to intently evaluate how we respond to challenges and circumstances: Using foul language, responding to withheld promotions, or not building positive relationships with spouses and kids. We buy things on Amazon that we don’t need or lose our tempers with family or friends, or we indulge in eating desserts to help us feel better. There are three areas that demonstrate that we are acting impulsively: We are **1) Slow to listen; 2) Quick to speak; 3) Quick to become angry.**

QUESTION: In what areas of your life do you continue to respond impulsively?

In the book of James we are encouraged to do the exact opposite. We can all agree on this: **Event + Response = Outcome.** James pleads with us to not settle for this process, but to elevate it to **Event + Responding as Jesus would = Best Outcome.** To respond without being impulsive - rather allowing our behavior to be filtered through His Word. **1) Quick to listen.** Leaning in so we concentrate on others. When we aren’t quick to listen, it’s as though we take a quick glance and then move on without giving the situation the proper attention it deserves. **2) Slow to speak.** Use measured words not trying to figure out what we want to say next and not truly listening! **3) Slow to become angry.** Anger comes from selfishness and does not produce the righteousness God desires. It is not what He wants because it separates us rather than uniting us. The end goal is to look more and more like Jesus and anger has no place in that vision.

QUESTION: How would it look if you faced events (challenges) as Jesus would?

QUESTION: When you are “intently” listening or praying, what distractions are you experiencing? How can you deliberately dismiss distractions?

QUESTION: How often do you interrupt others when they are speaking or how often are you thinking of what you are going to say next?

QUESTION: How angry are you at the news, social media and politicians today?

As Christians, because we accepted Jesus as our Savior, the Holy Spirit dwells within us. His presence there urges us to grow in knowledge, righteousness and wisdom. By definition, our growth, like something planted, needs nurturing and watering in order to take root.

QUESTION: When are you most aware of the Holy Spirit’s presence within you?

The mirror to our hearts is God's Word. It's us staring into the face of everything we are and everything we are not. It can make us smile, but it also convicts. It is a glimpse of what to adjust or what to keep as we live together, but spiritually it's how we live in God's Kingdom. It can give us a sense of peace - that we are on the right path. When we read the Word, we find that: "Scripture is a person (Jesus) and we are not merely encountering a concept, we are standing face-to-face with God. Our response to Him will be radically different from standing before a book. The moment we choose to read His Word, we choose to come into His presence, face-to-face. When we stand before God, whatever we do next reveals the nature of our relationship to Him."² James is telling us to get rid of the junk we are harboring in our lives and humbly accept the message of Jesus that saves us by His work on the Cross. We are called to put the Word of God to work as we become doers and servants of the Jesus Who lives within us. Being a doer means being in God's Word and learning how it applies in every situation. We are to immerse ourselves in its pages, becoming rich in its tenets and humbly walking in its light.

1) Looking intently means going on a journey to discover something; **2) Understanding the Gospel** is knowing that Jesus came, died and rose again for us. It's a process of believing, receiving, and becoming; **3) Freedom awaits us** when His commandments give us understanding and we hate every false way of life. Then, His lamp guides our feet and lights our path. **4) What we do** as part of our journey with Jesus, results in our becoming more like Him.

QUESTION: How much time do you spend reading the Bible compared to the time you spend watching television? What does that tell you about your dedication to your faith?

QUESTION: In what area of your life do you need to become a doer of God's Word?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, make us aware of the ways we respond impulsively to life's challenges and help us to behave as Jesus would. In Jesus' name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION: What in your life is pulling you away from Jesus? What pulls you closer to Him?

QUESTION: What is tempting you the most today?

QUESTION: In what areas of your life do you continue to respond impulsively?

QUESTION: How would it look if you faced events (challenges) as Jesus would?

QUESTION: When you are "intently" listening, what distractions are you experiencing?

QUESTION: How often do you interrupt others when they are speaking or how often are you thinking of what you are going to say next?

QUESTION: How angry are you at the news, social media and politicians today? How is this anger impacting your life?

QUESTION: When are you most aware of the Holy Spirit's presence within you?

QUESTION: How much time do you spend reading the Bible compared to the time you spend watching television? What does that tell you about your dedication to your faith?

QUESTION: In what area of your life do you need to become a doer of God's Word?

² The Man God Uses. Henry and Tom Blackaby