

Exceeding The Limit Part 1

It's never a good thing to hear. You weren't really paying attention when suddenly you notice flashing lights in your rearview mirror and you are made aware the lights and the siren are all intended for you. With your heart in your chest you roll down the window as the officer asks for your driver's license and tells you you were exceeding the limit. Not a good start or ending to your day.

I'm happy to say it's been a while since I've heard those words from a police officer. Exceeding the speed limit is a bad idea. But there are other limits in our life that we need to exceed. There are limits in our life, self-imposed limits, that prevent us from experiencing all God wants for us. God wants us to exceed those limits, to break free from and go beyond those self-imposed limits. I'm convinced God wants to bless us but we keep limiting the blessing! It's time to lose the limit!

Understand first, our unlimited God has called us to an abundant, unlimited life. Jesus said, **“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” John 10:10** (ESV). NIV reads “Have it to the full.” The word translated “abundantly” or “full” means beyond, superabundantly, excessive. It means exceeding the limits. God wants us to live a life in Him that exceeds the limits. Whose limits? Ours! Not God's. He isn't limiting us, we are. We have met the enemy and he is us. We limit the blessing of God in our life!

Look at this passage from 2 Peter. **“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” 2 Peter 1:3-4.**

God has given us everything we need to live a godly, abundant life. He even says we can share in the very life of God. Every blessing is available and by obeying Him and living for him we can escape the corruption, all the drama and bondage and pain and trouble that comes with sin and its consequences. All that and more has been offered to us in Christ, by the Holy Spirit. What prevents us from receiving it? What limits us? We do. Us and our choices. We spend time blaming God and others when we are responsible. We limit his blessing.

God doesn't talk to us in limiting terms, have you noticed that? Listen to the apostle

Paul. **“And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” Ephesians 3:17-20.**

He is an unlimited God and his capacity for giving is unlimited as well. **“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him.” Matthew 7:11.**

God wants to bless us, to give to us, to enable us to live an abundant life. Once again, the problem doesn't lie with God, the problem is with us. In Matthew 13 Jesus told the story of a farmer who went out to sow seed. Some fell on the path, some on rocky places, some fell among thorns and some fell on good soil. The problem wasn't with the seed, the problem was with the limitations of the soil.

Jesus explained that the seed represented the message of the kingdom of God. The seed/word that fell on the path is immediately snatched up by the enemy. The seed on rocky places represents the person who receives the word of God gladly, but when trouble comes, they fall away. The seed/word that fell among thorns represents the person who lets worry and wealth choke the life of God out of them. The seed/word that fell on good soil represents the person who receives the word of God and understands it and applies it and produces a crop that yields some a hundred, some sixty or some thirty times what was sown.

God wants us to live this abundant life. He wants the word of God to produce a crop in us, a harvest of right living, of right choices, of blessing and increase. But we limit what God wants to do in our lives. The problem is with the soil, not the seed. So what do we do? **We take the steps necessary to lose the limits we've set up in our lives!** It's time to make a change in how you live your life.

Remember that passage we read from 2 Peter? **“He has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”** God is sowing good seed. Now look at the next verse. **“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control,**

perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.” 2 Peter 1:5-9

“Make every effort.” Paul says we are to possess these qualities in increasing measure. We are to make every effort to grow, to break free from the self-imposed limits, to increase our capacity to receive all God has for us, to live as he calls us to live. If we aren’t growing in our Christian life, he suggests we’ve forgotten that we’ve been cleansed from our sins.

Make every effort means discipline and hard work. But don’t you want to experience the abundant life God intends for you? You don’t want to miss out on what God has for you. So what do we do? You want to be blessed? You want to have the blessings of God in your life? Start right here.

Make every effort to get the sin out of your life!!! The bible says **“As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written, ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” 1 Peter 1:14-16.**

Stop living the way you did before you met Jesus! Stop giving in to sin. Peter said stop living like you did when you lived in ignorance. Don’t be stupid. God has called you to a holy life. Live it.

“Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Get rid of everything that contaminates us - everything that pollutes our mind and body and spirit so we can make room for more of Jesus and his word and his blessing. Get the sin and disobedience out of your life and you increase your capacity for receiving God’s blessing and health and life. God wants you to have an abundant life but you limit the blessing by tolerating sin in your life. God can’t bless a disobedient life.

The bible says we are to rid ourselves of sin (1 Peter 2:1), we are to have nothing to do with sin (Eph. 5:11), we are to put to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature, all kinds of immorality and sin (Col. 3:5), we are to be sanctified, that is our life set apart for God and we are

to avoid immorality. All these phrases are from the bible. Abstain from, get rid of, have nothing to do with, put to death, be set apart from, avoid - all of it is telling us to get the sin out of our life.

Do you get the point? God calls us to a holy life. That doesn't mean we are perfect, it means we make every effort to obey God and his word, to please Jesus with our choices and our life. Holiness is about being like Jesus.

Understand, you can't serve God and serve the devil. You can't continue to live a sinful life and hope to have fellowship with God and be blessed by him. If there is unrepentant sin in your life - you know what you are doing is wrong and contrary to what God wants but you are doing it anyway - you are cutting yourself off from the blessings of God. You are missing out on the blessed life God wants you to have. You are limiting the blessing of God.

Do you hear what I'm telling you? Stop living like you did before you came to know the Lord! You willfully disobey God but hope He will just keep on blessing you. You're committing adultery but counting on God to bless your finances and your new business venture. You're sleeping with your boyfriend or girlfriend but what? Hoping God won't notice and will go ahead and bless your relationship? You are lying and stealing on your job but praying for a better job, hoping God will answer your prayer in spite of your sins. God can't bless sin! Our sinful choices grieve the heart of God. He cannot and will not ignore our sin because he paid such a high price to set us free from sin. He gave his only begotten son as a sacrifice to atone for our sins so he won't overlook our sin, but the good news is he will forgive our sins if we ask him. If you will repent and turn from your sins and turn to God in obedience, he will forgive you and restore you and bless you. God wants you to experience life in him, a life free from sin and all the pain and sad consequences that come with sin. He has something better for you if you will repent and turn to God and get things right.

"Make every effort" the bible says. We are talking about eternity here! We are talking about your soul. Your life with God. Jesus said, **"If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell."** Matthew 5:29-30.

Jesus is not suggesting literal mutilation of our bodies in order to conquer sin. The point

is simply this, at what time, at what point, will we decide it is serious enough to get the sin out of our life? At what point do we say, "Enough is enough! I'm going to ask God to help me and I will do what it takes to get the sin out of my life." It's time to get serious. Eternity is at stake and God has good things for you but your sin prevents you from receiving his blessings. It's time to exceed the self-imposed limit of sin and disobedience. Understand:

The time is now. Make your obedience immediate. Stop debating the pros and cons of obedience versus disobedience. This isn't a game, a contest, this is your life. Obey God. Obey his word. Get it settled. The only way you can walk in his favor and blessing is to obey God and his word and the faster, sooner, quicker you obey, the faster, sooner, and quicker God's blessing and God's harvest will be produced in your life.

He calls us to obedience. The bible says **"Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the word of this law. They are not just idle words for you - they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."** Deuteronomy 32:46-47.

These aren't idle words - these words are our life. Don't let sin or disobedience limit the blessing of God in your life. If you will live in obedience to God and his word, you can exceed the limits. The more we obey, the more we grow, the more we experience the blessings and glory of God in our life. The Lord told Joshua as they were preparing to enter the promised land, **"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this book of the Law depart from your mouth, meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."** Joshua 1:7-9. These are not idle words. These words are life to us. Obeying God's word leads to life and success.

I want to make room for all God has for me. I want to be good soil for the seed of God's word so my life will produce the right kind of harvest. We hold the key. You hold the key for your life. **Your choice will either limit God's blessing in your life or it will release God's blessing in your life.** Which will it be? Limit or release. God has a plan and purpose for your life that includes his blessing and favor. Stop living like you did before you met Jesus. Start living a life of obedience to God. Get the sin out and live so God can bless you and use you. You are God's child, the redeemed of the Lord and he is calling you to obedience so you can

enjoy fellowship with God, so you can partake of his divine nature, so you can experience his joy and peace, so he can pour good gifts and good things into your life.

Is there stuff in your life, unrepentant sin, wrong choices, things that right now are hindering your walk with God? Are there things in your life that you would admit this morning are limiting the blessings God has for you? Isn't it time to obey - now - immediately? It's time to lose the limits. It's time to repent, to forgive, to be forgiven, to obey God, to surrender to him. The sooner you obey God the sooner God can bless you, the sooner you can grow in his grace and mercy, the sooner you can know and experience his rich fellowship. Are you ready to break free and exceed those self-imposed limits? The choice is yours.