

**Sermon Notes of
Elder James Robert's Sermon on January 24, 2016
"Step Up"
Connecting to God and to Others Series**

[In today's sermon, "Step Up", part two of a series "Connecting to God and to Others", Elder James Roberts shows that when we step up to face challenges God has given us, He will step up with us.]

Notes:

Introduction:

- Is there a pattern in your life in a way God is working with you?
- God often asks us to “step up” to accept the special challenges and opportunities He places before us.
- And when we do “step up” God will “step up” with us.
- Often an aspect of these special challenges involves our connecting with others as we talk to them about Jesus.

Jim Roberts' (JR's) personal example:

- He grew up in SW Missouri.
- Going to college there with the intent of getting a degree in geology, so he was a geology major.
- But God said to him, “No, you are not going to be a geologist but a theologian.”

- JR was planning to go to Ambassador College in Big Sandy Texas to get his training in theology.
- But God wanted him to go to the Pasadena campus – so that's where he attended college.
- A close college friend told him that the way to become successful at Ambassador College is to become a minister.

After graduation:

- In 1970, after graduation, JR was not sent out as a ministerial trainee but hired in the Data Processing Center at the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) headquarters (in Pasadena) which sponsored the Ambassador Colleges.
- What was so amazing to JR was that he didn't know anything about computers.
- He quickly had to experience OJT – on the job training.
- One of the lessons he quickly learned was that God qualifies the called ones.

- JR worked in the Data Processing Center for 25 years.
- The last 18 years, he was given various leadership and diplomacy responsibilities within the department.

- One of the examples JR gave was to spearhead a project of having the various departments at WCG Headquarters to have their separate file servers combined together so they could communicate with each other and share data.
- That took a lot of diplomacy and communication skills.

Ministerial opportunities:

- During this time working in data Processing, JR was given various preaching opportunities in many of the Worldwide Church of God congregations from Bakersfield to San Diego.
- He also was given counseling opportunities.
- God just kept telling him to step up when facing these new challenges.

Another new challenge:

- In the early 1990's, JR was asked to see Joe Tkach, Jr., the head of Church Administration department.
- JR was asked if would like to go out into the field ministry.
- There were major theological changes going on within WCG at this time.
- And new ministers were needed to pastor churches to replace ministers who were leaving or ones who had abused their power and authority.
- So JR stepped up to the new opportunities and challenges God was giving him.
- By accepting this field ministry position, his wife, Hazel, would have to quite her CFO position in a mid-size company.

Field ministry challenges:

- In January 1995, JR moved to Dayton, Ohio, with his wife, to become the new pastor.
- Within a short period of time, the assistant pastor and pastor of a nearby church quit and JR became the pastor of a second church.
- Within another short period of time, he was pastoring 5 churches in Ohio and one church in Kentucky, before help could be sent out.
- JR was also asked to be a festival coordinator in the fall of 1995.
- This was the first time he had ever been in charge of a festival which ran for 8 days.
- JR had to come up with a zero-based budget while booking a facility to hold the special church services and book hotel accommodations for the many out of town visitors who would attend.
- Fortunately his wife was a big help in producing a zero-based budget based on her former job skills.
- God had definitely asked JR to step up to all these challenges,
- And God stepped up to give JR the necessary abilities to meet these challenging opportunities.

A transfer with new ministry challenges:

- After 18 months in Ohio, JR and his wife were transferred to the Bay Area on the West Coast of California.

- It was a difficult transition because the people there were so different than the ones in Ohio.
- JR was a mid-westerner from Missouri who related easily to the people of Ohio, but initially had a difficult time relating to the West Coast people.
- Again God stepped up and provided the leadership and diplomacy skills that JR needed to be a successful and effective pastor.
- JR couldn't say enough good things about the many close friendships he established with the members there.
- JR pastored churches in the Bay area for 18 ½ years.

Conclusion:

- Sometimes in life you need to “step down” instead of “stepping up.”
- Last February, JR stepped down from being a pastor and retired.
- The reason was so that he could become a full time care giver for his wife.

Philippians 2:5-11, In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6) Who, being in the very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7) rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

8) And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross! 9) Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11) and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- Jesus gave us an example of how to graciously “step down” in order to serve the Father and fulfill His plan of salvation for humanity.
- Jesus was honored and exalted by the Father because He was willing to “step down” by “being made in human likeness” and “by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!”
- Sometimes, in this life, one has to step down in order to step up again.
- What's God going to do next in your life?

Closing Prayer