

## **“Geronimo!”**

“Obey God’s message. Don’t fool yourselves by just listening to it. If you hear God’s message but don’t obey it, you are like people who look at themselves in a mirror, and forget what they look like when they leave.” - James 1:22-24

Back in the dark ages, the 1940’s, when I was a Junior Boy in Sunday School, our assembly song was:

“There’s a call for Juniors true, found in James one twenty-two, Be ye doers of the Word ... And not hearers only.”

One day I’m going to write a book on embarrassing moments in the ministry and this will be in it. One night I had a boil beginning on the side of my nose, so after I took my bath, I covered the side of my nose with a black ointment that would draw it out.

It was about 11 PM and before I could get in bed, the phone rang. A family from our church had been in a wreck, so I dressed and hurried to the ER. I stayed until around 1 AM and talked with the family, the doctors, the nurses, and others in the waiting room. I arrived home, weary, went into the bathroom to brush my teeth, looked in the mirror and saw *GERONIMO!* There was that big black “gooey” blob on the side of my nose.

I didn’t know it. The people in the hospital acted like they didn’t know it. As I walked and talked and ministered in that hospital, I thought I looked like a “good” pastor, when I really looked like a clown. I needed a good friend there to take me aside and point it out. I needed someone who didn’t like me, to point at it and laugh. But most of all, I should have LOOKED IN THE MIRROR, like Mary Ann told

me to always do before I went anywhere.

That’s the way we are spiritually, if we don’t use the mirror of God’s Word, or if we only glance at it as it flies over our heads in church. Doing this we walk away ugly, looking no different than those who don’t go to church. That is one reason why they don’t come.

### **When God Says “Yes”**

“Sir, the Lord as rescued me from lions and bears and He will keep me safe from this Philistine.” -1 Sam. 17

This is what young David said when Saul tried to talk him out of facing Goliath. Few things compare to having God answer one of our prayers – knowing in our heart of hearts, that the awesome God of this universe has taken a special interest in us, and answered us personally. Every time it happened to Abraham, he built an altar where it happened and gave the place a holy name.

We can’t prove answered prayers and we don’t have to, because we know it in our hearts. And when life is hard, we can always go back to those holy moments and know God is listening even when it may seem like He isn’t. 5

Answers from the past give us hope for the future and the courage to face the challenges of today. David faced Goliath, remembering how God helped him fight off lions and bears that attacked his sheep. God’s protection of David, when he was a boy enabled him to face any Goliath he met after that.

Test your memory. What were you worrying about one year ago today?

A missionary airplane dropped some items on a remote jungle tribe in South America. As they were going through it, they came across a large hand-mirror. They handed it to the chief. He took one look in it, and smashed it against a rock. Get it?