

# Pt.3 - The Slight Edge - No Blame No Baggage

Sermon Title: **Pt.3 - The Slight Edge - No Blame No Baggage**

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Nathaniel: When you take personal responsibility, you become empowered to change your life.

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And now for 5624, The Slight Edge Part Three, No Blame No Baggage.

Nathaniel: Welcome to Brothers of the Word because brother, you need the word. And today, we continue with part three of the series called The Slight Edge. And it fundamentally based upon the book The Slight Edge and today's subtitle is simply called No Blame No Baggage.

Now, in The Slight Edge which is a book that basically tells you about doing small things everyday on a regular basis you can change your life. And in The Slight Edge, it talks about 19 out of 20 people are unfulfilled in life. There's only 5% of people who are truly fulfilled. It doesn't have anything to do with the 5% of people who have money or who have fame or who have power. There are only 5% of people who are truly fulfilled in their purpose of life.

And I want to get as many people as possible to that 5% side. It has nothing to do with what church you belong to. It doesn't have anything to do with what religion you belong to because 19 out of 20 Christians are really not fulfilled in life and are not living to the fullest of God's purpose of what he has ordained them to be. So, the principles that he talked about in The Slight Edge helps you to move from the 19 to the one. God's true people have always been a remnant. That's nothing new. They have always been a remnant. It is never been the masses. It never has been and it never will be. The wide path to destruction has always been an eight lane super highway, but the path to salvation, to life, to joy, to peace is always a narrow foot path that very few people travel.

So, I want to just give us information of how do we get out of the 19 into the one. And The Slight Edge says that there's one fundamental attitude that differentiate the one from the 19. And that one attitude, that one view of life and if we can get this one view of life, it will empower us to change our lives. And this one view of life is the one takes personal responsibility. The 19 blame and put responsibility on someone else. That's why I told you, I would come in on the song that we just got through singing in the choir. Jesus can fix it and he can. But it isn't up to Jesus. It's not up to Jesus. You can fix it.

That's the difference because the overly super religious people generally don't have their stuff together in life. Have you ever noticed that? The real hallelujah spiritual people? The don't got no money, body generally not in shape. Now, I don't mean to put this – there's not a broad through overall but I don't see that a whole lot. The more spiritual folk get, the more messed up their lives are. And you said, why in the world is that, that the holy rollers are all out of shape financially, physically, relationship. Why is it that the holy rollers are so out of shape compared to the other folk? Because there was no God to fix it. There was no God to fix it. No, no, no, no, no, no. You see, I'm a strong, strong believer that God controls everything. I believe that almost to an unbalanced extreme. I believe that everything is under God's control but there's a but in it. God has given a huge amount of that control in my hands. Just like I'm standing here today, I'm in real good shape, I'm in real good health but that's not accidental. And what God has told is, if you work out six day a week, you will never be sick. Now, that's a Divine Word of God. That's a Divine Word of God. Oh, when I heard it. Oh, that's a Divine Word of God. But that isn't my problem. My problem is not the Divine Word of God.

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Your problem is not the Word of God. Your problem is not that Jesus can fix it. Your problem is not that God is all powerful. That's not your problem. Your problem is you won't do what he says. That's the problem.

See, God can handle all of the stuff. God -- he owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He is the richest in the universe. He owns everything but would you give it to an irresponsible child or someone who is not mature? Someone who you can't trust with

it? No, you wouldn't. It's there in the world for us but and the but part is a part that messes up so many people. We don't take personal responsibility. We want to put it on God.

I remember years ago from the lady Susan Smith over in South Carolina. You all remember the story. It was all over the news. She had two children and she claimed this African-American man had hijacked her car and taken her. They had the whole country just pleading and praying for the man to bring her children back. Found out nine days later, she had stood at the edge of a lake, got out of her car with the children in the back, put the thing in neutral, stepped on the gas and drove the car in the lake and drown the children. But it says in her confession that as the car was sliding in the water and sinking, she was standing on there and hollering "Oh, Lord God, why did you let his happen?" She standing on the shore hollering "God, why did you let this happen?"

God isn't letting most of that stuff happen in your life. It's you who stepped on the gas, you who put the thing in neutral and let -- that's me. See, if I get sick and you can always ask me that if you ever see pastor sick, don't ask me what you got, don't ask me what did you eat, just ask me the simple question. Why did you not do what God told you to do? Now, He didn't say I wasn't going to die. So, if I exercise six days a week, he didn't say I wasn't going to die because I am going to die. But I can live to a ripe old age without ever being sick. All I got to do is that one little simple thing. But that one little simple thing is not so simple. Because all kind of stuff comes up to distract you from them six days a week. So, even though I know it, even though I know it, but he placed the whole responsibility in my hands. And those of the one out of the 20, they take personal responsibility.

John Killinger tells about the manager of a minor league baseball team. He was so disgusted with the center fielder's performance that he ordered them over to the dugout and he said, "I'm going to go out there and play the centerfield position myself." The first ball that came into to centerfield, it took a bad hop and it hit the manager in the mouth. The next ball that came was a real high fly ball and he looked up in the glare of the sun because he couldn't quite see that and when finally, when the ball did come down, it hit him in the head. And then the third one was hard line drive that came down and it bounced

down and that him in the crotch. So, he just limped back over to the dugout, his mouth was bleeding, his cheek was swollen where the ball hit him, he was limping because it had hit him in the crotch. He just walked back over, he grabbed the center fielder by the uniform, jacked him and said, "Look. You got centerfield so messed even I can't play it."

The 19 blame all of the other stuff in life but the one takes personal responsibility. Now, people, I want you to understand this. When you look at the Bible, the first time that even man had a real conversation with God. If you read the Bible, the first words that Adam spoke was when God gave him Eve, he said, "This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" and this he went that but it doesn't really say he was talking to God about that. He may have just been talking to himself.

The first conversation between man and God in the Bible was the first mess up. When Eve ate the forbidden fruit and in that first conversation Genesis 3 beginning at verse 8, "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?' He answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.' And said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?'"

Now, first of all this was a yes or no answer. "Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" That's what God is asking him. Did you should do what I told you to do or did you violate what I told you to do? Now, see people, if we answer this one simple question, did you do what God told you to do or did you not do what God –

00:10:02

See, if we answer that one question. I would automatically say would no. No, I didn't do what you told me to do. Yes, I ate from the tree that you told me not to eat from. No, I didn't do what you said. Yes, I did what I wanted to do. No, I didn't do what you said. Yes, I did what I wanted to do. That's what I'll automatically do. But Adam in the first conversation, the man said "The woman you put here with me. She gave me some of the fruit from the tree and I ate it." Now, this is the first

recorded conversation between man and God. The bone of my bone, he may have been talking to himself because sometimes even we get some good job. Whoo Lord. Like Whoo. Yeah, Lord. Whoo. I got to go on a -- Sometimes when we're by ourselves, we don't know what (00:10:48) between man or God or not.

This is the first documented conversation between man and God. The first time man truly spoke to God and the first time that man spoke to God, he blamed somebody else. The first time man spoke to God, he blamed somebody else, the woman. Now, this is what I want you to understand. Then when he got to Eve. Then the Lord God said to the woman "What is this you have done?". The woman said, "The serpent deceived me." The serpent, that wiggly thing that you put here, you created that serpent. The serpent. Now, see, some of us could use that we get caught up in a sex scene. Lord, you made sex and you made it good. If you have to make good, I wouldn't have got caught in it. Make plenty of good sense doesn't it? Does that make good sense?

See, the thing about it, everything Adam and everything Eve say was true. It was all true. The woman that you gave me, gave me to eat this fruit that I did eat. That was absolutely true. See, this one of the situations where nobody could blame Adam for picking the wrong woman. He blamed Adam. Pastor James did a program called the Love Screener. The Love Screener wouldn't have helped Adam one bit because there was no screening and there was no other choice. It was a one menu buffet. There was no choice. So, you can't blame Adam for picking the wrong woman. So, Adam had a very valid point. The woman that you gave me, gave me this fruit and see there's all this stuff written between the lines. If your have not to given me this woman, I was doing fine by myself in this garden. I didn't ask for this woman. If you hadn't had given me this woman, yeah you told me not to eat that fruit, but you gave me this woman. If you hadn't given me this woman, I wouldn't have eaten that fruit. I wouldn't be in this mess right now. If you hadn't given me that woman. Does that sound familiar? This is the first conversation, not the second, the first conversation documented between man and God. And Eve had the same thing to say about the snake because the snake was smooth. He is the most subtle creature in all of the garden. It was smooth. But that was not what God did not ask them about the excuse. He asked them about the results, "Did you do what I told you to

do?” And see, when you don’t do and so many of us, we get to the point of dealing with what didn’t happen because we were not obedient. We deal with what has happened because we were not obedient. Did you do what God told you to do? And He told you, if you eat of this fruit you would die.” That’s the worst penalty you could possibly have. He told you, you will get maximum punishment, maximum penalty if you eat of this fruit. The one out of 20 begins with taking personal responsibility and when you take personal responsibility, you become empowered to change your life because it’s now in your hands. God is all powerful but He says, “If you just do, I can do, I can do all things in Christ through Christ who strengthen me.” He says, He gives you the power to get wealth. You got to do something. You got to use your power and you can’t use all of the blame to blaming somebody. And see, the other thing about blame -- a lot of the stuff is just true. A lot of the reasons you have as to why you’re not where you need to be, all that stuff is true. That has nothing to do with anything because you can’t do one doggone thing which you don’t have. All that stuff is absolutely true. Yes, the color of your skin may have impeded you. Yes, you didn’t have the family background. That may have set you back. Yes, you don’t have the education. No, you don’t have the money. All of that’s absolutely true. But all that stuff is serpent talk and you will never rise until you take personal responsibility. Yes, a lot of stuff wrong with the government. Yeah, and no question about that and there’s a whole lot of stuff wrong, there’s a whole lot of folk that surround you (00:15:05) not right?

00:15:07

Yeah. Jesus had some folk around him (00:15:09) and see, that’s the difference. You have to ask yourself, what can I do? What is my responsibility? My brother and I, we attended the monthly meeting with millionaire presidents of companies so we can surround ourselves with minds who think at a different level. And always even in that meeting, sometime there will be something that would happen, something would go wrong. There have one statement and that one statement is this has happened for me. The 19 says this has happened to me, the one says this has happened for me. So, now that these experience has happened for me, now that there has been more weight put on the bar. Now that this experience has happened for my good, what can I do to benefit? Again, what is my responsibility? What can I handle to do? No need of you complaining about the

high rate of taxes, you just get on the high tax bracket. Difference.

Now, I remember years ago, I was complaining to my accountant. Oh, I'm paying all these things. I can cut your taxes in half instantly. Ah, what kind of loophole is that? What's wrong? You just cut your salary in half. So, people, we have to understand that it is up to us and it is how we talk, stop blaming stuff outside of you, stop blaming God. God knows your situation. There's nothing in this universe that he has not have finely meticulously orchestrated. He knows exactly what problems you have. He knows what you were born into and it was for a reason. No, I can't explain it to you but it's for a reason. So, yes, God knows.

Let me tell you a story of Steve Jobs. You all know who Steve Jobs was. He is the founder and president of one of the greatest scientific innovators of the century. President of Apple Computer with the iPod, the iPhone, iPad, all that kind of stuff. At 13 years old, Steve Jobs was in church and he brought a cover of Life Magazine to the Sunday school class. And he asked the Sunday school teacher, as he held up the cover and on the cover was a picture of a starving child in Africa. And he asked the Sunday school teacher, does God know about these children? And the Sunday school teacher says, "Yes, God knows everything." And Steve Jobs got up and walked out of church and never returned. And he said because I don't want to serve a God that can see starving children in the world and not do anything about it. That was at 13 years old. Fast forward, 40 years later. Steve Jobs is worth 6.5 billion dollars and his biographer who wrote his book said, that Steve Jobs there's not one hospital named after him, there's no public record of the any charity that he donated to. And I had to go onto the record and searched. After he passed away, his wife said that they did give 50 million dollars to hospitals but Steve Jobs was worth 6.5 billion dollar. That wasn't even 1% of his net worth. Let me tell you the real story behind him. Steve Jobs walked out of church because he said God wasn't doing anything about this situation. So, what did God do? The man got 6.5 billion dollars. If he had just taken 10% of his money and fed the homeless and fed children over in Africa or wherever. If he had just taken 10% of his money, he'd have \$650,000,000. Do you know how many folk you can feed \$650,000,000? Do you know how much good you can do with \$650,000,000? If he had just taken 10% of his

money -- he didn't even take 1% and he's blaming God for the situation, wherein God empowered him to change it. He said, I'll give you the power to change the lives of a 100,000 folk. You can change the lives of a whole city and we blame God and we don't do, because most of the stuff in the earth God is going to send it through people who can hear his voice. But it's not hearing his voice is the issue. Hearing his voice isn't worth a quarter if you don't do what He says. As a matter of fact. It's better that you never hear. Hearing his voice is not worth a quarter and when you really start hearing the voice of God, He will send you out on some (00:19:32). He will not keep you in a comfort zone. I can guarantee you that. Read the prophets if you don't think so. He will not keep you in a comfort zone. So, Jobs was empowered to literally change the world and he was mad at God because there was hungry folk in world. When you take personal responsibility and if Jobs had said it, "What can I do about the starving children in Africa?

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What can I do?" He could have literally said, "I can take on and adopt the whole country and I can eliminate every hungry child in that country," and he had the resources to do it. When we stop blaming other folk of our situations and when we start taking personal responsibility and I know the blame is real, I know that faults are real, I know folk could hurt you, I know people have not done you right, I understand all of that. But then you got one thing to do with what God has ordained you to do and the destiny that you can reach. Blaming other folk, that's the 19. Let me ask you one simple question, how many of you know people who is far as you know are happy but they have worse situation than you do? How many of you know people that as far as you know they're happy but they got worse situations than you do? Do you know, when you really think about almost everybody knows somebody they literally have nothing. They got nothing. He said my dad got a pot, a blanket and I want to throw it out. Well. they got nothing. But they're just as happy. And see, when you travel, you really see that. So, the question is, if I know people or at least one person they're happier than I am with much less than I have, then why am I not at least as happy as they are? And if you're not the reason, it let's you know the reason is not in the stuff of the circumstances because their circumstances that worse than yours. So, it lets you know that I am empowered to first of all

create within my world, my joy. See, the real kingdom is still all in the inside. That's why Jesus said, the Kingdom of God is within. It's still all inside. I am empowered to create within me, my world regardless of happens on the outside.

Let me just give you a hypothetical example. Let's just say you are coming to church today, and all of a sudden you see some blue lights behind you, you pull over, 10 or 12 police cars surround you and they all get out their guns drawn until you get out the car. And they say, somebody look just like you driving the same kind of car you drive, the same color, just robbed a store and shot the owner and we think it's you. You say, "I am not doing that. I mean, I'm on my way to church." So, they lock you up, circumstantial evidence, you got witnesses. Yeah, it did look like him. Yeah, he's driving that kind of car about the same time and bottom line you get convicted and now you're in jail the rest of your life. Absolute horror.

I have gone to speak in prisons and I have seen those in prison who were literally more at peace than those out in the world. And I didn't understand it until much later, because often if I shake a lot of hands, it will drain me because the energy of the people it'll pull from me but when I shook all them prisoners' hands, I wasn't drained. I was just as fresh and that's unusual and I looked in their eyes, all of their eyes were bright, all of them we're in good shape. And then I realized, they got no problems. They got no bills to pay. (00:23:00). It was 1,800 men in the prison, in that session it was 600. Those are perhaps the 600 most elevated. They want the 1,200. They were 600 best.

But the point is, I saw basically people that who were at peace and I didn't realize even if I were unjustly or justly incarcerated, I can be just as happy in jail. Because in jail, there are some things that are positive. Now, you say, pastor, what in the world are you talking about? Now, see, it's not what it is. It's how you view it. So, if I got in jail, first of all, I got time to get my mind strengthened. I can read all day long. You know on the prison maybe it will be Pastor James, him working on me. If you go to jail, you got all day to work out. You got all day to work out. So, prison just be all buff at me looking like Mr. Universe. Well, you got all day to work out if you go to jail. So, you got all day to read, you got all day to work out. It's one of the best weight loss clinic. You never see anybody overweight in

jail. Absolutely, you're going to lose that weight on a hurry in jail. So, if you go to jail, (00:24:05) get on my diet. Yes, I have.

I'm telling you whatever. See, it's not what it is, and you could be just as happy if you have the right attitude about things. That thing is internal and even if you're in jail, even if all of your surroundings are terrible, you'd have to ask yourself, what can I do to get myself together, to get me happy in this situation? (00:24:36) I was just railroaded. It's just unjust. Yeah, all that's true. All is absolutely true, but the main question that you have to ask yourself that will empower or reduce your life is the question, what can I do? Blaming other folk is not going to get you anywhere. It's just going to make you bitter, not them. It's just going to make you mad and sad. Blaming other folk is not going to do anything. You always have to ask that question and as a general principle one thing I found out by just divine and universal law, you have something to do with it.

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You have something to do with it. That's just a rule somewhere down the road you have something to do with it. It just wasn't all -- The Bible says the curse does not call us that it has come. You may not be able to see sometime the whole picture. That maybe something 10 years ago that has finally come back around. You have something to do with it. But when we can gear our minds to I am going to take personal responsibility. I am not going to blame anyone for my situation. It's up to me to get out of it. Jesus can fix it for you but he isn't, because when you really go and look at what Jesus taught you and told you, Jesus says, why are worrying about what you're going to wear? Why are you worrying about what you're going to eat? Look at the lilies of the field. See how my Father clothed them and there's nothing more beautiful. So, as when he says not even a (00:25:52) falls to earth that my daddy don't know about.

So, why worry about tomorrow? That's what Jesus tell you. So, he can fix it but you got to follow His fixing rules. You go to use his toolkits. We want Jesus to just come in and fix the mess and we just said all, "thank you Jesus for fixing this. Thank you Jesus. Thank you." No, no. It doesn't work like that. When you follow what he told you to do, if you just follow that simple rule, "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and

strength.” You just follow that. Love your neighbors. You follow that and he will fix it because see, a lot of things wouldn’t be broken if you love your neighbor like you do. They just wouldn’t be broken. So, He can fix it but His toolkit is different from what we want. We want to lie there while He fixes and does all the work. That’s what we want. Generally, that don’t happen. You got to change the way you think, to change the way you act and it will change the results that you get.

King Frederick II was an 18th century King of Prussia and he was visiting a prison in Berlin, and every cell that he went to, all the inmates tried to prove to him how they had been so wrongly convicted, how they were unjustly imprisoned, all of them were just pleading their cases. King, we’re just innocent. I didn’t do that. I’m just entered into a system and railroaded me. I got nothing to do with any of it. I was in the wrong place, the wrong time. I’m just as innocent as I can be. So, he finally got to one man and this man was just sitting in the corner, just as quiet, just as peaceful and he said, “excuse me, do you see (00:27:24), what are you in here for?”. He said, armed robbery. And the King said, “did you do it?” He said, “yes, I did it. I’m just as guilty as I can be and I deserve every bit of punishment they had given me. I’m just as guilty as I can be.”

And then the King turned to all of the guards and he said, “look. I want you to release this man here.” He said, “because this man is guilty and I don’t want him contaminating all this innocent folk in here.” So, sometimes, we just admit this stuff was us and own up to the stuff we’ve done. It will set you free. Instead of trying to blame it on everybody, we just own up to what we’ve done, it will set you free. That’s why Jesus said, know the truth and the truth will set you free. That truth is rough. The truth is rough. It’s a two-edged sword. That truth is rough, but knowing the truth sets you free, and one of those truths is going to be it’s up to me. God will be behind me, God will strengthen me, God will carry me through, but God know, I got to got to do what he tells me to do. And when I don’t do what he tells me to do, there’s a curse and too many of us spend our time focusing on and blaming the curse and never looking at we didn’t do what He told us to do.

It’s a part of the slight edge that really becomes a huge edge. Taking personal responsibility, no blame and no regrets and no

baggage. Let it go, admit it, take responsibility. In every situation ask yourself, "what can I do?"

You know, I have a case in marriage counseling that we deal with, always dealing with the (00:29:07), she did and she tell me what he did. And almost in every case it is stuff on both sides. Very rarely would you ever hear talking about, well, you know pastor, I got some stuff I needed to really straighten out. I really got some stuff I need to straighten out and if I straighten out my stuff, my guess is my spouse maybe a whole lot better if I just straighten out my stuff. You don't hear that. You just do not hear that. It's always about what they're doing, how bad they are and they will straighten up, I wouldn't be so sad if they straighten up. And the truth is, they might not be so sad if you just straighten up. But you only have the power to straighten up you. You cannot straighten up another person. So, spending your time blaming somebody else, you can't straighten up the government. Governments have always been this way. You just don't know history if you think any different.

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It's always been this way. So, when you understand some things, it changes perspective and perspective changes performance and performance will change prospect and the prospect difference will change you prize. So, if we can learn, stop blaming anything else. You have the power to change you. You have the power. Youi have the power. That's what God said, "I am the one who giveth thee power." You got the power. Now, what you do with it is your business, but you have the power. No blame, no baggage.

Bow your heads. Dear Heavenly Father upon this day, we just pray that we have a new insight. We speak a new voice and we stop blaming anything that is external to us, for we know that you are with us and if you are for us, who can be against us? Who can stand? No weapon formed against us will prosper. But Father, we have to be in your will, we have to do, help us to do what we need to do. Father, help my will to become thy will and as we straighten up, our path and our results radically change as we recognize it is us who needs to change. In thy Son Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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