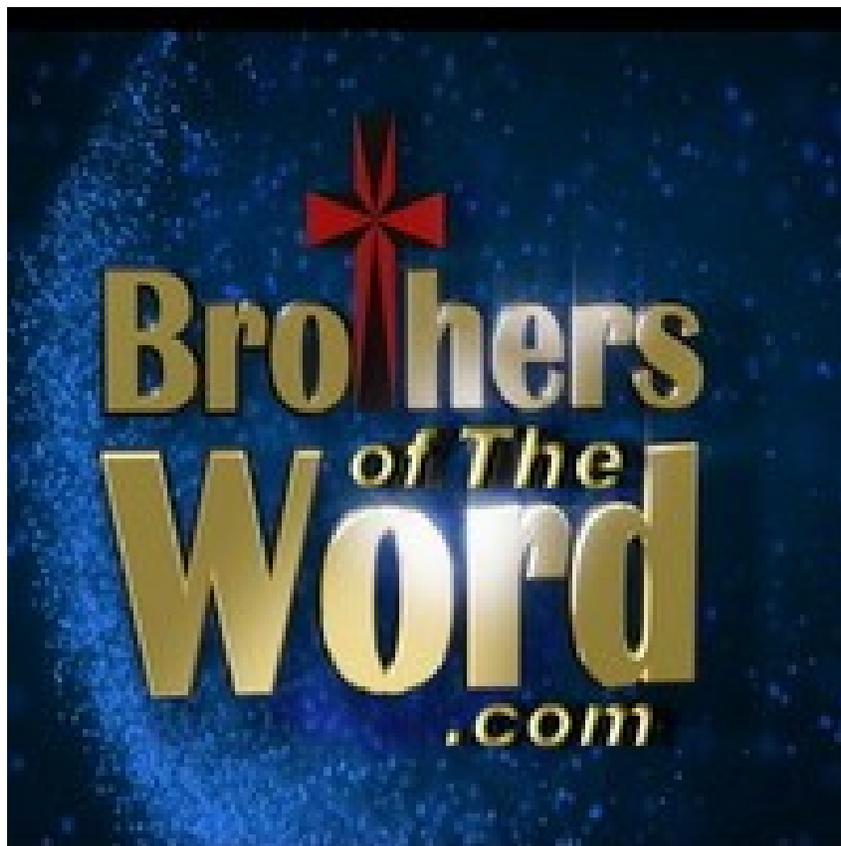


Over and Over Again

Sermon Title: **Over and Over Again**
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Speaker: **James Bronner**

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Welcome to Brothers of the Word because, brother, you need the Word. Today's message will be a little more technical than my normal messages but it will impact your life if you will apply it when you leave this place or when you finish listening to it. Some of the messages God gives me, I find the day – touch the heart of people and other messages they reach the head to change the thinking. And this is going to be the latter kind today. Only God knows what message people need at the proper time, you have to be sensitive to his spirit.

This won't be a feel-good message today. You may not shout on it, but I will tell you, if you will apply the principles of the message then you'll feel good later when your life begins to change and improves. Pastor and I, we went on a CEO retreat about a week ago and it wasn't about other company presidents at this retreat and it was a secular retreat it wasn't spiritual but we were spiritual men in the midst of it and even though it wasn't spiritual, they were able to recognize the favor of God upon us. And even after some days of the teaching on the last day, they had a little golf tournament. And even out in the nature playing golf, not even related to spiritual. They began to just see God move even on my golf game and I was playing and I hit the ball too hard and it went over the grain and in the woods. And they said, "Oh I got him now". All of a sudden, they saw the ball hit something in the woods and just come back out of the woods and landed this far from the hole. And these guys, they just turned to me. They said, "I don't know what you have going on but you've got the angels working on your behalf."

And all of their years of training they had never seen some things that was just happening with my golf balls right there. And I was just smiling because I knew who was on my side and who was helping me play. So God will work in mysterious ways even on your job, even in situations where you can't preach to people. He'll use some things in your life that will minister to them. So, he just used a little golf ball to minister to those CEOs I was playing with.

And I want to teach today one of the principles that we were taught at that CEO retreat, teaching them how to run their companies. And you won't have to pay big money to get the teaching like the other CEOs did. I'm going to give you a free bit of that. Just turn to your neighbor and say, "I like freebies." And I believe it can be applied to some parts of running your life just as they were taught this principle to running their companies and organizations. And I really hate to see sometimes people. They're so excellent in their jobs and they'll give 100% at work but then, the job will train them on how to have good customer service with people – they will wait on them and say, "Is there anything else I can do for you today" and then they get home and they're at each other's throat. They'll give their workplace their best attitude and their best smile and their best patience, give around that love to one another and all of that customer service that they just practice and learn about goals out of the window.

So I want to give you a principle today that you can use right at home and in your life. They took us out in the woods for this retreat for three days and they talked about how business owners get so busy but they call it putting out fires in their business with situations come up and problems have to be dealt with urgently. They get so busy putting out these fires that they never take time to sit back to analyze the business itself and the operations, to see if there's a better way to do this, is there's a system that can be put in place for this problem won't keep happening over and over. And I found that individual lives are the same way. We get so busy with work, so busy with cooking and cleaning and homework with the kids and taking them to practices and games, so busy going to church and dealing with doctor's appointments and dealing with athletic events and doing all of these things, paying bills, just the humdrum of life that we never have time to sit down and analyze our life to see what is the source of recurring problems that are happening.

Here's a Brother Point for you. We get so caught up in living that we never step back and see how we are living. And we can get so caught up in the discipline and feeding, cleaning up behind the teenager that we never stop and just meditate on it and see how this teen is developing on the inside and see if they're exhibiting any traits of little self esteem or lack of love or immaturity in their lives. The business of life can affect the quality of life. That's another Brother Point for you.

I told you I was going to give you some freebies today. At the retreat they focused on what they called SRPs and it stands for Silly Repeating Patterns. Business have them, homes have them, churches have them, schools have them – Silly Repeating Patterns. And I'm going to name so Silly Repeating Patterns that I've seen people have in life. And after I name each one, if you can think about anybody that exhibits this pattern, I want you to say after I name the pattern, you say the words – “Over and over again”.

The first one is – Choosing the wrong boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse – Over and over again. Eating something you know is bad for your health and paying the price later – Over and over again. Buying what you want and not having the money to buy what you need – Over and over again. Getting mad and saying something you wish you could take back later – Over and over again. Running late for something that you were supposed to be on time for – Over and over again. And I speak today from the subject of, “Over and Over Again”.

Over and over again we do the same thing with the same problem, get in the same situations over and over again. I'm glad, you all just thought about other people, I'm glad you all aren't doing these things. We are preaching about the other folks today. And they taught us for solid three days on how to find their true calls of problems and develop systems that prevent the problem from happening in the future, all while causing the least number of side-effects. And this system dynamic as they call

them track the side-effects because sometimes you can create a bigger problem than the original problem you were working on by the way you try to fix the problem. I'll give you an example of a husband getting angry seeing the budget get out of whack for a month and he comes home and says, "I'm going to fix this problem today". And he calls the wife in and they talk, "What is it, give me all your credit cards, all of your bank cards. I'm going to handle all the household spending from now on so we won't have this problem again."

How many of you know? He might have a bigger problem than the little budget here from he started out with in that relationship and the complex way that they talked to analyze the system involving something, involved something called Leverage Points. And these were point within an organization or system where a small change would result in a bigger change in behavior. For instance, if you were running a restaurant and you made a small leverage point change and you've been getting complains of poor customer service and you've made a small Leverage Point change of installing cameras with microphones on them throughout your restaurant and you let your service know – we're going to be monitoring how you're treating the customers we've had a few complaints. That one small change will result in a larger behavioral change over time and it's called a leverage point. They also use diagrams involving what's called Feedbag Loops, which in a nutshell shows you how everything in the system is connected and how adjusting any one small thing affects all of the other elements in the system.

To give you an example of both of those principles in a simple example, let's take the thermostat in your house. That's a leverage point because you can make a small change in temperature on that dial. And that small twist of the dial will cause the heat or the air to kick in or to cut off. That small twist of the dial will cause your electric bill to go up or down depending on how you've adjusted it. That small twist will cause the temperature to be more comfortable or be more uncomfortable. It can cause your children – it could affect the rate at which they get colds. It could affect the number of arguments you have with your spouse over the temperature in there. It can even affect things as much you cuddle with your spouse. Sometimes, I'll turn the air up a little bit so she would just have to get under me and say, "Oh, it's chili down here". But I'm using a leverage point there in my marriage.

Systems Dynamics with diagram, all of these things that the twist of the dial will cause and it will monitor the change that was affected by that twist and you've never thought about all of these parameters as you adjust that temperature up and down in your home. But all of these things take place behind the scenes and I had to sit through three days of this teaching and imagine – I was on a three minutes worth I gave you. Well, there are many decisions in life where we make temporary decisions and actions to get an immediate effect but we don't look at how it affects the long term situation in the world around us. Drugs and alcohol may temporarily take your mind off your problems but what else in your body and in your world

would it affect. Eating a pint of ice cream before you go to bed, it ought to give you some immediate comfort and satisfaction. I'm not denying that now but overtime, what would that do for your body and your world. What kind of side effects will it produce? That's why pharmaceutical companies, they have to list all of those long side effects on their ads you hear on TV. They all say – If you're having arthritis pain, you can take this medication, but if you're experiencing this, stop immediately, if your hair starts falling, if your chest starts giving you problems, if your feet start acting up on you when you walk, if you start growing hair on your chest, if your voice starts cracking on you, if you can't eat, can't sleep, can't breathe, stop taking it immediately. They will list all of the side effects and you're trying to fix one problem and you're here now with ten other problems going on in your world.

And that's what system dynamics teaches, how to monitor all of these things, create a system change that will keep problems from recurring over and over. Luke 16 starting at verse one says, And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. ² And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

³ Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. ⁴ I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. ⁵ So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? ⁶ And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. ⁷ Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. ⁸ And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

I'll repeat verse 8, And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And we've seen a lot of this in the business world where even though they aren't in the church, they are operating things wiser than the children of light and it's a shame that people will use their God given creativity to think up solutions when money is involved but they won't be as creative when it comes to getting people saved. God gave me this revelation, people will tell you that – when you talk about bringing people to Christ, they'll say, "I'm just not a good talker and I don't know. I've never been trained in it, that's not my calling". But if the Ark of Salvation offered \$1,000.00 for each person that you brought to church next week that came up to the altar, I'll bet you that the church will be filled up next week. Creative juices like you've never used before would begin to operate.

I can see members going out with – tracks saying, "Have you heard about Jesus". I can see them going to jobs on break times – Let me give you this little testimony

about what happened to me, how the Lord brought me up. I'd tell you, after the baseball game in the parking lot, just preaching about Jesus. If we put a thousand dollars a head on it, we would have to just bring in some more chairs all up and down the aisles and all up in the choir stand, just filling them up with chairs over that thousand dollar.

People that hadn't thought about how to see somebody, they'll be coming over to all kinds of – stores or gimmicks that ministers have been preaching 40 years have never come up with. Creativity juices, which flow when you just put some money on them, and that's a shame, think about it, we'll do all of that for a thousand dollars a person, more than we would do to prevent a person from spending a thousand years in torment. What will you do for money? The financial benefits has caused corporate America to spend millions of dollars analyzing how business works and they become so efficient at running operations than most mega-churches today have to hire, people out of corporate America to come in and run the operations of the church. They've taken Biblical principles and studied them more than the people of God all for the sake of money.

Understanding system dynamics can help reduce patterns of problems and arguments, relationships, finance, child discipline, health in almost any area of your life. And as others were sitting there in this retreat, listening and thinking about how this training would benefit their business, I was seeing how individuals could use these principles in every area of their personal life. They business world, they looked at how God set up things and they saw that the world was created and runs by rules and systems. They saw, when they looked up in the sky, that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west every single day. The universe is set up in an orderly manner.

There are billions of stars and planets in the universe and yet they are all in an orderly orbits. When was the last time you've heard of one crashing into another? What are the chances out of billions? The movement of the planets of our solar system are so precise, scientists can actually calculate where a planet will be hundreds of years in advance. God set up a system for a seed to grow into a plant. That system needs seven things, room to grow, the right temperature, light, water, air, nutrients and time. Even within your human body, he created 11 systems that all seven billion humans on this planet come equipped with, the digestive system, that breakdown food into nutrients, the endocrine system to produce hormones to control bodily functions, the integumentary system consisting of hair skin and nails that protects the body from damage from out surroundings.

I don't reading about that one in school, I think they came up with a new one on me there. The lymphatic or immune system is the body's defense against infections and diseases. The muscular system works with the skeletal system to control movement of the body. The nervous system is like a computer and network to control the body. The reproductive system allows humans to produce children. Having seven kids, my

wife and I know something about that system. The respiratory system brings air into the body and removes carbon dioxide. You get an interruption in that system for a few seconds and you have a major problem. The skeletal system shapes the body and protects organs. The urinary system eliminates wastes from the body in the form of urine. The circulatory system is the body's transport system. And it's amazing that science, thinks so smart by discovering some of the purposes of some of what God created but scientists are too shallow to realize the intricate detail – that could have only come from an intelligent designer, when looking at the level of complexities in our bodies and in everything that is created in the earth and the solar system.

It's amazing that they can think all of this order came from an explosion called the, "Big Bang", yet every explosion I've ever seen in my life created more disorder than order. I don't know about the explosion you've seen. And I'm not trying to put you back into school here. I'm just trying to show you that God put order and systems into everything he created so that you won't think that the world created these systems. Just because Corporate America uses them, they saw what God did and wanted to copy something that was good and was working. And I want to give you some examples of even some simple systems that I have applied in my home.

I would notice our mail is just stacking up and I would look for something important and it would just be misplaced and take me a long time. So I set up a little system of box that had poles for each one of us with names on it and as we would bring the mail we would just put it in the slots and that one system set up one time eliminated all mail clutter from then on out. The minute you don't place your keys in the same place every day, you have to spend time every couple of days looking for them wasting time. So we have a key board right by the door that we put the keys on. I set up a dating system for my wife and I. So we have a baby sitter coming at a set time each week so that we can go out and if we don't have it on a system, we find that we don't do it on a regular basis. And I can go on and on but you should have systems even to get the Word of God in your children. We have a schedule that we keep – a curriculum that we go through, we put the Word of God in our children.

I have a system, instead of dealing with my teenagers, taking them to counseling on pornography; instead I set up a system to filter out pornography out of the house. So it's not a problem that won't recur over and over again. So these are examples of some simple systems.

In closing I want you to ask yourself five questions right now. Number one, if you have a pen write this down:

1. What problems do I keep facing over and over again?
2. What actions lead up to the problems?
3. If someone else came to me with these repeating problems and actions, what system would I design for them to put in place to break the pattern? You know a lot of times we can give other people the best advice in the world but

when it comes to us, it's like we just can't see it, but friends and neighbors and co-workers, we can talk like Dr. Phil to them, like we've got a degree.

4. Is the result of the system worth the change of behavior, is it worth it?
5. Am I willing to make the change and implement the system in my life?

Deuteronomy 2: 1-3 says, Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the LORD spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days. ²And the LORD spake unto me, saying, ³Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward.

And as I close today, I speak unto you and say these mountains of problems that are repeating in your life over and over again that God is telling you today that you circled around the problems long enough now. It's time to look up now to go to a higher ground and set up systems in, if you will just pray and meditate on it. God will show you the answers. He'll show you even when you don't know how to do it. If you'll research as much as you can on your own and leave the rest up to him. He'll guide you the rest of the way. But it's up to you to answer these five questions and to do something about it today. And I pray that this message will change your life for the better, that you don't keep circling that mountain over and over and that you'll go up northward from here. God bless you.

We thank you for joining Brothers of the Word because brother, you need the Word.