

Time for A Change
James 1:19-21

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. ²¹Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

James' concern is authentic faith in the midst of hardship.

1:2-4 - *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

Everything else he says in the book is a reflection of that hope –

Joy in trials + steadfast faith = Christian maturity

According to verse 18, salvation is a matter of God imparting new life through His word of truth. Just as a newborn baby gives clear evidence that he is alive and well, so a new believer gives evidence of his new life in Christ.

Since **verse 18** is true –

Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Verses 19-21 are the result -

First: Be swift to hear.

Hear what? V 21 – *“receive with meekness the implanted word...”*

Why be ‘swift to hear’ the Bible?

a) It builds our faith

Romans 10:17 - So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

God has given us the record of Scripture to build our faith in him.

When discussing temptation, Paul points to Israel's failure to believe God when the nation was wandering in the wilderness. He then says,

1 Corinthians 10:11-13 - Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. ¹²Therefore let anyone

who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

We should be swift to hear Scripture because it builds our faith.

b) It matures us in Christ

2 Timothy 3:16 - All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God^[b] may be complete, equipped for every good work.

c) It gives us assurance of our salvation

Your love for, understanding and practice of the Bible is one of the greatest evidences of your Christianity.

Psalm 119:47-48 - I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. ⁴⁸ I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes....⁹⁷ - Oh how I love your law. It is my meditation all the day.

Psalm 19:10 - More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

1 Peter 2:2-3 - Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

d) There are many impediments to listening to God.

Luke 8:4-8 – ⁴ And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, ⁵ “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. ⁶ And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. ⁸ And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.”

- Busyness 5
- Lack of attention 6
- Competition 7

ILL - Rowland Hill (1744-1833), as an old man, was visiting with a longtime friend who said, “It is now 65 years since I first heard you preach. I still remember your text and a part of your sermon.” Hill asked, “What part of the sermon do you remember?”

The friend answered, “You said that some people, when they went to hear a sermon, were very squeamish about the delivery of the preacher. Then you said, ‘Supposing you went to hear the

will of one of your relatives read, and you were expecting a legacy from him. You would hardly think of criticizing the manner in which the lawyer read the will, but you would be all attention to hear whether anything was left to you, and if so, how much. And that is the way to hear the gospel.’” (Adapted from Spurgeon’s Lectures to his Students, condensed and edited by David Otis Fuller [Zondervan], p. 374.)

APP: “*Be swift to hear.*” What’s your listening plan? **CGs.**

Second: Be slow to speak

Have you ever been around an expert? Did it make you quick or slow to speak? When we read the Bible and interact with omniscience, it reminds us of our own limited knowledge and makes us cautious to appear wise.

Let’s not reverse the order. Let’s not be slow to hear and swift to speak.

Sadly, humans don’t come with a ‘CTRL Z’ button.

Prov 10:19 - In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.

Prov 13:3 - He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.

Prov 17:28 - Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.

Prov 29:20 - Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

ILL – We have two ears and one mouth so we should spend twice as much time listening as speaking. We have two ears that we cannot close and one mouth that we can.

A big ego has little ears.

James 3:2-12 - READ

Famed TV interviewer, Larry King, observed, “*I never learned anything while I was talking*” (in Reader’s Digest [12/02], p. 67)

Be swift to hear, slow to speak and...

Third: Be slow to wrath.

If you’ve ever wondered how Scripture can change your life, this is a good example. Interacting with Scripture produces a humility in your speech that checks displays of anger.

A swift ear and slow speech controls the emotions.

When we know and believe that God is and we know and believe all God says, we are not as quick to take matters into our own hands

Before Cain killed Abel God asked him, “*Why are you angry?*” (Gen 4:6).

These particular imperatives build off of each other.

The person who is swift to hear and slow to speak will be slow to wrath.

Why should we be slow to wrath?

v 20 – *our anger doesn't produce righteousness*

Anger might produce instant results, but it does not produce heart change. It may scare someone into immediate behavioral changes, but not life change. It won't create long lasting, meaningful, transformation.

Before Cain killed Abel God asked him, “*Why are you angry?*” (Gen 4:6).

Fourth: one final thought:

This is Paul's application point and this is his question for all of us, “Do you really have ‘time for change?’”

21 - *Therefore* – This is how you are going to be swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger...

put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

“put away” = athletic word used of runners who stripped to carry as little weight as possible.

86,400 seconds in a day.

1,440 minutes in a day.

24 hours in a day.

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Men work 8.58

Women work 8.28

Men sleep 7.51

Women sleep 7.55

Men leisure 3.20

Women leisure 2.46

To gain this spiritual benefit you are going to have to ‘put something away’ in order to create a time and place to ‘receive the word.’

What will it be for you? More than anyone else in the world, Christians need a reality check on time.

Psalm 90:12 - *So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.*

Ephesians 5:16 - *make the best use of the time...*

We are not too busy. We do have time for change. It is simply a matter of choices.

APP: What changes can you make to your daily schedule to insure you are benefiting from a steady diet of Scripture? **CGs.**

Conclusion:

James has given us three thoughts:

1. The challenge – 19 - *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;*
2. The reason – 20 - *for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*
3. The method – 21 - *Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your soul.*

Truth + Time – Trash = Transformation

Why do all this? This is how we endure hardship.

- a) Listen more.
- b) Talk less.
- c) This will keep you from anger.

It is a matter of putting off the old person and putting on the new person. It is a matter of valuing righteousness more than sinfulness. It is a matter of choosing godliness over ungodliness. And the choice doesn't save us, but it does reveal our salvation.

Community Groups:

Community Groups:

1 – Why would James begin his appeal by referring to his audience as ‘beloved brothers?’

2 – How does our eagerness to hear Scripture and obey it offer insight into our salvation? Our sanctification?

3 – What are some of the reasons why we be ‘swift to hear’ Scripture? What reasons were listed in the sermon? What reasons can you think of?

4 – What Scripture most recently challenged your lifestyle? How did you react? Did you make the necessary adjustments to live in synch with God’s will?

5 – Read Luke 8:15. Why is patience required to bear fruit?

6 – Can you provide an example of being patient with someone; waiting on the Word to take root and produce fruit?

7 – What is your personal plan for hearing/studying/memorizing the Bible?

8 – How does knowing the Bible make us cautious in our speech?

9 – How might interacting with Scripture and a hesitancy to speak result in exhibiting less anger?

10 – What hinders you from spending time in the Bible? Be specific. How long has this hindered you?

11 – Share with the class what steps you have taken to free up your time in general so that you can rest, take time to smell the roses, etc?

12 – What steps have you taken to give you more time for your spiritual life?

13 – How does listening more, talking less and minimizing anger help you better endure trials?