



Scripture: James 1:19-22, Matthew 21:12–13

Hey everyone! I'm so glad you're here today. My name is [your name] and I have the incredible privilege of walking with students like you as we grow in our relationship with Jesus. Today, we're going to journey through a passage in James.

Now, today's focus is on something James says that is short, but hits right between the eyes:

“Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.”

Now, I don't know about you, but when I hear that, my first thought is, “Good thing we've already mastered that one, right?” Our world is super great at listening carefully, not popping off our opinions, and keeping anger in check... right?

If you can't tell, that's sarcasm.

The truth is, this is **more relevant today than ever**. In our culture, our communities, and honestly, even in our churches, we are **not naturally good at this**. And that's why this passage matters so much for our faith and for how we live it out.

Before we dive deep into this, though, I want to start by asking the Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts and change us from the inside out.

Let's pray.

[Pray]

Alright, let's open our Bibles to **James 1:19-22** (NIV). Let's read it together:

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word

planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

Let's zoom out a little bit and get some background. James, the brother of Jesus, is writing this letter to Jewish believers who had been scattered from their homes because of persecution. They were struggling. They were facing trials, temptations, hardships, and James didn't sugarcoat anything. His writing feels a lot like Proverbs: punchy, direct, and practical.

Right before this passage, James wrote about how to face trials and temptation. And then he hit them with this: **Be quick to listen. Slow to speak. Slow to become angry.**

If we rip this verse out of context, it just sounds like something we would have in a bumper sticker. But in context, James was saying: *"This is how you respond when life gets tough. This is how you respond when people hurt you. This is how you live your faith when you're under pressure."*

And honestly, that's when our real hearts show up, isn't it? Not when everything is easy, but when life presses in.

Think about our culture for a second. If you had to describe it, would you say it's quick to listen and slow to speak? Hard no. We live in a world that interrupts, yells louder, types faster, and rages easier than probably any generation before. Anger is the default setting.

But here's the thing: Christians are called to be countercultural. We are called to live differently. So, let's start by examining what it means to be **quick to listen and slow to speak.**

James tied listening and speaking together because they're connected. If you're *listening*, you're not *talking*. And if you're *talking*, you're not *listening*.

Quick to listen means we hurry; we rush; not to defend ourselves, not to fire off our opinion, but to actually hear and understand someone else.

Slow to speak means we choose to control our tongues, to pause, to consider before we respond. Imagine what a difference this would make if we actually did this.

What if we ask questions to *understand* instead of to put people into a *corner*? What if we care more about *the person* than winning the

argument? What if we give people the gift of *being* heard instead of just hearing ourselves talk?

In our world today, we jump onto X, TikTok, or whatever platform and share every thought the moment it pops into our head. Imagine if Peter, from the Bible, had Facebook. He probably would've tagged you in a post like, "Hey, I just want to say the Roman government is corrupt and deserves to be overthrown. #cutyourearooff."

Peter was impulsive. He spoke quickly and acted faster. And a lot of us do the same thing, but online. I'll be honest, my heart can barely take social media anymore. It's painful to see how quick we are to blast people, take stances, and throw stones; all while completely forgetting that there's a real human being on the other side of the screen.

Ed Stetzer, in his book *Christians in the Age of Outrage*, said this: "When Christians participate in an unhelpful way in this age of outrage, the gospel has not transformed their worldview."

Yikes. That is a bold statement but one that is very true. Has your worldview been shaped by the gospel? Do you see the person on the other side of that screen? Are you able to be quick to listen and slow to speak. It's something to think about.

Alright, let's talk about anger. It's something we've all felt, probably even this week. Maybe even today. Perhaps a friend said something that stung you. Or, maybe you were blamed for something that wasn't your fault. Whatever it was, it sparked that familiar fire in your chest.

Now, in this passage, James told us to be *slow to anger* and that raises a fair question: is anger always bad?

Let's pause here. Because this is one of those verses that can easily get misunderstood. James wasn't saying that every time you feel anger, you're sinning. Anger, by itself, is not a sin. It's an emotion, just like sadness, or fear. Anger is something we feel. But what we *do* with our anger, *that's* what really matters. And James warned us about the kind of anger that easily pulls us away from the life God wants for us.

Let's dig a little deeper. Because not all anger is the same.

This preview includes a select number of pages from this resource.

If you like what you see, download the entire resource today!

downloadyouthministry.com