

Be Quick to Hear, Slow to Speak, Slow to Anger (Go To Meeting)

Tom Fannin—March 25, 2023

James 1:17: “Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning.”

We know for us, it's the gift of grace and our calling!

Verse 18: “According to His own will, He begat us by *the* Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all His created beings.”

We look forward to being firstfruits in the Kingdom of God!

Verse 19: “**For this reason...**”

Keeping these things in mind about our calling and the purpose that God has for us and what we should be doing. Here are some things that James says that we need to be keeping in mind.

“...my beloved brethren, **let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger,** because man's wrath does not work out God's righteousness” (vs 19-20).

James gives us something here for us to consider and thinking about as we're on this spiritual walk. With God's Spirit within us, we should be striving to work out God's righteousness with us.

When you think about what James is mentioning here about how important it is for us to “...be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger...” we look at the world, especially the world we live in today and all the different mindsets we have, the world really does this in opposite way. They're *more quick* to speak, *more quick* to have wrath or anger. They're not very quick to listen, very slow to listen.

If we can apply what James is talking about to ourselves, it will definitely help in our conversion, building the mind of Christ and God, and having a better relationship with God and Jesus Christ, the relationship we need to have. But also, this will help us with the relationships we have with other people. It's very important that we have good relationships with people, *especially the brethren!*

It's a blessing for all of us in the Church to be able to hear God's Word, and hear and have God's Word in our very hands every day, so that we can pick up and read and study upon.

Matthew 13:10: “And His [Christ] disciples

came to Him and asked, ‘Why do You speak to them in parables?’ And He answered *and* said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has *understanding*, to him more shall be given, and he shall have an abundance, but whoever does not have *understanding*, even what he has shall be taken away from him” (vs 10-12).

We need to understand! We need more understanding! Christ said to those of us who do have understanding, we will be given more!

Verse 13: “For this *reason* I speak to them in parables, because seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, ‘In hearing you shall hear, and in no way understand; and *in* seeing you shall see, and in no way perceive; for the heart of **this people has grown fat, and their ears are dull of hearing,** and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and should hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them.” (vs 13-15).

That's what we see in the world! They don't hear or perceive! But Christ says:

Verse 16: “**But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.**”

James said to be ‘quick to hear’ and we have this opportunity to hear at this time.

Luke 11:27: “And it came to pass *that* as He spoke these things, a certain woman lifted up *her* voice from the multitude *and* said to Him, ‘Blessed *is* the womb that bore You, and *the* breasts that You sucked.’ And He said, ‘Yes, rather, blessed *are* those who hear the Word of God and keep it” (vs 27-28).

Again, it's an indication of those of us who have this opportunity to hear God's Word and we keep it. It's a blessing to us, if we're willing to hear.

Luke 6:47: “Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and practices them, I will show you what he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid *the* foundation on the rock; and a flood came, and the torrent beat against that house, but could not shake it, because it was founded

on the rock. But the one who has heard *My words* and has not practiced *them* is like a man who built a house on *top of* the ground, without a foundation; and *when* the torrent beat against it, it fell at once, and the ruin of that house was great” (vs 47-49).

There is this opportunity for all of us who are willing to hear God’s Word, and be quick to hear it, and then go on to *listen to it, practice it and follow it!*

Hopefully, that’s our desire, we want to hear! We want to be quick to hear what God has to say to us!

Heb. 5—we see that Paul talks about the concern that he had, because there are those who maybe become dull of hearing. Let’s see what Paul wrote here:

Hebrews 5:9: “And having been perfected... [speaking about Jesus Christ] ...**He became the Author of eternal salvation** to all those who obey Him, after He had been designated by God *as* High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec” (vs 9-10).

We know Jesus Christ and Who He is and He is the Author of salvation. It says later in Hebrews that He is *the Beginner and the Finisher of our faith!* Christ laid the course for us as an example. There’s so much to be said and learned about Christ.

Verse 11: “Concerning Whom [Jesus Christ] **we have much to say and hard to explain...** [Why is this?] ...**since you have become dull of hearing.**”

You’ve lost the excitement in the hearing, lost interest in hearing! There is so much to be said about Jesus Christ, and He should be preached and taught so much, *and our ears should never become dull of hearing about Christ!* We should always be excited and interested! But a warning is here that there are some who become dull in their hearing. So, we have to be careful about that!

Hebrews 13:20: “And *may* the God of peace, Who raised our Lord Jesus from among *the* dead—that great Shepherd of the sheep—through *the* blood of *the* everlasting covenant, **perfect you in every good work in order that you may do His will;** accomplishing in you that which *is* well pleasing in His sight, **through Jesus Christ**” (vs 20-21).

That’s how it’s done, through Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit through the grace given to us through Christ.

“...to Whom *be the* glory into the ages of eternity. Amen. Now, **I admonish you,** brethren, to patiently listen to this message of exhortation, for I

have written to you in only a few words” (vs 21-22).

We have to be patient in our listening, patiently listen, because there is continually a message being given to us for those who are willing to listen. Sometimes it’s hard to be patient in our listening, *but this is required of us, to be patient in our listening!*

Psalm 119:97: “O how love I Your Law! It is my meditation all the day.”

I hope that this is something we all do. It’s really a good sign to us, or a good indication of how well we’re listening. As we go through the day, if our mind is on God’s Word and meditating on God’s law, commandments and instruction, things that He desires for us to do; if our mind is on these types of things, it’s a pretty good indication that we’re listening patiently, or being quick to hear. If our mind gets on a lot of different things and other things, it may mean we need to practice more.

But this is where our mind should be throughout the day, that we have God’s Word within us, and we’re thinking about it.

Psalm 4:1: “Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness. You gave me relief *when I was* in distress; be gracious to me, and hear my prayer. O sons of men, how long will my glory be put to shame? How long will you love delusions and seek after lies? Selah” (vs 1-2).

That’s what the world desires to hear, vain words, lies. Speaking lies against God and His Word. That’s what the world desires to hear. That’s what they have continually.

Verse 3: “But know that the LORD has set apart the Godly for Himself. The LORD will hear when I call to Him. Tremble, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah” (vs 3-4).

There is a time for us to speak, and we have the opportunity to speak before God. The very, very important thing to remember is that when we speak, we need to speak with wisdom, as it says in v 4: “...commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still...”

Quick to hear and slow to speak! So, we need to consider ourselves and commune upon our own heart and think about some of these things we need to be doing.

We want our mind to be on what God wants to be giving us, and what we need to be understanding and learning. We want to be slow to speak!

Colossians 4:6: “*Let your speech be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how to answer each one.”

This is challenging! When we do open our mouths and we have an opportunity to speak, we really have to consider what we’re saying.

- Is what we say, is there value to it?
- Does it edify?
- Does it build up?
- Is it in accordance to God’s Word and what He says?
 - it should always be with grace
 - it should always be seasoned, like salt
 - it should always add something that’s needed

If we practice this, and we’re patient with it, we can learn how to consider this and how to properly answer when we got chance to answer.

Being slow to anger is a quality we need to have, also. That is being able to control yourself. It takes a lot of work sometimes to do that!

Proverbs 14:29: “*He who is slow to wrath is* of great understanding, but *he who is hasty of spirit* exalts folly.

You can see this tying together. If we’re considering God’s Word, if we’re quick to hear and get understanding, think through things, and what we should be doing. Being slow to speak and slow to answer. Wanting to answer with wisdom. It’s showing us better understanding. It’s showing us right here that if we are slow to wrath, if we’re slow to anger, it’s showing that we have understanding and knowledge.

But it shows here, too, that those who are hasty to get upset and lose control of their emotions and get angry, they’re not in control of themselves. They lack good sense or understanding.

Proverbs 16:32: “*He who is slow to anger is* better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit is better than he who takes a city.”

Isn’t that something! Think about down through time there have been a lot of mighty men and those who are able to take cities through what they are physically able to do. But the more important thing here is those who can control their anger and are slow to anger. They’re better than those who have the ability, through wrath, to do what they can do. It’s very important for us to think about this, the quality of being slow to anger, controlling our emotions. Because if we don’t, we know that it can lead us to things we shouldn’t be

doing.

Haven’t you had a time, and I know that I have in my life a lot, when I was quick to get angry and upset about something, and said something that didn’t need to be said, or did something I didn’t need to do. Then later on you wind up regretting it, and repenting of it. Maybe sometime having to go to someone and reconcile because you lost control of your anger.

We don’t want to be doing that. We have some examples in God’s Word of those who didn’t follow this, and because of this it led to sin or correction. We’ll read about Cain and Abel.

Genesis 4:3: “It came to pass that Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground. And Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock *and* of the fat of it. And the LORD had regard unto Abel and his offering” (vs 3-4).

We don’t know all the details here, but however Abel did this, brought this offering to God, it was acceptable to God and He looked upon it and had regard for it. He’s a heart-knowing God. So, this was done in a right way, whatever Abel did here.

Verse 5: “But He did not have regard unto Cain and his offering. And Cain was extremely angry and his countenance fell.”

Whatever Cain did there, whatever his attitude was as he brought that offering to God, it wasn’t right! We can pick that up here, because God didn’t have regard for it.

Verse 6: “And the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you so angry? And why has your countenance fallen?’”

What could he have done? *He could have listened to what God had to say, and the reason why God didn’t have regard for it.* Cain could have had:

- a heart that wanted to hear
- a mind that wanted to be slow to speak
- a mind that wanted to be slow to anger

having regard what God had to say to him!

Was this the case with Cain? *We know that it wasn’t!*

Verse 6: “And the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you so angry? And why has your countenance fallen? “If you do well, shall you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. Its desire *is* for you, but you must rule over it!”’ (vs 5-7).

That’s part of what we’re talking about here today, being able to rule ourselves and control

ourselves! Then hopefully being able to ward off sin!

Verse 8: “And Cain talked with his brother Abel....”

Another opportunity maybe to get with his brother and talk about some of these things that happened. Again, the conversation isn’t brought out here, exactly what words were said, but we see the outcome of what happened:

“...And it came to pass that when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him” (v 8).

So, whatever the conversation was like, or whatever it led to, Cain lost control of emotions and he killed his brother.

Verse 9: “And the LORD said unto Cain, ‘Where *is* your brother Abel?’ And he said, ‘I do not know. *Am* I my brother’s keeper?’ And He said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries to Me from the ground’” (vs 9-10).

This is an example of how if Cain could have listened and considered what God was trying to give him and had that understanding, Cain could have repented and come to God with an acceptable offering that God would have regard for, and learn, grow and develop from that. So, we have to be mindful ourselves when we run into difficulties and trials and problems.

Matt. 16—Jesus was with His disciples, apostles:

Matthew 16:21: “From that time Jesus began to explain to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem, and to suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised the third day.”

Here was an explanation that Christ was starting to give about was getting ready to occur in His life. Why Christ was here on the earth and what His purpose was. He was explaining more and more all the time. Maybe the disciples didn’t understand completely everything going on. We know that they understood more later.

Let’s read Peter’s reaction to what Jesus was saying to them:

Verse 22: “But after taking *Him* aside, Peter personally began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘*God will be* favorable to You, Lord. In no way shall this *happen* to You.’ Then He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, because your thoughts are not *in accord* with the things of God, but the things of men’” (vs 22-23).

This is written for us, and it’s good for us to think about are our thoughts in accordance with the thoughts of God. Again, Peter wasn’t quick to hear was he? He was quick to speak and quick to wrath, or let his emotions get the best of him when he told Christ that this won’t happen to You.

He was considering what was being said and thinking through things. This is good for us to think about as we read God’s Word and study and God works with us. Try to understand what God is trying to tell us and get through to us, and take that in continually examining ourselves.

What we’re talking about here, isn’t this a quality of God and Jesus Christ, being quick to hear? Aren’t we so glad that They’re quick to hear us and we can approach them anytime and They listen. They listen to our prayers, meditation and our thoughts! Isn’t it nice to know that when God speaks to us:

- He speaks to us righteously, through righteousness
- He speaks to us through love

God is slow to anger! God’s not quick to anger; He’s slow to anger and very merciful! These are qualities of God and Jesus Christ!

We do have tests and trials that come upon us. A lot of times tests and trials reveal how we’re doing. A lot of time these are very personal for us, a lot of times it’s how we interact with other people is a test for us in how we’re doing. Peter says that we shouldn’t be surprised if things come upon us!

1-Peter 4:11: “If anyone speaks, ***let it be as the words of God...***”

To be able to do this, we have to be studying and meditating constantly, and in prayer to be able to have the mind of God and the mind of Christ in order to speak Their words.

“If anyone speaks, ***let it be as the words of God...***”—*that’s the goal! That’s what we should strive for!*

“...if anyone serves, *let it be* as from *the* strength which God supplies; so that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to Whom is the glory and the power into the ages of eternity. Amen” (v 11).

That’s what we’re always striving for, that whatever we do that God and Jesus Christ are glorified through us!

Verse 12: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you *which is* taking place to test

you, as if some strange thing *were* happening to you.”

That’s what we go through on this spiritual walk. There are trials that come alone and there are tests for us to see where we’re at. We come through trials and learn from them, and a lot of times we can go back and think about trials we’ve been through and maybe grade ourselves on how well we did. Trials are there for tests so we can learn, grow and develop.

We know that Job went through a very hard trial. Let’s read what Job said:

Job 42:1: “And Job answered the LORD and said, ‘I know that You can do all things, and *that* no thought can be withheld from You” (vs 1-2).

That’s something we need to keep in mind at all times. God is a heart-knowing God, and He knows our thoughts from afar off. There’s not a thought that can be withheld from Him. Before our lips move and whatever comes out of our mouths, He knows!

Verse 3: “*You [God] asked, ‘Who is he who hides counsel without knowledge?’* Therefore, I [Job] have spoken that which I did not understand; *things* too wonderful for me; yea, which I did not know. Hear, I beseech You, and I will speak; *You said, ‘I will ask of you, and you will declare to Me.’* I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You. Therefore, I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes” (vs 3-6).

Job went through a terrible trial. I think about what he went through and I certainly don’t want to go through that. I’m sure all of you don’t want to go through such a hard trial that Job went through. This was recorded for us. Job will be in God’s Kingdom! There’s much spoken about Job.

Job learned something here. We know through the process that he went through it was a hard trial. You can say, at times during his trial maybe he came to a point where he was quick to speak. Maybe he wasn’t hearing the message he needed to hear. He probably got upset. But in the end, he learned! He reflected back and he learned a lot from this. That’s how we should be, too.

We should reflect on our trials that we go through and strive to listen and understand what God’s trying to teach us and tell us. We need to learn about ourselves, who we are, and what our heart and mind is really on. It’s a blessing to go through trials. I know they’re difficult when we go through them, but in the end it strengthens our faith. We are being more developed to be like God and Christ at the end of trials. We can look back on ourselves and what

we went through, and hopefully be encouraged by that, that we are better than we were in our conversion.

I want to read through some Proverbs that talk about James’ instruction to us.

Proverbs 17:27: “He who has knowledge uses few words; a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he is silent, is counted wise, *and* he who shuts his lips *is counted* as a man of understanding” (vs 27-28).

There is wisdom and knowledge in using a few words. That knowledge and wisdom is shown, because the words you do say are adding value. They’re no idle words, but valuable words, and important words. They’re spoken as if they’re words of God. So, there is wisdom in using few words, and very much considering what you’re saying.

Proverbs 18:1: “He who isolates himself seeks his own desire...” *We can look at this a couple of ways:*

1. a person who wants to isolate himself and be away from people and be in isolation, having their mind on themselves and their own desires

or maybe

2. within our mind we isolate our self and put our self in a different category

“...he rails against all sound wisdom.... [the person that’s like this] ...A fool has no delight in understanding, but only that his heart may discover itself” (vs 1-2).

So, this is a person that’s seeking their own desires, seeking self. In a lot of ways, a person like this is just interested in what they have to say.

Have you ever been around like that, that you’re in a conversation with and as you’re speaking you can just tell that their really not engaged in what you’re saying. They’re isolated! Their mind on themselves! And in some ways self-righteous. They don’t really listen or care what you have to say. But you can tell that they’re ready to reply back with what’s on their mind to say. *We shouldn’t be this way!*

Verse 13: “He who answers a matter before he hears it, it *is* folly and shame to him.”

A lack of good sense! If you’re answering matters, you’re quick to speak before you hear it. It’s foolishness! We need to not be quick to speak. We want to be those who are quick to hear and listen to what others have to say. Our relationship with others is so important, and we want to value what people have to say when conversing with us.

Proverbs 29:20: “Do you see a man hasty in his words? *There is* more hope for a fool than for him.”

Again, being quick to speak and hasty in our words. It can really cause us problems. I know there are times that we’ve heard spoken of some that they have ‘the gift to gab.’ I’ve been around people like this, and I’m sure you have, too, where they continually talk and talk. In some ways that may not be a gift. Maybe a better gift is being ‘slow to speak,’ and remembering that what you do speak has value.

I’ll say this, your best leaders—and I don’t care if they’re in organizations, within families or within the Church—are the ones who are good at hearing and listening to what others have to say. Those are your best leaders, not the ones who are quick to speak!

As we approach the Passover and days of Unleavened Bread, these things that James is teaching us are how we need to be. To be focused on the righteousness of God. It is a time for us to be this way, wanting to hear, not wanting speak, but wanting to hear, wanting to understand what God has to say to us. There is much to be learned from keeping the Passover and the spring Holy Days every year.

Brethren, don’t we get a better and clearer understanding every year as we keep the Holy Days of God’s Plan and Purpose for us, and for mankind? *Yes!* Every year we should have a better understanding and a clearer picture!

Psalm 95:6: “O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.”

That’s how we are to go into the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread. We come kneeling before God, to worship God as we keep these days.

Verse 7: “For **He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture**, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would but hearken to His voice: **‘Harden not your heart as in the rebellion**, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness when your fathers tempted Me, tried Me, even though they saw My work. For forty years I was grieved with that generation, and said, “It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they have not known My ways”; to whom I swore in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest” (vs 7-11). *That’s not who we should be!*

We should be those who of a circumcised heart, have a softened heart! Be willing and wanting to hear, hearken and consider what’s being told to us and taught to us and what we’re living.

Ecclesiastes 5:1: “Guard your steps when you go to the house of God, and **be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools**.... [we’ve talked a lot about that] ...For **they do not know that they are doing evil**.”

This is an important message for us continually, but especially as we approach the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread. We need to be guarding our steps when we come before God into the House of God, **being ready to hear!** *It’s a time to understand the message God has for us!*

Verse 2: “**Do not be rash with your mouth**, and do not let your heart be hasty to say a word before God. For God *is* in heaven, and you *are* on earth; **therefore, let your words be few**.”

A lot here for us to consider as we approach God and Jesus Christ, love, honor and glorify Them in who we are.

We to consider ourselves and examine ourselves continually as we stand before God and Jesus Christ!

Let’s remember the message here that came through James; that we are **quick to hear** what God says, and **we want to hear about Christ and not be dull in our hearing!**

- we want more understanding
- we want slow to speak
- we want add value
- we want the words that come out of our mouth to be the Word of God
- we want to be slow to anger
- we want to be in control of our emotions

Let’s remember this admonishment from James!

Scriptural References:

- 1) James 1:17-20
- 2) Matthew 13:10-16
- 3) Luke 11:27-28
- 4) Luke 6:47-49
- 5) Hebrews 5:9-11
- 6) Hebrews 13:20-22
- 7) Psalm 119:97
- 8) Psalm 4:1-4
- 9) Colossians 4:6
- 10) Proverbs 14:29
- 11) Proverbs 16:32

Be Quick to Hear,
Slow to Speak, Slow to Anger
(Go To Meeting)

- 12) Genesis 4:3-10
- 13) Matthew 16:21-23
- 14) 1 Peter 4:11-12
- 15) Job 42:1-6
- 16) Proverbs 17:27-28
- 17) Proverbs 18:1-2, 13
- 18) Proverbs 29:20
- 19) Psalm 95:6-11
- 20) Ecclesiastes 5:1-2

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