

# The book of James

1:19-26

Welcome back to our study in the book of James.

Before we get started this week I just wanted to let you know that I have added a link called “Misc. Studies”, which is just that, miscellaneous studies I have done. There is studies on the Passover, Christmas, Halloween, Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, and a new one you may not have read called “Where did everybody go” which is intended for those left behind after the rapture of the church.

To read them just click on the Misc. Studies from the bible study page.

So let's get started in this week's study.

✚ **James 1:19-20** *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

Or as it says in the NLT:

✚ **James 1:19-20 (NLT)** *My dear brothers and sisters, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Your anger can never make things right in God's sight.*

I know a lot of people that seem to get into other people's conversations; they seem to be quick to listen, but also quick to butt in as well. These are the sorts that have all the answers and you can't tell them any different.

This week's lesson in James starts with these type of people, but it also goes beyond that.

First off, we notice that it says to be “**quick to listen**”. To be quick to listen not only means not to start talking when others are, but to also be there to listen when others are going through problems.

It's so easy to just blow someone off when they come to you with a problem. We seem to use the old, “*I'll be praying for you*” and walk away.

But the bible has something to say about that.

† **James 2:15-16 (NLT)** *Suppose you see a brother or sister who needs food or clothing, and you say, "Well, good-bye and God bless you; stay warm and eat well"--but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?*

This is called faith with actions, which we will learn more about when we get to chapter 2 in James.

Also looking at these verses in the context, last week we learned about temptations. When you are being tempted you need to be quick to hear, or stop and listen to what the Lord may be trying to tell you.

Remember we learned that:

† **1 Cor 10:13** *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

In order to know what that way of escape, you must first listen to the Lord (quick to hear).

Here is an example in the bible.

† **Matt 17:24-27** *When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the temple tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?" He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you."*

We have all heard of this account in the bible, but did you notice that Peter was quick to hear? That's right, he had a dilemma of paying taxes, but notice he didn't first run out and get a loan or even asked someone for the money to pay the taxes. No, he first went to Jesus, and before Peter could even ask, Jesus had the answer. Now it wasn't one he expected, but then God seems to do a lot of things in ways we don't expect. Maybe that's why He's God and we are not, because God's ways always work, and our ways just mess things up even more.

It's seems so easy to get a loan or use our credit cards to get us out of hot water, but we soon find that we are in even hotter water because we try to solve our problems ourselves.

So whatever you may have been going through, or maybe going through even now, stop and be quick to hear what the Lord wants to do. Maybe He'll have you go fishing?

Next James says, "**slow to speak**".

In simple terms, "*Don't put your foot in your mouth*".

It's so easy to give our own personal advice, but what does the bible say about the person's situation? Can you back up your advice with scripture?

When you go talk to one of the pastors or elders in your church, do you want their advice or God's answer?

It's the same with others coming to you; they want to know what the Lord says, not you. They came to you because they know you are a Christian and they may have noticed you

go through certain things with a peace because the Lord is with you. They want that peace, not our so-called wisdom, but rather God's wisdom!

So how do we apply this to being tempted?

As with quick to listen, waiting for the Lord's way out, slow to speak is not telling the Lord what you are going to do.

An example would be, you're invited to a party with drinking and drugs and who knows what else going on there. The Lord says to stay away because you can't handle it (quick to listen), but you tell the Lord, "*I'm going to go and be a witness for you*" (Quick to speak instead of slow to speak). So you blurt out, "*I would love to go, what time does it start?*"

You didn't even ask the Lord or pray about it. Being slow to speak is to say, "let *me pray about it and I'll get back to you about your party*". Now the Lord may tell you to go and be a witness there, but if He knows you are heading for something you are not ready to handle, He will tell you no. Remember we learned that God would not allow you to go through something you are not able to handle.

✠ **1 Cor 10:13** *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

It's not making up our own minds and deciding everything on our own. Sure God has given us a free will, but He also wants to be a part of your life. One way to do that is to involve Him in everything you do or would like to do.

The third thing James mentions is: "*slow to wrath*" or "*slow to get angry*" and he gives the reason why "*Your anger can never make things right in God's sight.*"

Maybe something someone is sharing with you makes you mad, personally I can't stand drugs, it's something I never could put up with. I don't have a problem with people in general, just drugs sellers and users.

If someone were to start telling me about their drug problem I have two choices, first I could get mad at them and yell at them calling them names. But that never does any good.

Or I could follow what the bible says here in James, I could be quick to listen, which helps you to be understanding with their problem.

Slow to speak seeking what the Lord would have me say.

Finally slow to anger, getting angry with a person does not show God's love.

Next in James he tells us why these things are important.

✠ **James 1:21** *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

Reading this in the context, *laying aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness* is to not to be uncaring and unwilling to listen to others but rather *swift to hear*. Also not quick to speak without even thinking or praying, but rather *slow to speak*.

Finally, not getting angry easily but rather *slow to wrath*. These are things we used to do but should not be doing any longer.

We need to also humbly accept God's word as truth and not argue with God on what He says in His word remembering that what God says in His word *is able to save your souls*.

✠ **James 1:22-25** *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

Have you ever had an imperfection on your face? Ok a pimple or scar on your face that every time you looked in the mirror it stuck out like a sore thumb?

We spend time each morning getting ready for work or school or just our day, studying our faces, making sure every hair is in place, trying to cover up any imperfections with makeup or a Band-Aid. We also make sure no hairs are sticking out of our noses or growing out of our ears. But after we walk away, within a few minutes we forget about any imperfection we saw in the mirror, at least until we look in another mirror.

That's what these next verses are speaking about, but not our physical body and imperfections, but rather our spiritual imperfections.

Currently I am reading in the book of Leviticus, and if you ever read it you know God has given the children of Israel a lot of commands to follow, more than just the ten we are familiar with. But all these others are branches of the Ten Commandments.

When I am reading these laws of God in Leviticus, I always come across one or more that I have broken, maybe even recently. You may find the same thing as you read through God's word; I know I always do no matter where I am reading in the bible. Now I have two choices, I could either read it and forget about it, and continue on doing what I just read was wrong; or I could read it and do what God's word says. That's what it means in verse 25 when it says *continues in it*. You are not just reading God's word and forgetting about it, but you continue in it by remembering it and doing what it says.

✠ *But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

Also notice that if you do follow what the bible says, you will be blessed in what you do, why? Because when you follow God's word you no longer have to face the consequences for your sin.

God says not to commit fornication; if you do there is the possibility of a child being born out of marriage (no matter what the world says, this is not a good thing), or you could get

aids or some other sexual diseases, along with broken hearts plus other things that you know happens when you have sex outside of marriage.

But if you listen to God and what He says in His word, you don't have to worry about that, no worries of having to marry someone you don't love because of the child, or having to pay child support, no worries of aids or sexual diseases, etc. Now isn't that a blessing in itself, plus you will know the joy of saving yourself for your future spouse.

This is only one example, but you can do the same thing with anything God says in His word. If God says not to do something, then there is a good reason for it. We may not always understand why, but then we don't have to understand everything, just do our best to be obedient to God's word.

✠ **James 1:26** *If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.*

I won't get too much into this verse because we will study the tongue more in chapter 3.

Just one thing to think about for this verse, do you talk about others behind their backs, possibly making fun of them or putting them down? If you do, then your religion is useless and it says here in verse 26.

Religion is often put down even in the bible and by Jesus. But they are not speaking of God's religion, but the world's religion. We as Christians say we don't have a religion but a relationship with Jesus. But you must understand that Christianity is a religion, just not the sense that most would think about. James tells us what God's definition of real religion is.

✠ **James 1:27** *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

These are things we should be doing as Christians, and if we are doing them, then we are really practicing religion, but God's religion, not the world's religion.

Maybe all these teachings here in James are new to you. Maybe you have been shying away from Jesus because of the so-called world's definition of religion. Maybe you are here seeking the truth, and you have found in God's word, by going through these studies, that there is something here that you want but just can't put your finger on what it is.

The thing you are finding here in God's word is Jesus. Not the Jesus the world tells us about during Christmas or Easter, but the Jesus of the bible. The Jesus who really came and died for ALL your sins. The Jesus who loves you just for who you are.

The Jesus who knew what you did last night or even today, but was still willing to die for that sin and wants you to be with Him forever in heaven.

So how do you know this Jesus?

By one simple prayer of faith, meaning you have not seen Jesus or Him dying or rising from the dead, but you believe that it's true, because God's word says that it's true.

A prayer just like this one.

**Jesus, I admit I am a sinner and I chose to turn from my sins. I believe that you died for me and rose from the dead. I ask you to please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me and make me a new creation. Please fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me to tell others about You and what You did for me and them too. Thank You Jesus for all You did for me. I love You and ask this in Your name Jesus. AMEN!**

If you just prayed that and believed it. Welcome to the family of God. Now go tell someone what you did, read your bible everyday so you can learn and grow in God's word, and find a good bible teaching Christian church to go to.

Well, we made it through chapter 1. Next week we start in chapter two.

May God richly bless you in His love grace and mercy!