

Our Response to the Word Pt.1

James 1:19-21

James 1:19–21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.²¹ Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Introduction:

486 years ago on October 6th 1536, William Tyndale was strangled and burned at the stake after having been imprisoned for 1 1/2 years for translating the Bible into to English for all to read. This was no small matter because at that time it was a crime to have the Bible in English..His commitment to the necessity and veracity of the Word of God was unwavering and unapologetic.

The clear reading, preaching and teaching of the Word of God is absolutely essential in the work of God in the salvation and sanctification of the sinner.

Any attempt to undermine, minimize or deemphasize this will have a direct effect on the mission of the church in evangelization and edification. A church is no stronger than the pulpit ministry and preaching of the whole counsel of God and a christian is only as strong as his/her understanding, application, saturation of the Word of God.

Also nothing is as telling to the nature of saving faith than a person's response to the Word of God. There are a lot of people who call themselves christian, but the percentage that are willing to read, study and submit to the teaching of Scripture, even when it is challenging and convicting is very small.

Much can be learned about the genuine nature of a man's faith by his response to the Bible. One of the clearest evidences of true saving faith is one's love for and response to the Word of God. Nothing so separates the sheep and the goats as this test.

We see this all throughout Scripture.

John 8:47 (NKJV)

⁴⁷ He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

John 8:43 (NKJV)

⁴³ Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.

John 8:37 (NKJV)

³⁷ “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

John 10:26–27 (NKJV)

²⁶ But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. ²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

John 8:51 (NKJV)

⁵¹ Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”

John 17:6–8 (NKJV)

⁶ “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷ Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. ⁸ For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

1 John 4:5–6 (NKJV)

⁵ They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them. ⁶ We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

This is not just a New Testament reality.

The Old Testament is full of examples of the devotion of the true child of God to the Word of God.

Jeremiah 15:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Your words were found, and I ate them,
And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of
my heart;
For I am called by Your name,
O Lord God of hosts.

Job 23:12 (NKJV)

¹² I have not departed from the commandment of His
lips;
I have treasured the words of His mouth
More than my necessary *food*.

Psalms 19:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ More to be desired *are they* than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Psalms 119:1–2 (NKJV)

¹ Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, Who walk in
the law of the Lord!
² Blessed *are* those who keep His testimonies,
Who seek Him with the whole heart!

Psalm 119:70–72 (NKJV)

⁷⁰I delight in Your law.

⁷¹ *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted,
That I may learn Your statutes.

⁷² The law of Your mouth *is* better to me
Than thousands of *coins of* gold and silver.

Psalm 119:97 (NKJV)

⁹⁷ Oh, how I love Your law!
It *is* my meditation all the day.

Psalm 119:102–105 (NKJV)

¹⁰² I have not departed from Your judgments,
For You Yourself have taught me.

¹⁰³ How sweet are Your words to my taste,
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!

¹⁰⁴ Through Your precepts I get understanding;
Therefore I hate every false way.

¹⁰⁵ Your word *is* a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.

It is evident from the O.T Prophets that a
regenerated heart is given and love and
submission to the Word of God.

Ezekiel 11:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

Jeremiah 11:2–4 (NKJV)

² “Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; ³ and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Cursed *is* the man who does not obey the words of this covenant ⁴ which I commanded your fathers in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and do according to all that I command you; so shall you be My people, and I will be your God,’

Jeremiah 31:33 (NKJV)

³³ But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will

put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Luke 24:27;32 (NKJV)

²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.....

³² And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”

Review

Lesson

James 1:19–20 (NKJV)

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

There is a familiar verse to many, and it is often thought of as more of a warning or proverb to listen

to one another and guard your tongue. But is that what James has in mind here. Just a simple isolated commandment to be sober about your speech and more willing to listen.

Like the Proverbs warn us....

Proverbs 10:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ In the multitude of words sin is not lacking,
But he who restrains his lips *is* wise.

Proverbs 13:3 (NKJV)

³ He who guards his mouth preserves his life,
But he who opens wide his lips shall have
destruction.

Proverbs 15:2 (NKJV)

² The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly,
But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.

Proverbs 17:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ He who has knowledge spares his words,
And a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.

Proverbs 18:13 (NKJV)

¹³ He who answers a matter before he hears *it*,
It *is* folly and shame to him.

Proverbs 21:23 (NKJV)

²³ Whoever guards his mouth and tongue
Keeps his soul from troubles.

Or as Solomon writes in

Ecclesiastes 5:2 (NKJV)

² Do not be rash with your mouth,
And let not your heart utter anything hastily before
God.
For God *is* in heaven, and you on earth;
Therefore let your words be few.

Rabbinic parallels also appear: “Silence is a fence for wisdom.” “Even a fool, as long as he keeps silent, is regarded as wise.” “Speech is worth one Selah, but silence two.” “All my days I have grown up among the wise, and I have found nothing better for men than silence.” Such remarks obviously relate to social intercourse and are general in their scope and import.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 112). BMH Books.

Is this all this is, a warning of hearing and speaking? It is true as testified by the numerous other verses, we should be willing to

listen and slow to speak. We need to guard our tongue as James will make abundantly clear in James 3, that the tongue is set on fire from Hell. But I don't believe that this is what James has in mind. Although the discipline of the ear and the tongue are important in a general sense, James has something much more profound in mind than that.

Remember, context is king. After James has taught us that God will test us and that we need to respond to the test in a God honoring way, and that he will never tempt us to do evil with the test, he declares that God cannot do evil and does not lead to evil and only gives what is good. And one of the greatest examples of the Good God gives is the regeneration.

Being born from Above. He brought us forth, verse 18 by his own will... He has willingly of his own sovereign choice decided resurrect us from spiritual death to new life in Christ. A gracious and merciful miracle!!

He did not do this by just zapping us and making us alive. He used the means to accomplish it and that was the Word of Truth, the gospel.

God Sovereignly chooses whom He will save then he chooses to use the means of prayer

and the preaching and teaching of the word of God to draw the sinner to himself.

The Word is absolutely, unequivocally of necessity to bring sinners to Himself in Salvation. This is James point. That God gives good gifts and one is Salvation through regeneration by the Word..

The Word was used to birth us and begins an ongoing and eternally relationship of the believer with the love of the Word of God.

He continues the theme of the relationship of the believer with the Word of God in verses 21-25
James 1:21–25 (NKJV)

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

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

²³ 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;

²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

²⁵ 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.

So the context is the work of God through the Word to save us in v.18

to the on going work of God through the Word to sanctify us in v. 25

This means that verse, 19-21 are in the middle of the context of our response to the Word of God that was used to save us.

I. Be Careful How you Listen

II. Be Careful How you Speak

III. Be Careful How you Act.

I. Be Careful How you Listen

19 So then, my beloved brethren,

James 1:19 (ESV)

19 Know this, my beloved brothers:

James 1:19 (NASB95)

19 This you know, my beloved brethren.

1:19 Know/You know^a (this), my beloved brothers,

TEXT—Instead of ἵστε ‘know/you know’, some

manuscripts have ὥστε ‘therefore’. GNT reads ἵστε

with a B rating, indicating that the text is almost certain. ‘Kno

w/you know’ is read by AB, Alf, BKC, EBC, Hb, Herm, HNTC, ICC, Lg, Lns, May,

Mit, My, NBC, NIGTC, NTC, Tsk, WBC, **and all versions except KJV. ‘Therefore’** is read by Bg, Blm, NIC, and KJV.

Greenlee, J. H. (2008). [An Exegetical Summary of James](#) (2nd ed., pp. 44–45). SIL International.

This is a textual variant, or a variant reading.

The Greek manuscripts use two different words as the initial word of the sentence. The King James Version, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren,” follows the Textus Receptus, which uses *hōste*, while the NIV rendering given above is based on the reading *iste*, a variant form of the familiar Greek verb *oida*, “to know.” Most modern critical editions of the Greek New Testament accept *iste* as more probably the original reading. The two Greek words, differing only in the initial letter, could easily be confused by the copyists. The reading of the Textus Receptus forms a smooth connection with what has just gone before, but the reading accepted in the critical editions is more difficult and unexpected. In the process of recopying the text, it is more probable that the reading *iste* was changed to the easier and more familiar *hostē* than the other way. The verbal form *iste* occurs only twice elsewhere in the New Testament. We accept *iste* as more probably the original reading

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 110). BMH Books.

The better reading is “knowing this”

It is a Perfect, having come to know this, continue knowing this. It can be an Imperative or Indicative.

I believe it is best to be referring to the past verse. That since we have already experienced the power of the Word in Salvation, now, knowing this. Response this way.

19 So then, **my beloved brethren,**

He calls them his beloved Brothers

James 1:2 (NKJV)

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

James 1:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

No doubt a reference to the love he has of his Jewish brothers in Christ, but most likely a reference like in the Pauline books of the Love God has for the Saints. The Beloved of God.

It softens any suggestion of harshness in his commands to them and assures them that “he wants them to feel that he is not a superior, commanding them, but an equal, exhorting them.” They are the objects of his brotherly concern, and this should strengthen their desire to accept his call unto attainment of the ideal for the Christian life.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 111). BMH Books.

The point is that he is writing to believers who have been brought forth by the will of God through the Word of God,

So now we knowing this should respond accordingly to the means of our birth.

19 So then, my beloved brethren, let
every man be swift to hear

ἔστω δὲ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ταχύς εἰς τὸ
ἀκοῦσαι,

And every man should continually be **quick**
unto the hearing.

The definite article is there.

swift, quick

tachus:

Original Word: ΤΑΧΥΣ, εἶα, ὑ

Part of Speech: Adjective

Usage: quick, swift, speedy, ready, prompt.

Cognate: 5036 taxýs (an adjective) – swift (**speedy**), **without unnecessary delay**. See 5035 (taxy).

[This root (tax-) emphasizes the idea

"promptly" (without unjustified time-lapse). Immediacy is conveyed by 2112 /euthéōs ("straightway, right away").

“Quick to listen” requires that they be eager and attentive, ready to receive and assimilate the message heard.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 112). BMH Books.

“To listen” implies a public reading of the Word and oral instruction in the Christian faith

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 112). BMH Books.

Our acceptance of an early date for this epistle (see Introduction, pp. 35–36) carries with it the conclusion that the New Testament had not yet been written.

Therefore, “the Christians were dependent upon the preaching of traveling missionaries ... and of local teachers (Acts 13:1) for their knowledge of the gospel.” To listen eagerly to the message was the first duty of discipleship.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 112). BMH Books.

This is what Paul commanded Timothy to do

1 Timothy 4:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Till I come, give **attention to reading**, to exhortation, to doctrine.

give **attention P. Act Imperative**

prosechó: to hold to, turn to, attend to

Original Word: προσέχω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: prosechó

Phonetic Spelling: (pros-ekh'-o)

Definition: to hold to, turn to, attend to

Usage: (a) I attend to, pay attention to, (b) I beware, am cautious, (c) I join, devote myself to.

4337 proséxō (from 4314 /prós, "towards" and 2192 /éxō, "have") – properly, have towards, i.e. to give full attention; to set a course and keep to it.

reading

ἀνάγνωσις, εως, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: anagnósis

public reading n. — delivering an address to a public audience from a written linguistic message.

Acts 2:42 (NKJV)

⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

It was the practice of the early N.T. Church to have the O.T Scriptures and the letters of the apostles read to the congregation. It was very important, because there were so few copies of the manuscripts and fewer copies of the letters of the apostles that you needed to give your attention, full

attention to the reading. You needed to be fully alert, fully conscious, fully rested and devoted.

No daydreaming, dosing off, or distractions. It was a matter of life and death, salvation and sanctification.

This is not hearing academically or physically only.. It is not hearing for the sake of hearing. It is hearing with the intent of learning and obeying.

James 1:22–25 (NKJV)

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ 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; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵ 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.

James is telling us that the faithful listening of the Word is fruit of regeneration. It is evidence of conversion. He that is born by the Word remains in the Word.

There is no such thing as a Christian that does not love the law of God.

No one born of the Spirit is satisfied by temporary trifles of this life.... they desire the Word of God.

John MacArthur writes,

When the true disciple hears God's Word, there is an affection for its truth and a desire in his heart to obey it. One of the most reliable evidences of genuine salvation is that hunger for the Word of God

Just as a newborn baby does not have to be taught to hunger for its mother's milk, the newborn child of God does not have to be taught to hunger for God's Word, his spiritual food and drink. That is the natural impulse of his new spiritual life, of his new creation. To use another metaphor, his spiritual dial is tuned to the frequency of Scripture.

Our Lord stated: "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine" (John 8:31

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [*James*](#) (pp. 65–66). Moody Press.

This is why so many of the churches that are faithful to teach and preach the whole counsel of God are seeing such growth.

Many believers are starving having been fed junk food for so long are amazed to see that there are those that feed the flock, teach the Word, and exposit the text.

They are hungry for God through His Word. Their appetite needs to be satisfied. They long for God through His Word as the deer pants for the water brook.

More and more there is a marked clarity, a line in the sand, a visible indicator of the Children of God and the Children of the Devil. It is their love for and willing submission to the Word of God.

You need to ask yourself some pointed questions. How seriously to you quickly run to the Word of God.

Is it that which you look forward to every day. Is it the first and most important time you spend. How much time to you spend reading, listening, thinking, mediating on the Scripture.

Do other things take priority over the Word.

Are you eager to listen, willing to listen, willing to have your views challenged. Are you so stuck in your ideas that you will never entertain the thought that you could be wrong in your understanding of a verse.

What occupies your mind, what lifts your heart, what satisfies your soul, what feeds your spirit.

Too many Christians spend more time in sports, recreation, social gathering, hours in social media, more hours watching TV or just talking but not listening, eagerly desiring the Word of God.

Too often, we are too busy for our own good. We are too occupied with the trivia of life while missing life itself.

Brothers and sisters, this Word is the very breath of God and is to be taken as seriously as if God Himself were standing in front of you speaking to you.

2 Timothy 3:16–4:1 (NKJV)

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

4 I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: **PREACH THE WORD**

J. A. Motyer has perceptively written,

We might wonder why the ever-practical James does not proceed to outline schemes of daily Bible reading or the like, for surely these are the ways in which we offer a willing ear to the voice of God. But he does not help us in this way.

Rather, he goes deeper, for there is little point in schemes and times if we have not got an attentive spirit. It is possible to be unfailingly regular in Bible reading, but to achieve no more than to have moved the book-mark forward: this is reading unrelated to an attentive spirit. The word is read but not heard. On the other hand, if we can develop an attentive spirit, this will spur us to create those conditions—a proper method in Bible-reading, a discipline of time, and so on —by which the spirit will find itself satisfied in hearing the Word of God. (J. A. Motyer, *The Message of James* [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1985], 64–65)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (pp. 69–70). Moody Press.

So....

I. Be Careful How you Listen

II. Be Careful How you Speak

¹⁹ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak,

βραδὺς εἰς τὸ λαλῆσαι,
slow unto the speaking

βραδὺς

bradus: slow

Original Word: βραδύς, εἶα, ὑ

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: bradus

1021 bradýs – properly, slow, as in taking time to deliberate (Js 1:19); unhurried, while still moving forward after considering all the facts.

1. βραδύς, slow, heavy, *of the mind*

Bullinger, E. W. (1908). In [A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament](#) (Fifth Edition, Revised, p. 710). Longmans, Green, & Co.

The use of εἰς with the articular infinitive is stronger than the simple infinitive [Lns].

Greenlee, J. H. (2008). [An Exegetical Summary of James](#) (2nd ed., p. 47). SIL International.

“Slow to speak” does not mean slowness in speaking but is a call for restraint upon hasty and ill-considered reactions to what is heard. It would allow time for a fuller apprehension and thoughtful evaluation of what had been heard. It offered a valuable safeguard against shallow, immature, and immoderate reactions. “A continual talker cannot hear what anyone else says and by the same token will not hear when God speaks to him.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 112). BMH Books.

The need for this exhortation apparently arose out of the free and largely unstructured nature of the early Christian assemblies, permitting personal participation in, and ready interaction with, others sharing in the service (1 Cor. 14:26-33).

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [*James*](#) (Revised Edition, p. 112). BMH Books.

This is a sobering thought that too many today do not consider. They are quick to offer an opinion on the meaning and purpose of Scripture without a thorough study of it.

It amazes me, that so many are authorities in this area. We are church culture of eisegesis. We are known for reading into the text things that are not there. We will take a verse and isolate it out of its context and make it do all kinds of things that God never said.

The frivolity and looseness with which many handle the scripture is astonishing to say the least.

Much of this can be attributed to the pulpits of America. As the pulpit goes, so goes the church, and as the church goes so goes the nation.

Because the pastors don't take the Word of God serious, neither do the people.

This can be accomplished a number of ways

1. Say you believe it and not preach it.
2. Say it is important and minimize it in the Worship
3. Say it is a priority and relegate it the time left over after all there other is done.
4. Preach against sin and never do anything about.
5. Preach about Holiness and never discipline yourself to do it.
6. Teach on evangelism but never practice it.

What is very clear from history is that every move of God from Early N.T church, to the Reformation and Puritans and Great Awakening to any genuine Revival, the Word of God was taken seriously. Careful exegesis of the Bible along with a tremendous reverence and submission to the Scriptures is evident.

We are commanded by God to be careful how we speak the Word of God

According to one of his biographers, when the great Scottish Reformer and theologian John Knox was first called to preach, “He burst forth in most abundant tears, and withdrew himself to his chamber. His countenance and behavior from that day until the day he was compelled to present

himself to the public place of preaching, did sufficiently declare the trouble of his heart” (William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975], 50).

When a famous Roman orator was asked by a young man to teach him the art of public speaking, the young man continued an incessant flow of meaningless talk that allowed the great teacher no opportunity to interject a word. When they finally reached the point of discussing a fee, the orator said, “Young man, to instruct you in oratory, I will have to charge you a double fee.” When asked why, he explained, “Because I will have to teach you two skills: the first, how to hold your tongue; the second, how to use it.”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 71). Moody Press.

My greatest fear in preaching is that I might misrepresent the Word of God. That I could not or would not spend the time necessary to do the research, and dig deeply enough into the text to understand it correctly, so as to misinterpret the Bible and tell you something that God never said.

I don't want to stand before Christ and He says to me, "I never said that"

The same is true for you.

You should not accept anything from a preacher or teacher or tradition or at confession of faith unless you fully check it out and make sure it is correct. Be a Berean and search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so.

And if you are a teacher, or preacher the Bible warns you to be careful what you say.

James 3:1 (NKJV)

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

Ezekiel 3:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: ¹⁸ When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.

Acts 20:26–27 (NKJV)

²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*. ²⁷ For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

At the conclusion of his commentary on Revelation, J. A. Seiss expressed the humble reverence for Scripture that marks true believers: O, my friends, it is a fearful thing to suppress or stultify the word of God, and above all “the words of the prophecy of this Book.” To put forth for truth what is not the truth, —denounce as error, condemn, repudiate, or emasculate what God himself hath set his seal to as his mind and purpose, is one of those high crimes, not only against God, but against the souls of men, which cannot go unpunished. With an honest and ever-prayerful heart, and with these solemn and awful warnings ever before my eyes, I have endeavoured to ascertain and indicate in these Lectures what our gracious Lord and Master has been so particular to make known and defend. If I have read into this Book anything which he has not put there, or read out of it anything which he has put there, with the profoundest sorrow would I recant, and willingly burn up the books in which

such mischievous wickedness is contained. If I have in anything gone beyond the limits of due subjection to what is written, or curtailed in any way the depth and measure of what Jesus by his angel has signified for the learning of the Churches, I need not the condemnation of men to heap upon me the burden of censure which I deserve. If feebleness, or rashness, or overweening confidence in my own understanding has distorted anything, I can only deplore the fault, and pray God to send a man more competent to unfold to us the mighty truths which here stand written. According to the grace and light given me, have I spoken.... If I err, God forgive me! If I am right, God bless my feeble testimony! In either case, God speed his everlasting truth! (The Apocalypse [reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1987], 527)

I. Be Careful How you Listen

II. Be Careful How you Speak

III. Be Careful How you Act.

¹⁹ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the

wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

James 1:19 (ESV) and NAS95
slow to anger;

wrath;

orgé: impulse, wrath

Original Word: ὀργή, ἡς, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: orgé

Phonetic Spelling: (or-gay')

Definition: impulse, wrath

Usage: anger, wrath, passion; punishment, vengeance.

3709 orgé (from orgáō, "to teem, swelling up to constitutionally oppose") – properly, settled anger (opposition), i.e. rising up from an ongoing (fixed) opposition.

3709 /orgé ("settled anger") proceeds from an internal disposition which steadfastly opposes someone or something based on extended personal exposure, i.e. solidifying what the beholder considers wrong (unjust, evil).

["Orgē comes from the verb oragō meaning, 'to teem, to swell'; and thus implies that it is not a sudden outburst, but rather (referring to God's) fixed, controlled, passionate feeling against sin . . . a settled indignation (so Hendriksen)" (D. E. Hiebert, at 1 Thes 1:10).]

Another Greek word, *thumos*, also means anger. It denotes the turbulent, passionate outburst of anger,

whereas the term used here points more to the deliberate, persistent attitude of hostility. In Matthew 5:22 the verbal form suggests the persistent harboring of the feeling of resentment.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 113). BMH Books.

“Slow to become angry” rebukes the danger involved in a flash reaction. Rash and reckless speech is prone to wound; it is likely to provoke animosity “Intemperate religious zeal is often accompanied with a train of bad passions, and particularly with great wrath against those who differ from us in opinion.” James’s warning suggests “scenes of wrangling, of attempts at self-display, of the manifestation of unchristian tempers in the midst of debates on Christian truth.”²² Mitchell calls it “the wrath of argumentation.” Such wrathful reactions are manifestations of carnal zeal under a religious guise. Such furious reactions to the views of others have always been a discredit to the cause of Christ.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 113). BMH Books.

This anger can come about in a number of ways

Since the context is talking about the listening and speaking of the word of God, then many get angry because they are told something from the scripture that they do not like, or they're confronted of their sin by scripture. Or the view that they have held for so long has now been challenged.

I have seen and experienced some of the most vitriolic hatred and anger from professed Christians regarding doctrine and what I have taught from the Bible. Far more anger than from the ones outside the church. But a lot of that is context.

People who attend church on a regular basis and have been taught something for years tend to believe that they are right and I am wrong and that I am misrepresenting God. And they get angry because of their convictions.

Or in some cases it is pure ignorance of Scripture

Or some are lost and are hostile

Even believers can get angry, especially when you bring the scripture to their sin. We don't like people poking and prodding us about our sin.

There is a right kind of anger

Ephesians 4:26–27 (NKJV)

²⁶ “*Be angry, and do not sin*”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷ nor give place to the devil.

There is right anger against sin and for the glory and name of God not to dishonored.

but the anger that James is referring to is sin. It does not produce righteous fruit, it does not lead to truth and holiness.

²⁰ for the wrath of man does not
produce the righteousness of God.

“For” (gar) introduces the reason for the warning against yielding to anger: “Man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”

James assumes that his readers were aiming at promoting the righteousness of God, but he insists that wrath is not a proper tool to further that goal

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 113). BMH Books.

“Man” (*andros*) in its specific connotation denotes the male sex. Mayor suggests that its use here “was probably determined by the facts of the case; the speakers would be men, and they might perhaps imagine that there was something manly in violence.” The original setting may lend some support to the suggestion, but it need not be assumed that James intended his warning for men only (cf. 1:8, 12). The term is without the article and is qualitative: “man’s anger.” It is human wrath, standing in sharp contrast to “the righteous life that God desires” (*dikaio sunēn theou*, literally “righteousness of God”)

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, pp. 113–114). BMH Books.

20 for the wrath of man does not
produce the righteousness of God.

Moo notes that this phrase consistently has this meaning in biblical Greek with the verb “do” (*poieō*) or “practice” (*ergazomai*).

ἐργάζομαι ① to engage in activity that involves effort, *work*,

Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 389). University of Chicago Press.

Such a righteous life is “of God” because it is defined by Him. “Righteousness” is without the article and is qualitative, characterizing a life that is just or right in the eyes of God. Such conduct can only be the product of justifying righteousness.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 114). BMH Books.

The negative (*ouk*) and the present indicative verb assert an abiding negative fact: “Man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life.” The verb “bring about” (*ergazetai*) may mean that man’s wrath never actively performs that which constitutes right dealing in God’s sight

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 114). BMH Books.

Can we sing with Charles Wesley,

When quiet in my room I sit,
 Thy book be my companion still;
 My joy Thy sayings to repeat,
 Talk o’er the records of Thy will,
 And search the oracles divine
 Till every heartfelt word is mine

Be careful how you listen
Be careful how you speak
Be careful how you act in response to the
eternal Word of the Living God.