

## Why Doesn't Our Anger Work?

[James 1:19-20](#)

James, Day 8

*Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

- James 1:19-20, ESV

I have a confession to make: Sometimes I act like I know better than God. God says certain things very clearly in His word, and I believe His word is truth, but sometimes I live my life as if I think I know better than what the plain Word of God says.

Take today's passage, for example: Could I possibly be the one man whose anger might actually produce the righteousness of God, if I try hard enough? No, of course not. My human anger is as impotent as everyone else's human anger when it comes to producing lasting spiritual fruit. So, why do I get angry at my children and think I can force them to be righteous, not through the fear of the Lord but through the fear of Dad?

So, it's time for me to once again re-read these very familiar verses and confess to God my frequent prideful disregard of them. And it's time for me to hear the wisdom in them afresh. "Every person" includes me and you, all of us. We are called by God to be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.

Why quick to hear? Because when we listen, we actually learn new things. We are open to new information and might learn something that would change our perspective a bit or help us grow in empathy or understanding.

We should be slow to speak because, in humility, we should count what others have to say as more valuable than what we have to say. Our words can wait until we have heard the whole story from the other side.

Slow to anger? Yes, we should be slow to anger because our anger is ultimately impotent. It has limited effectiveness to get some things done which have some limited value. Too often, though, it causes more pain and hurt and loss than whatever short-term gain it seems to produce.

Do you know what all of this really requires? It requires eyes of faith to see that God is already at work in the situation that is causing us frustration. The situation may seem out-of-control to us, and we may be tempted to want to lash out and grasp control of it. The truth is, of course, that it's not out-of-control at all, is it? God is always in control, and God is always at work.

For us to listen is to show faith that God may have something to teach us, For us to be slow to speak and slow to anger is to show faith that God's purposes will stand and His hands will hold the situation in faithfulness and love, even when we can't see how. And that's ultimately that call of James 1:19-20. These aren't just verses to shame us into submission, but they're calling us to a deeper trust of God and an abiding peace found only in Him.