

# A STUDY OF JAMES (6)

Swift to hear, Slow to speak  
**James 1:19-20**

## The Book of James – 1:1-18

- Continuing our study of James, we have addressed trials – how they can make us better
- We can turn to God for strength (asking for wisdom)
- In our last lesson we addressed how temptations lead to sin, and if unrepented to spiritual death.
- We noted that God does not tempt us to sin, but provides “every good and perfect gift” (including the way of escape).
- It is “by the word of truth” that we understand this.  
Tonight we address James 1:19-20

## Be swift to hear

- Are you listening?
- Far too many today do not really listen. Some refuse (interrupt, pre-conceived views, unwilling to consider, etc.).
- **Proverbs 18:13**, *He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him.*

## Be swift to hear

- Are you listening?
- The wisdom literature and listening
- **Proverbs 4:1**, *Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding;*  
NOT just audibly, but PAY ATTENTION!  
A call to wisdom!
- **Proverbs 13:8**, *The ransom of a man's life is his riches, But the poor does not hear rebuke.*  
Refusal to take advice

## Be swift to hear

- Are you listening?
- The wisdom literature and listening
- **Proverbs 15:31**, *The ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide among the wise.*  
The wise are willing to learn and thus prosper
- **Proverbs 20:12**, *The hearing ear and the seeing eye, The LORD has made them both.*  
NEVER forget who created you and what He wants.

## Be swift to hear

- Are you listening?
- The wisdom literature and listening
- **Ecclesiastes 7:5**, *It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise Than for a man to hear the song of fools.*  
WHAT do you really want to hear? Want or need?
- **Ecclesiastes 7:21**, *Also do not take to heart everything people say, Lest you hear your servant cursing you.*  
Do not OVER-hear what was not intended.

## Be swift to hear

- Are you listening to God?
- Consider our text. “So then” (see **vs. 18**).  
We especially need to listen to God through His word.
- **Matthew 17:5**, ... *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **Hear Him!**”*  
At times the disciples had a problem listening to Jesus.
- **Romans 10:17**, *faith comes by hearing*
- **James 1:22-25** (3x)

## Be swift to hear

- Are you listening to God?
- **Matthew 11:15**, ... *"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."* 3x in Matthew (**13:9, 43**)  
& 7x in **Rev. 2 & 3** (**2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22**)
- **Hebrews 4:1-2**, Israel in the wilderness did not listen (it did not "sink in")
- **Matthew 13:13-15 (Isaiah 6:9-10)** – the corrupt Jewish leaders REFUSED to listen!



## Be swift to hear

- Are you listening to God?
- **Proverbs 28:9**, ... *"One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination."*
- **Ecclesiastes 5:1**, *Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.*
- **Ecclesiastes 12:13**, *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all...*

## Be swift to hear

- Are you listening to God?
- We need to carefully listen to what God tells us through His word.
- **2 Timothy 2:15**, *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*  
As we study, let our goal be to listen to Him. That will help us overcome temptations!

# Be slow to speak

- Are you sure?
- Before we say something are our words well thought out?
- **James 3:1-12** addresses this thoroughly. He even warns of stricter judgment for teachers.
- **Matthew 12:36-37**, every idle word. We will be justified and/or condemned by our words.  
Your words often reveal your character!

# Be slow to speak

- Are you sure?
- The wisdom literature addresses this too
- **Proverbs 10:19**, *In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.*
- **Ecclesiastes 5:6-7**, *Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands? For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity. But fear God.*

# Be slow to speak

- Are you sure?
- The wisdom literature addresses this too
- **Proverbs 11:9**, *The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor, But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.*
- **Proverbs 11:13**, *A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.*  
IS what you are about to say true, helpful & necessary?

# Be slow to speak

- Are you sure?
- The wisdom literature addresses this too
- **Proverbs 13:2-3**, *A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth, But the soul of the unfaithful feeds on violence. He who guards his mouth preserves his life, But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.*

# Be slow to speak

- Are you sure?
- The wisdom literature addresses the godly tongue
- **Proverbs 16:23**, *The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, And adds learning to his lips.*
- **Proverbs 10:11**, *The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.*
- **Proverbs 15:1-2**, *A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.*

# Be slow to speak

- Are you sure?
- The wisdom literature addresses the godly tongue
- **Proverbs 17:9**, *He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends.*  
You do NOT have to say everything you hear or see
- **Proverbs 11:12**, *He who is devoid of wisdom despises his neighbor, But a man of understanding holds his peace.*
- **Ecclesiastes 12:11**, *The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.*



# Be slow to speak

- Are you sure it is what God meant?
- Let us not forget to think before we teach about God's word.
- **James 3:1**, *My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*
- **Ecclesiastes 5:1-2**, *Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil. 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.*

## Be slow to speak

- Are you sure it is what God meant?
- **Proverbs 15:28**, *The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.*
- **2 Timothy 2:15**, *... rightly dividing the word of truth.*
- **Colossians 4:6**, *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*

## Be slow to speak

- Are you sure it is what God meant?
- **Jude 22-23**, *On some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear...*
- **1 Peter 3:15**, *... ready to give an answer.*
- **2 Timothy 2:24-26**, the demeanor of the “*servant of the Lord*” – not quarrelsome, gentle, able to teach, patient, humble, hoping for repentance
- As we teach, we MUST proclaim, “the whole counsel of God” (**cf. Acts 20:27**), without compromise or error.

Are you in control of  
what you hear and say?