

JAMES: FAITH WORKS / RIGHTEOUSNESS IN OVERALLS #9
"The Keys to God-Honoring Communication" Part 2 (James 1:19-20)
 Mission Bible Fellowship (1-26-2020) Pastor Larry Nelson

Introduction:

1. Please open your Bibles again this morning to James Chapter 1, where I want to continue the sermon that I started back in November, which I am calling: *"The Keys to God-Honoring Communication"*
 - a. As I said last time, no one ever had to teach us how to misbehave, because we are all born wanting to have our own way, where our sinful flesh wants to talk, instead of truly listening.
2. Over these many years, people have often asked me, why I do you not refer people for psychological counseling?
 - a. Although there are many reasons for this, the main one is found in:

2 Peter 1:2-3

- 2 *Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;*
- 3 *seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to **life** and **godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.*
 - b. Simply put, when it comes to all matters that pertain to "life" and "godliness," I believe in the **inerrancy**, **authority**, and **sufficiency** of the Bible.
 - c. According to this text, the Bible gives us everything we need for **salvation & sanctification**, and therefore we must **not** go begging for the worldly, "*wise-in-their-own-eyes*," crumbs that fall off the counseling tables of those who seek to provide answers to life's problems, totally apart from the foundation and authority of Scripture.
 - d. Every year, needy Christians spend zillions of dollars going to secular and so-called, "Christian" counselors, in a desperate search for help and hope with their interpersonal relationships.
 - e. Sadly, they are like the woman in *Mark 5:26*, who for 12 years:

Mark 5:26 "... had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse."

- f. In *Romans 12:16-18* Paul exhorts us all, by saying:

Romans 12:16-18

- 16 *... Do not be wise in your own estimation.*
- 17 *Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.
Respect what is right in the sight of all men.*
- 18 *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.*

- g. Although interpersonal relationships can be very difficult, the Apostle Paul commands us to work hard at trying to be at peace with all men, which includes those who are both inside and outside the church.
- h. If someone has a broken arm, then I will try to find them a good doctor, but if they are experiencing damaged, or even broken relationships, this help falls under the purview of the

local church, where everyone should be able to receive all the help that is necessary on how to live a God-honoring, others loving, life.

- i. In *Philippians 2:3-4*, Paul provides us with a uniquely Christian command, which is foundational to understanding and obeying the *James 1* text that is before us this morning:

Philippians 2:3-4

- 2 *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;*
 4 *do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

- j. Simply put, it is impossible to truly glorify God, if we are not deliberately and constantly seeking to put the needs and interests of others before our own.

TRANS> So with this as an introduction, let's read:

James 1:19-20

- 19 *This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;*
 20 *for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.*

3. Now as I said last time, this James text, pretty much outlines itself with **Three Commands** and **One Warning**.
 4. And if you were unable to be with us last time, perhaps you would like to catch up by visiting my webpage at: www.kootenaichurch.org/nelson, which is also listed in your sermon outlines.
 5. So please take them out, and follow with me as I do a quick review, before we move on in the text, beginning with:

I. **THE COMMANDS**

A. **BE QUICK TO HEAR** (James 1:19c)

1. Simply put, we all are commanded here to be careful listeners.

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

Proverbs 18:13 "He who gives an answer before he hears,
 It is folly and shame to him."

- a. To answer before we have carefully listened, is foolishness, because we do not know, what we do not know, even if we think we know what the other person is going to say.
 b. Although *Proverbs 18:13* warns us against such foolishness, the text goes on to tell us that this behavior is also "shameful."
 c. God is the only One in the universe who can read our thoughts and who never needs to ask a question.

- d. So when we assume that we know, when we don't know, or we try to talk over the top, or we interrupt others, then we are making ourselves out to be like God, which is **“shameful!”**
 - e. And the last time I checked, it did not go too well for Satan when he made himself out to be like God.
2. Last time we were together, I gave you examples of what being “*quick to hear*,” **does**, and **does not** look like.
- a. Being “*quick to hear*,” means that we are not just sitting in silence, while our mind is off somewhere else.
 - b. Being “*quick to hear*” means that we are giving the other person our full and undivided attention.
 - c. Being “*quick to hear*” means that we are not thinking about what we are going to say, when we can finally get a word in.

TRANS> Then we moved on to James' next command:

B. BE SLOW TO SPEAK (James 1:19d)

- 1. It should go without saying that if you are being “*quick to hear*,” then you will also be “*slow to speak*.”
 - a. These are two sides of the same coin, because if you are **talking**, then you aren't, **listening**. **<REPEAT>**

1 Corinthians 13:3 (Love) does not act unbecomingly; it **does not seek its own**, is **not provoked**, and does not take into account a wrong suffered,

- b. And again, I gave you 9 of illustrations of what being “*slow to speak*” **does**, and **does not** look like.
 - (1) Being “*slow to speak*” is **neither demanding** your own way , nor is it **monopolizing** the conversation.
 - (2) Being “*slow to speak*” is not folding your arms, clenching your teeth, setting your jaw, pursing your lips, clenching your fists, tapping your foot, throwing things – or slamming doors.
 - (3) Being “*slow to speak*” is all about assuming the **best** about the other person's words and motives, not the **worst**.
 - (4) Being “*slow to speak*” means that we do not jump to conclusions assuming that we **know**, when in fact, we may not know **anything**.
 - (5) Being “*slow to speak*” is the humble acknowledgment in our own mind, which admits that **I** could be the one who is at least partially **wrong** here.

- (6) Being “*slow to speak*” recognizes the possibility that I may not have all the facts, or that I may have misinterpreted them.
- (7) Being “*slow to speak*” will cause us to remember and apply:

Ephesians 4:1-3

- 1 *Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,*
- 2 *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing (forbearance) tolerance for one another in love,*
- 3 *being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

2 Timothy 2:24-25

- 24 *The Lord's bond-servant (slave) must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,*
- 25 *with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,*

- (8) Being “*slow to speak*,” will cause us to remember that not all Christians are at the same stage of spiritual growth.
- (9) And finally, being “*slow to speak*” will cause your hearers to want to hear more of what you have to say, not less.

Colossians 4:6 “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

- (a) And so I asked you, “How salty are your words? Are your Holy Spirit-controlled words so gracious, so wise, so loving, so patient, and so gentle, that they leave your hearers thirsty, wanting to hear more?”
- (b) Mom, Dad, “How salty are your words with each other, and with your children?”

TRANS> So with this convicting review, I want us to move on to the 3rd Command in our text:

C. BE SLOW TO ANGER (James 1:19e)

James 1:19-20

- 19 *This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;*
- 20 *for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.*

1. Perhaps you have noticed that when people get into a conflict, they tend to move toward one of two extremes, where they either “clam-up” or “blow-up,” neither of which honors God.
2. There are two Greek words that are used in the N.T., which are both translated as “*anger*.”
 - (1) <Or - ge> is the word that is used here in James, which is also translated as indignation and vengeance.

- (2) <**Thu - mos**> is translated as wrath and fierceness.
- (3) While *Thu-mos* is typically an explosive outburst of temper and rage, *orge* is more of an inward brewing and seething anger.
- (4) The one thing that both of these words for anger have in common is that they typically come as the result of some perceived offence that has been done to us.

3. Please notice how Paul describes *agape* love in:

1 Corinthians 13:5 Love “does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, **is not provoked** ...”
(¿Why? because Paul goes on to say that it) “... does not take into account a wrong suffered,”

a. When Paul says, “love is not provoked”, please notice what it does **NOT** say:

(1) It does not say: “Love is not “**easily** angered”, (which is one of the many reasons that I do not recommend the New International Version of the Bible.)

b. You are probably thinking, “But Pastor, that is **impossible!**”

c. And yes, if we are trying to obey this command in our own strength, not responding in anger to the personal offenses of others **is** impossible.

d. However, when we are submitting to the moment-by-moment control of the Holy Spirit, Paul declares in:

Galatians 5:22-23

22 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness, (and) self-control ...”

e. Through the Holy Spirit’s power, He enables us to “**put off**” becoming angry, either **internally OR externally**.

f. No *thumos*, and No *orge*.

Ephesians 4:31-32

31 Let all bitterness and wrath (**thumos**) and anger (**orge**) and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

32 Be **kind** to one another, **tender-hearted**, **forgiving** each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Colossians 3:8-10

8 But now you also, **put them all aside**: anger (**orge**), wrath (**thumos**), malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.

9 Do not lie to one another, since you **laid aside** the old self with its evil practices,

10 and have **put on** the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him--

g. In the same way that Christians are commanded to “**put off**” clamor, malice, slander, abusive speech, and lying, so too are we to “**put off**” anger (**orge**) and wrath (**thumos**).

- h. And then Paul goes on to command us, (through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit), to **“put on”** the moment-by-moment sanctification process of becoming more and more like Christ.
- (1) **“Put off”** and **“Put on”** are like two sides of the same coin, where you cannot successfully have one without the other.
 - (2) The drunkard, and the gossip, and the liar, and the one who is known for his anger, may sincerely desire to stop, by **“putting them off”** saying, **“I’m never going to do that again!!,”** **“I’m never going to do that again!!!”**
 - (3) But as Christians, we will only be able to change, as we replace these sinful habits through the **“putting on”** process of deliberately, moment-by-moment, turning our will over to the power and will of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
4. So when it comes to anger, please consider that God, is the only One, who has the right to be both **thumos** and **orge**, because we have all sinned against Him.
- a. Notice how these two words are combined in:

Revelation 19:11-15

- 11 *And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.*
- 12 *His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.*
- 13 *He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.*
- 14 *And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.*
- 15 *From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce (**thumos**) wrath (**orge**) of God, the Almighty.*

- b. This is not the gentle Jesus, coming to earth to die for our sins.
- c. This is Jesus, the **“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS”**, who will come to earth in the righteous **fierce wrath** of God Almighty, to bring final and forever judgment upon all who have not received Him as their Lord, and Master, and Savior.

Hebrews 10:30-31

- 30 *For we know Him who said, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY” ...*
- 31 *It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

5. ¿ So how do we balance *James 1:19*, where we are commanded to be **“slow to anger”** and *Ephesians 4:26* which says, **“... BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger,”**?
 - a. There is only one kind of **“righteous anger”** that is acceptable for Christians, and that is when God’s name, His ways, and His will are being defamed or violated.
 - (1) Simply put, We should be angered by what angers God.

- (2) When we hear of millions of babies being murdered in the womb, this should anger us.
 - (3) When we hear of parents, who are abusing and confusing children as to their gender, this should anger us.
 - (4) When we hear of the almost 100% Buddhist country of Myanmar (Burma), murdering entire Muslim villages, this should anger us.
 - (5) When we heard about Al Shabaab, the Isis terrorists in Africa, who kidnaped 100s of Christian girls from their school, and sold them as slaves to be abused by Muslim men, this should anger us.
- b. But the problem in all these things is that, if we are not extremely careful, even a “*righteous anger*” will soon morph into a **sinful** anger.
- c. In point of fact, as Christians, we have not been called to social activism, where we try to clean up the dead corpse of this cursed and sinful world.
- (1) Instead, when we see these atrocities, they should move us all the more, to obey our Master’s command to go into all the world and “... *make disciples of all the nations*” (Matthew 28:19).
 - (2) So here is your ***Nelsonism*** for the day, “*We should not be surprised when **sinner**s act like **sinner**s!*”
 - (3) Please remember that the only thing that will eternally change anyone, is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (4) And as people become new creations in Christ, then they seek to change the little part of the world that they touch.
 - (5) History has shown us that in the sovereignty of God, sometimes the harvest of Christian souls can be so large that entire families, villages, and towns, and even countries, have been changed for the glory of God.
 - (6) But this only happens when repentance and change comes from the **inside**, not pressure for social change being imposed or forced from the **outside**.
 - (7) If we could somehow outlaw abortion **today**, the problem is that, if hearts are not changed by the saving Gospel, then others will come along and change the laws back again.
 - (8) So the answer for Christians is not to angrily waste our time and resources trying to bring social changes to the atrocities that are all around us.
 - (9) Instead, we are called to win men and women, boys and girls to salvation in Christ, who alone can forgive, and forever change us, from the inside out.
6. So as we focus again on our text, being “***slow to anger***” (***orge***), this means that when we are feeling violated, we need to give some time for our mind to catch up with the empowering Holy Spirit, Who will then empower us to have self-control, so that we will not sin by giving in to our emotional hurts of the moment.

- a. While, ***thumos*** is the immediate explosion of anger, and ***orge*** is a brewing, stewing, kind of anger, both of them are usually caused by either a **real**, or an **imagined** offense against us.
- (1) For example, if some guy cuts you off on the freeway and almost causes an accident, that is a **real** offense, and there will be an immediate emotional feeling of being violated.
 - (2) But this internal emotion or anger is not necessarily sin (*ie. "Be angry but do not sin" Ephesians 4:26.*)
 - (a) However, if the emotional response turns into angry words, gestures, or revenge, now it has become sin.
 - (b) Sometimes the best thing we can do in such situations is to pull off the road, and give thanks for God's protection, as we give time for our emotions cool off.
 - (3) ¿ Or what if someone seems to ignore you as you are coming into church on Sunday morning?
 - (a) If you are being *quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger*, then you will choose **not** to assume the worst and get angry (***orge***), where you stew, and brew all through the church service, and even into the next week, over this **apparent** offense.
 - (b) Instead, you assume the best about this person, choosing to believe that they were probably just distracted, by all the surrounding activities.
 - (c) But if you still feel that there might have been an offense on their part, then ask them about it after church.
 - (d) Don't wait for weeks or months to take care of it, where **real** or **imagined** offenses can turn to bitterness.
 - (e) More often than not, you will find out that there was no intended offense at all, because they did not even see you, or hear your greeting.
 - (f) This may sound silly, but I have seen relationships **damaged** and even **destroyed**, over little misunderstandings like this, which became **huge** walls of **separation**.

TRANS> So far, we have studied and applied 3 Commands, "... *be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger ...*", and now I want to conclude my sermon with:

II. **THE WARNING** (James 1:20)

James 1:19-20

19 *This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;*

20 *for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.*

- A. If you believe someone has sinned against you, then God has given His church a very clear path to reconciliation, which begins with:

Matthew 18:15 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother."

Galatians 6:1-2

1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, **restore** such a one in a spirit of **gentleness**; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

1. "Restore" is <kat-ar-tid'-zo> in the Greek, which is a medical term, which means to set a broken bone, or to put a dislocated shoulder back into service.
 - a. The picture here is that there is a member of the body of Christ, whose sin has damaged his ability to serve the rest of the body.
 - b. And we are called to gently speak to him about his sin, so that he will hopefully repent and be restored to useful service.
2. But only those who are obedient to our *James 1:19-20* text, who are "quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger", will be able to restore a sinning brother in a spirit of gentleness, which is what "achieving the righteousness of God", would actually look like in this scenario.
3. Continuing to use this medical example, please remember, that God does not want His surgeons to "operate" on a sinning member of the body of Christ with dirty hands.
4. So no matter how right and even righteous, our position may be, sinful anger will short circuit all of our efforts to achieve anything for the glory of God.
5. Parents, this is why we must never correct or discipline our children in anger.
 - a. Consider for just a moment the hypocrisy of punishing a child in anger for their lack of self-control, when we ourselves are failing to exercise self-control.
 - b. Clearly, in such cases, James 1:20 should be blaring in our ears.

James 1:20 "... the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

- c. I believe that this is exactly what Paul had in mind when he made this command to us as parents:

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

- d. Now we can all remember times when we failed our children, by correcting or disciplining them in anger.
- e. Fortunately for us, children are the most forgiving people on the planet, and they don't expect their parents to be perfect.

- f. However, if we fail by the displaying sinful anger, our children do have the right to expect that we will humbly confess our failure, and seek their forgiveness.

James 1:19-20

19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;

20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

Conclusion: Let's pray together