



DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

January 26, 2024



Photo: Our Daily Bread

QUICK TO LISTEN

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

James 1:19

READ James 1:18-20

I felt my heart rate increase as I opened my mouth to refute the charges a dear friend was leveling against me. What I had posted online had nothing to do with her as she implied. But before I replied, I whispered a prayer. I then calmed down and heard what she was saying and the hurt behind her words. It was clear that this went deeper than the surface. My friend was hurting, and my need to defend myself dissolved as I chose to help her address her pain.

During this conversation, I learned what James meant in today's Scripture when he urged us to "be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (1:19). Listening can help us hear what may be behind the words and to avoid anger that "does not produce the righteousness that God desires" (v. 20). It allows us to hear the heart of the speaker. I think stopping and praying helped me greatly with my friend. I became much more sensitive to her words rather than my own offense. Perhaps if I hadn't stopped to pray, I would have fired back my thoughts and shared how offended I was.

And while I haven't always gotten the instruction James outlines right, that day, I think I did. Stopping to whisper a prayer before allowing anger and offense to take a hold of me was the key to listening quickly and speaking slowly. I pray that God will give me the wisdom to do this more often (Proverbs 19:11).

By **Marvin Williams**

PRAY & REFLECT

Gracious God, please remind me to be quick to listen and slow to become offended. Amen

How has James' instruction helped you in the past? How can you employ it today?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Anger is a topic mentioned often in Scripture. James urges us to be "slow to become angry" (James 1:19). Proverbs 19:11 says, "Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs" (nlt). Paul tells us, " 'In your anger do not sin': Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry" (Ephesians 4:26). As believers in Jesus, we're to be growing more like our "compassionate and gracious God, [who is] slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness" (Exodus 34:6). In the Old Testament, we see God angry at the sin of individuals or nations, but only after repeatedly imploring them: "Return to the Lord your God, for he is . . . slow to anger and abounding in love" (Joel 2:13). David assures us, "His anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime" (Psalm 30:5). – By **Alyson Kieda**

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