



SERIES: A SEASON OF HOPE

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Tuesday, December 29, 2020

Scripture: James 1:19-21

TITLE: We Don't Have to Agree

Let me shatter a myth for you. Did you know that pastors have anger issues like everyone else? Unfortunately, it's true. At times, our anger gets the best of us, so we fight and argue just like everyone else - hopefully with a little bit quicker resolution - but we still fight, and we still become angry.

A couple of nights ago, after the kids went to bed, my wife and I began talking about the upcoming month, and rather quickly, the conversation became heated. We both became defensive, and we both became very angry. She went to bed, and I slept on the couch. I wish I were kidding, but it's completely true.

I don't know what it is in your life that gets you to go from zero to 10 on the anger scale, but God says that there's a better way. If you struggle with anger today, listen to what James tells us to do to overcome our anger struggles:

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:19-21, ESV)

James truly has the perfect solution for us if we struggle with anger today, and that solution is two steps. He says first, be quick to hear and slow to speak. I would call this grace-based living. Because when we pause and stop, rather than jump to conclusions, or quickly jump to our preferences, we begin to show other people grace. We seek to know where they are coming from, and why they believe what they believe. I believe most of our communication issues would be resolved if we simply shut up, asked better questions, and listened. It doesn't mean we have to agree. It doesn't mean we have to concede. But it does mean that we are willing to gain some perspective, and potentially show some empathy.

So James has been slow to speak, and quick to listen. But then he says something in verse 21, that I think is essential if we really want to have transformation—a life change in the area of relationships and managing our anger. He says, you have to put away all this wickedness and sinfulness, but the real solution, he says, is to “receive with meekness the implanted word”. In other words, we need to go back to the Bible daily, and allow God's Word to transform our minds, which transforms our beliefs, which directly impacts how we live.

I'll tell you, my couch is pretty comfortable, but you better believe, as I woke up at 1:00 in the morning, I realized I had messed up. We both messed up, but I'm not responsible for my wife's responses or actions; I'm responsible for mine. Three hours earlier, I should have been quick to listen and slow to speak. You see, I wasn't very meek. I was prideful, and I really didn't care what the Word of God had to say at that moment.

Here's my challenge for you today: If you're struggling with anger, and you're having relationship issues, start by turning back to God's Word. Come back to the Bible. Memorize this passage in James 1:19-21. In fact, I'm going to help you memorize it right now.

James says, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. How? By engaging in God's Word. That's the summary version of this passage. Say it with me: **be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. How? By engaging in God's Word.**

The next time you feel anger boiling up inside, remember this verse. Quote this verse, and when you do, you will be engaging Scripture from memory, and I bet you will overcome your anger one beat at a time.