



SERIES: FEBRUARY – James: Faith In Real Life

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Thursday, 02/10/2022

Scripture: James 1:19-20

TITLE: Low and Slow

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 love good BBQ. A few years ago, my wife bought me a smoker so I could learn to smoke my own BBQ. I'll be honest with you all. I'm better at eating good BBQ than I am at cooking good BBQ. Making good BBQ is a process and all the good, master grillers say the same thing, "*Low and slow is the way to go.*" By low, they mean lower temperatures. And by slow, they mean take your time in allowing the meat to cook without drying itself out. There's definitely a science to making good BBQ!

Our passage today carries with it the same idea of low and slow. Only in this context, low has to do with humbling ourselves before God and others. And slow has to do with exercising self-control over our emotions when dealing with conflict. It's like God is saying to us, "*Lower the temperature and be patient with others when navigating conflict.*"

There are 3 keys to practicing this "low & slow" approach to relational conflict:

1. Remember that you are God's beloved.
2. Remember that you're not God.
3. Remember that God's glory is your goal.

James says, "know this." Know these things. To my first point, know that you are greatly loved by God despite the fact that you are far from perfect. Let me say that again. You are greatly loved by God and He knows that you are far from perfect. God's love for us as imperfect sons and daughters is what provides the foundation for us to lower the emotional temperature in conflict. We know that we are loved greatly and we know that we are far from perfect.

Now, we can hear criticism. Now we can receive feedback regarding our actions and words. Criticism doesn't threaten our position in Christ, but it can help us to mature in Him, even if we disagree with the criticism. So James says, "*Be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.*"

Knowing these things helps us to grow in Christ through conflict. We grow in humility, wisdom and love for others by responding this way. And it all begins with remembering that you are God's beloved, which isn't a cause for pride, but is a security for our souls and a foundation for growth in Christ.

Secondly, remembering that you're not God might sound like a, "duh, I know that" kinda thing for you. But really, the idea is rooted in original sin. Genesis 3:4-5 says, "But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" This passage is the marketing spiel that Satan gave to Adam and Eve. And being like God, knowing good and evil means trusting your own judgment, your intuition, your own thoughts and justifying everything you do as if you're always right. Always right as in, like God. A lot of good relationships have been lost because one or both parties forget that they are not always right like God. Low and slow helps us to see this.

Lastly, to my final point, remember that God's glory is your goal. Smart and crafty individuals can win arguments and debates by talking circles around others, but it doesn't mean they've produced the righteousness of God. Selfish and manipulative people know how to leverage their anger to get whatever they want but it never produces the righteousness of God. In reality, the three points I've given you ought to read like a domino effect. Forgetting that God loved us while we were His enemies, forgetting that our ways are not like His and forgetting that we exist to bring Him glory means an inflated view of ourselves and a whole lot of burned relational bridges.

Brothers and sisters, if you struggle with relationships because you don't have a low and slow approach to conflict remember: God's great love for you in Christ, remember that your ways aren't perfect like God's ways and remember, you bring God the most glory when you trust Him, even as He works in you through conflict. Amen.