

HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE

Improving Your Communication

James 1:19-20

Quick to Listen

James 1:19 (KJV) ¹⁹ “*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, ...*”

- Good listening is a *skill* and is important to good communication
- It is a skill that does not come easy for us
- Most of the time, we think we’re listening , but we really aren’t listening
- If we are interrupting others, we’re saying what we have to say is “more important”
- If we’re “preoccupied” with other things while people are talking to us, we’re not listening
- Listening is more than just “audibly hearing” what others are saying
- Good listening requires us to be totally engaged, to be totally *present*
- To be “swift to hear” means we must be a ready, or an active listener
- First of all, we must swift to hear what *God* has to say
- We must also be swift to hear what *others* have to say
- As a ready listener, others deserve to be heard, they deserve a *hearing*
- That means to be a ready listener we must:
 - Give them our undivided attention, which may include stopping what we are doing
 - Give them eye contact
 - Listen to what they have said
 - Be more concerned with what they have to say than what we have to say
 - Ask questions based on what they have said for clarification
- When we genuinely listen to others, we are saying to them that they are important and what they have to say is important
- We listen to understand **Proverbs 4:7 (KJV)** **7** *Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.*
- Misunderstanding often happen because we are talking more than we’re listening **Proverbs 18:2 (NLT2)** **2** *Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their own opinions.*
- There is a lot of information to be learned just by listening to **Proverbs 1:5 (KJV)** ⁵ “*A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; ...*”
- As you listen, you will identify, clarifying questions you need to ask, see opportunities for encouragement, opportunities to help where they are struggling or afraid, and ask questions for them to provide you with more detail
- As a ready listener, we must learn to listen with our *ears, our heads, and our hearts*
- To improve our listening, we may need to repeat what we heard to ensure we heard it and understand what was said correctly
- To improve our listening, we *care* about what others have to say
- To improve our listening, listen to others the same way you want others to listen to you
- To improve our listening, ask follow-up questions
- Asking follow-up questions:

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- Increases our understanding
- Can diffuse possible conflicts
- Listening is vital to improving our communication and avoiding or resolving conflicts

Slow to Speak

James 1:19 (KJV) ¹⁹“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be slow to speak...”

- Some of the most damaging things said to others is said in haste
 - They are said in the heat of the moment without thought
 - That’s why we must be *slow* to speak
 - To be “slow to speak” means we are deliberate, thoughtful, we measure our words, we choose our words carefully
 - It does not mean we water down the truth, but it does mean we speak carefully and honestly
- Ephesians 4:15 (KJV)** ⁵“**But speaking the truth in love, ...**”
- That means we don’t speak words to intentionally hurt others
 - Slow to speak *does not* mean that you ignore problems, it does mean you will consider what you will say *before* you say it
- Proverbs 10:19 (KJV)** **19** *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.*
- Slow to speak is not responding in the same way you may have been spoken to
 - Slow to speak is not talking too much
 - We can improve our communication by:
 1. Speaking to build others up; not tearing them down **Ephesians 4:29 (KJV)** ²⁹ *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*
 - a. Choose your words carefully **Proverbs 17:27 (NLT2)** **27** *A truly wise person uses few words; a person with understanding is even-tempered.*
 2. Know what to say **and** when to say it **Ecclesiastes 3:1,7 (KJV)** ¹“*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: ⁷... a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;....*”

Slow to Anger

James 1:19 (KJV) ¹⁹“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be ... slow to wrath...”

- James connects anger with unrighteous behavior, highlighting that anger often leads to words and actions that don’t reflect God’s will for our lives
- You and fellow believers at some point are going to disagree
- Some people know our triggers; they know what sets us off
- As Christians we can’t have a short fuse and explode **Proverbs 14:29 (NLT2)** **29** *People with understanding control their anger; a hot temper shows great foolishness.*
- These explosions of anger hurt our witness to our

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- Anger often clouds the *real* issue
- Many times, conflicts amongst family, friends, coworkers, and church members are a result of short tempers and hasty words
- As a believer, the way you speak can diffuse *or* inflame the situation ***Proverbs 15:1 (KJV) ¹ A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.***
- When we govern and restrain our temper; we will not give way to excited and angry words ***Proverbs 16:32, "He that is slow to anger is greater than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."***
- When we control our tempers, when win other's respect, their openness, and their honesty

Anger Does Not Produce Righteousness

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

- Righteous living is God's desire for us
- Anger is the opposite of the patience God wants us to produce in our lives as we grow and mature in Christ
- Anger is inconsistent with Jesus' command love our enemies
- You can be certain anger is wrong when it keeps you from living the way God wants you to live
- We are to handle problems and conflicts with patience, understanding and self-control
- Righteousness is living in a way that is morally right and just according to God's standards
- Anger doesn't produce righteousness in our lives, what does?
 - Faith in Jesus ***Romans 3:22 (NLT2) 22 We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.***
 - Obedience to God's Word ***James 1:22 (NLT2) 22 But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.***
 - Living by the Spirit ***Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT2) 22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!***
 - Practicing Love and Justice ***Micah 6:8 (NLT2) 8 No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.***
- Living by these principles not only produce righteousness in our lives, it also produces the ability to properly communicate with others and avoid or resolve conflicts with others