

James 1:19-26 – Wisdom to communicate, live cleanly, and be sincere

Trapp, Vincent, Robertson, Family, TSK, Henry, Lexicon, Arnold, Ellsworth, Clarke, Geneva, JFB, PNT, Poole, Rienecker, Calvin, INT, Stott? Beloved Congregation of Jesus Christ: God calls you to **live a life that expresses your faith**. But to live your faith, **you have to have wisdom**. God gives wisdom liberally. You need wisdom **to know what to do** and **you need wisdom to know how to resist the temptation to wander away from what you were called to do**.

Today you will hear more reasons you need to ask God for wisdom.

Our headings are:

Wisdom helps you to communicate

Wisdom helps you to live a clean life

Wisdom helps you to be sincere

Our goals are: **That you will cry out all the more for wisdom to communicate well, live a clean life, and be sincere, and in so doing, bring honor to your Savior.**

Wisdom helps you to communicate

19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

1. Apostle James entreated his dear brothers to be swift to hear.

There are some who believe this is a call to listen to what God wanted to teach. After all, no one will know how to live or know what to say without listening to God! And that is generally true. You can find many passages like these in the Bible:

Proverbs 5: 1 My son, pay attention to my wisdom; Lend your ear to my understanding, 2 That you may preserve discretion, And your lips may keep knowledge.

But the focus here is a call to listen, to listen carefully to their brother's problems.

And “**swift**” carries the idea of pursuit, so Christians were literally to “**hurry up and listen!**”

James 1: 26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

2. Apostle James then entreated his dear brothers to be slow to speak.

“**Slow**” carries the idea of **hesitation**.

So Christians were to delay speaking (authoritatively, of course) because they had to listen first. It would have been too easy for Christians then to say all manner of things against the Roman and Jewish leaders who constantly opposed the church of Jesus. But **wisdom would warn them that there were times it wasn't wise to speak.** Stirring up hatred was wrong.

More, they had to listen to someone's problem carefully before speaking. That's how they could bear one another's burdens!

Proverbs 13: 3 He who guards his mouth preserves his life, But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.

3. Apostle James then entreated his dear brothers to be slow to get angry.

While anger isn't always bad, Apostle James identified those who got angry without hearing the facts. That is the context. These **3 things are related**. The man who is quick to get angry without listening, lacks wisdom.

Proverbs 15: 18 A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger allays contention.

20 for the wrath of man does not **produce** the righteousness of God.

4. Apostle James then detailed why it was dangerous for Christians to have wrongful anger!

He said wrongful anger does not produce God's righteousness. What does that mean?

When Apostle Paul spoke of the “righteousness of God,” he meant the “**righteousness produced by God through Christ's work**.” But when Apostle James spoke of the “righteousness of God” he meant **your anger does not produce righteousness you can offer to God**. You produce nothing righteous with unjust anger! **Foolish anger is not evidence of faith.**

5. Lessons:

a. If you want to successfully live as a Christian and show your true faith, learn to patiently listen, and not allow yourself to become sinfully angry. You can become sinfully angry when you don't listen to the facts. Speak after listening patiently.

b. To do these things successfully, you have to ask God for wisdom. You aren't born this way. If fact, you are born with the desire to not listen and to quickly speak without understanding the facts. Learn God's wisdom from his Word. There is no other reliable source of wisdom in this world!

c. God does not say, “Don't ever speak.” So don't avoid speaking. Don't say, “It's none of my business.” God simply says,

“Think about it before you speak. Don’t jump to conclusions. Listen to the facts first and then speak wisely.”

d. Don’t surround yourself with people (including when choosing a spouse) who are quick to talk and slow to listen. It shows that one lacks wisdom.

Wisdom helps you to live a clean life

21 Therefore **lay aside all filthiness** and **overflow of wickedness**, and **receive with meekness the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls.

1. Apostle James warned his brothers to set aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness that were in their hands.

Notice that this verse begins with “therefore.” So there is a link with what was said before. **So refusing to listen, jumping in to talk, and becoming sinfully angry (among other things), were to be set aside.**

These 3 things were like dirty cloths, symbolizing moral defilement, filthiness, and pollution – the growth of wickedness, quite unbecoming of a child of God. When cloths were dirty, they were to be changed.

But they couldn’t change **unless they had an attitude of humility**. And you have to understand **in the Roman world, humility was not seen as a virtue**, but as a weakness. But a life of faith in a Christian is marked by humility and service.

2. Apostle James warned his brothers, that after putting aside filthiness and growth of wickedness, they had to receive the implanted Word of God with meekness.

Instead of filthiness overflowing, they had to allow the Word of Truth, which God planted in them, to grow. The planted Word would make the Christian patient, listen, be at peace with others, and speak truth to those around. **Those are good fruits.**

3. Apostle James then warned them that without setting aside filthiness, and without receiving the implanted Word, their souls would not be saved!

“Implanted” meant that the Word of God took up residence in the lives of the believers.

Jeremiah 31:33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will **put My law in their minds**, and **write it on their hearts**; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

4. Lessons:

a. Sin is destructive. Sin is gross. Sin smells in God’s nostrils. And you have lot of it...many remnants...in your heart!

b. There is a lifelong battle of putting-off and putting-on in the Christian life. When you put-off a bad habit, you have to fight to put on a good one. For example: Instead of spending too much time watching YouTube videos, write a letter to someone suffering in prison for the Gospel! Put off...put on! **Don’t stop doing something bad and do nothing!**

c. When the Word of God sets root in your heart it will grow and you will be a blessing to others. Let it be like moist earth that will receive the seed of God’s Word so that it will grow. Don’t let your heart be rocky!

d. You action, or your non-action, affects the lives of many. The notion “**It’s my business, I will live how I want**” is **not Christian**. People are watching you! **People in church and people outside**. They see how you **talk to your wife or husband**. They see how you **treat the boss** or **your employee**. They see the way you **talk to the cashier** in the supermarket! Do you have patience with **the person counting coins** at the cashier? People see if Christ is alive in you! They see if you have real faith. **Some may not see you singing and worshipping in church on Sunday**. But what really matters to them is **how you live your life and how you portray God before their eyes**.

Wisdom helps you to be sincere

22 But **be doers of the word**, and not hearers only, **deceiving yourselves**. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

1. Apostle James then taught Christians were to be doers of the Word of God (not just hearers) in sincerity.

Matthew 7:24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

Everyone who has a child knows that **you may not assume because a child hears your instruction he will obey!** (You probably have a husband the same way.) **You may not assume your child will do it, even if he says he will do it!** Talkers don’t always do. **But sincere Christians do.**

2. Apostle James then, on the contrary, stated that Christians who were *only* hearers and not doers to the Word of God were deceiving themselves; they were insincere.

How were Christians deceiving themselves?

They were living like those who looked in the mirror, studied what they looked like, and then went away and forgot what they looked like; the impression did not sink in. But they to look carefully because mirrors of those days were not clear. Mirrors were merely a piece of brass rubbed with pumice to make it shine. After going away, they forgot what they looked like.

Similarly, those who heard and understood the Gospel and then went away, forgot the Gospel, and therefore didn't obey it, were insincere. The Word did not sink in.

25 But he who **looks into the perfect law of liberty** and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

3. Apostle James then stated the person who looked carefully at the law of liberty, the Gospel that gave freedom, and did not forget it, but continued in it, he was not insincere, but one filled with godliness. Wisdom made Christians look into the perfect law of liberty and then they obeyed it.

But it was a long look, not just a temporary look! They were *not superficial hearers* of the Word. They were *sincere lookers* at the law of liberty!

Deuteronomy 4:9 "Only **take heed to yourself**, and diligently keep yourself, **lest you forget** the things your eyes have seen, and **lest they depart from your heart** all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,

4. Lessons:

a. Those who only listen to the Word of God and do not obey it are hypocrites. They are **fooling themselves**. They will **hurt others** in the process. They **dishonor the work of the Lord**. They can't be in a right relationship with God and treat his Word this way!

b. On the contrary, if you carefully consider the Gospel of Jesus, and you understand the law you are bound to follow, and you ask the Holy Spirit to help you to obey, then you are not only not a hypocrite, but you will be blessed. Yes, the law of liberty saved. The law of liberty guides you. And the law of liberty will bring blessings to you.

c. Don't do something because you "feel it is a moral thing to do." Do it because it is right according to God's Word. God's Word is the ground of your salvation and the ground of your life now.

Conclusion:

Christians needed God's wisdom to communicate properly, to live a clean life, and to live in sincerity. Doing these things showed their true faith.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Let God's Word grow in you. This will promote peace. This will kill out the weeds of impatience and anger.

2. Let God's Word grow in you. Let him turn the soil in your garden! This will promote fruits of obedience that others can see your sincerity and desire and be drawn to Jesus.

3. For God's Word to grow in you, keep listening to the Word and eating the Lord's Supper. Ask God for his Holy Spirit to keep digging around your roots and fertilizing you so you will be nourished and grow!

Finally: If the Word of God has not been implanted in you, there is no fruit in you that will please God. Only if you ask God to plant that Word, that Word that shows you who God is, how bad your sins are, and what Jesus did for you, are you able to bear fruit. Why not do that today so you have something to use to plead before God when you leave this world? And even as that seed grows now, you will start to receive blessings from heaven.