

James 1:19-27

4. (19-20) Standing firm against unrighteous anger.

I think this is a very important verse for all of us to memorize, because we will all face conflicts in our lives.

God gave you two ears and one mouth. Now think about that. It means that He wants you to hear twice as much as what you speak. Don't be so quick to speak. Be quick to hear, but slow to speak, slow to wrath. Many times if I'd only been slower to speak. If I just kept my mouth shut, how much easier things could have been. But when we are quick to speak, so often we are wrong. And we have to then later take back what we said.

the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God: Now the bible doesn't say it's a sin to be angry. Jesus was stirred up with anger when he cleared out the sellers from the temple. But we need to realize that the Bible puts strict limits on anger. Ephesians 4:26 tells us to be angry and do not sin. Well that's tough to do. The question really is, what is the reason for our anger, and how to we use it? Here I think James is pointing out that most often when people get angry, it's because they are too busy talking (or yelling) and not busy enough listening. If we're angry because we're not getting our own way, that's not righteous anger. Our **wrath** almost always simply defends our own agenda. We have to ask ourselves in the situation, "is my response here going to bring everyone more like Jesus?"

5. (21) Standing firm against the lusts of the flesh.

Therefore lay aside: Filthiness and overflow of wickedness probably has in mind an impure manner of living. He's saying that if we want to avoid temptation and grow closer to the Lord, we need to take steps to lay aside anything that is drawing us into temptation. Then next step is to **Receive with meekness the implanted word:** In contrast to an impure manner of living, we should **receive** (doing it **with meekness**, a teachable heart) **the implanted word** of God. The purity of God's word will preserve us in an impure age.

Instead of surrounding our selves with things that tempt us to sin, fill our heart with the Word of God.

6. (22-25) How to receive the word of God.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only: Jesus used this same point to conclude His great Sermon on the Mount. He said that the one who heard the word without doing it was like a man who built his house on the sand, but the one who heard God's word and did it was like a man whose house was built on a rock and could withstand the inevitable storms of life and eternity. Talk is cheap, to just read the Word or listen to a teaching isn't enough. We need to live it.

He is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was:

7. (26-27) Examples of what it means to be a doer of the word of God.

If anyone among you thinks he is religious: Real religion is not shown by hearing the word, but by doing it. You can say you're a Christian, wear a cross around your neck, put a fish sticker on your car, listen to the right music, go to church every week, but if you don't live it when it really matters, all the talk is useless.

Pure and undefiled religion before God: To visit orphans and widows in their trouble: Some people get involved in ministry to receive the praise of man. In the culture of James' day, (and also today to some degree) orphans and widows were nobodies, almost worthless. There was no financial or fame related advantage to ministering to them, except in God's eyes. Jesus said, "as you've done to the least of these, you've done to me."

Psalm 82:3

Isaiah 1:17