

# JAMES

MARK IT UP

## James 1:19-21 **LEADER** Discussion Guide

Week of 3/6/22

**Icebreaker:** We all know what uncontrolled and unjustified anger looks like. What are some consequences of it?

**Getting Started:** Read James 1:19-21 as a group.

Select 2-3 questions below for your discussion.

**1.** In general, how do you think listening, speaking, and anger relate to one another?

On one hand, anger can (but not always) lead to an unwillingness to listen and a license to speak. On the other hand, a failure to listen well, which often goes hand-in-hand with being consumed with hearing our own voice, can lead to anger when we don't take the time to fully understand what someone else is saying. This can result in a vicious loop where the contributing factors to our anger lead us to double down on the very same tendencies that inspired our anger in the first place.

*Application:* On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the best), how would you rate yourself at being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry?  
It's good to be vulnerable here but be ready to justify your answer.

**2.** Verse 18 (last week) introduced “the word of truth.” Verse 21 (this week) includes “the implanted word,” and verses 22-23 (next week) mention “the word.” Given this context, to what are the *beloved brothers* supposed to be “quick to hear”?

These are most likely references to the gospel message. It's the word that saves, according to v. 21.

*Application:* What do you think it looks like for us to be “quick to hear” the word of truth? What kind of things help us listen well to it?

James lived in a day when the vast majority of people could only hear the gospel because they either were illiterate and/or didn't have an available copy of the Scripture. That's not our problem, though! “Quick” suggests an eagerness to listen. We listen by reading God's Word, listening to it proclaimed in preaching and teaching, and studying and meditating on it. We could also include habits or commitments that help us set aside time in our schedules to listen. “Listen” can more broadly be understood to mean obedience, but James will make a distinction between listening and obedience as we keep reading chapter 1.

**3.** In verse 20, what's the problem with “the anger of man”? What do you think James means by what he says?

*Building Christ-centered communities of people  
fully devoted to loving God and loving others.*

When James says that it “does not produce the righteousness of God,” he likely means human anger so commonly misrepresents both God’s character and God’s desired outcome. There are times where our anger is justified; however, the way we respond can make a situation even more unjust or unrighteous.

*Application:* Is anger always bad? If not, what do you think makes anger justified or righteous?

No. The Bible says repeatedly that God is “slow to anger” (Ex 34:6), but we see examples where God is angry. Jesus was angry when he drove out those selling at the temple (John 2:15). The Bible does not condemn every instance of human anger, either. John Stott noted the difference between human and divine anger when he said that God’s anger “is never unpredictable, but always predictable, because it is provoked by evil, and evil alone...In short, God’s anger is poles apart from ours. What provokes our anger (Injured vanity) never produces his; what provokes his anger (evil) seldom provokes ours” (*The Cross of Christ*, 171).

**4.** The word *meekness* in verse 21 points to humility or not thinking too highly of oneself. What does it mean, then, for a person to “receive with meekness the implanted word”?

Simply put, it points to being teachable and correctable. This is an attitude that acknowledges that one does not have everything figured out and that there’s room for improvement in knowledge and practice.

*Application:* How could this kind of attitude or disposition help us live out James’s instruction in verse 19?

Someone who’s teachable is ready to listen well and isn’t easily angered when confronted with the truth of one’s deficiencies. This is an attitude that is ready to listen to others (God and other people).

**5.** What do you think it would be like to be part of a community of believers who strive to do what James is instructing in verses 19-21?

The point of this question is to help you envision and discuss how your group is doing in comparison to what James is describing. Do you have a problem with people dominating the conversation? They should be reminded of the importance of listening well. Do you have people who hardly speak at all? They should be reminded that being “slow to speak” still means speaking! Do you have such a problem with anger in your group that fist fights are breaking out in the living room? Well, that’s another problem altogether and you should probably let us know!!! ☺

*Application:* How do you think your group is doing in these areas? Why?