

Sermon or Lesson: James 1:19-20 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Your Anger Is Counterproductive To God's Purposes

INTRO: Think about the last time you got angry. What reasons did you use to get and stay angry? What results occurred from your anger? Did the results of your anger accomplish God's purposes? Who's purposes were achieved as a result of your anger? Let's look at how God regards your anger and its results.

READ: James 1:19-20, with verse 18 for context

[Lesson Question: If God is actively working to make us "a kind of firstfruits" (v.18), then do we believers have any responsibilities in this process?]

SECTION POINT: Because God is actively working to make us "a kind of firstfruits" (v.18), we believers have responsibilities in this process.

- - We are to "take note" (v.19) of the various responsibilities (or biblical principles) described in the "word" (vv.18,21,22) and be careful to remember and do them (v.22).
 - - We are all ("my dear brothers" and "everyone" (v.19)) obligated by God to follow these principles from God.
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[Lesson Question: In this passage, when we believers are in difficult situations or trials or temptations, how does God want us to react or respond, in addition to persevering under trial (v.12) and not giving in to temptation (vv.12,14)?]

SECTION POINT: In this passage, when we believers are in difficult situations or trials or temptations, God wants us to react or respond in a righteous manner, in addition to persevering under trial (v.12) and not giving in to temptation (vv.12,14).

v.19 - READ

being "**quick to listen**":

- - Listening leads to "knowledge, understanding, and discernment". (Proverbs 17:27-28)
- - We should purposefully acquire more information before making any decisions, actions, or statements. (Proverbs 15:2)
- - This activity of listening to intentionally acquire information and knowledge denotes and utilizes wisdom. (Proverbs 15:2)
- - We are to immediately start ("quick") with this activity of listening and do it regularly.
- - Speaking first before listening will probably result in saying harmful words, which cannot be taken back. (see Proverbs 15:2)

being "**slow to speak**":

- - Our mouth gets us in trouble and it causes harm because we tend to speak what we are thinking before adequately considering its appropriateness and consequences. (Ephesians 4:29)
- - Most of the time it is not our duty or place to give or push our opinion.
- - We may do more harm than good. (Ephesians 4:29)
- - We may be speaking out of ignorance or foolishness. (Proverbs 29:20)
- - We argue. (James 4:1-2)
- - We state and restate our position and defend our views over and over and over even though the other person heard and caught our position and views the first time.
- - We wander from the initiating specific problem topic and expand the argument to attack the other person in other unrelated topic areas and attack their character on a personal level.
- - In a verbal disagreement, our emotions and word intensity tend to escalate the more we speak. This is due to frustration leading to anger that the other person is not getting and agreeing with what we are saying, and due to the releasing of words that progressively expose more and more of our true hidden feelings, opinion, and character.
- - During our speaking, we may give into temptations to exaggerate, deceive, distort, accuse, verbally abuse, and etc. (Ephesians 4:25,29)

being “slow to become angry”:

- - Anger is a strong emotional reaction against an element in some situation, in which we regard or value or perceive that a serious or critical violating offense has occurred.
- - Anger usually makes a situation worse and may cause us and/or others to sin or to give in to temptation.
- - Furthermore, getting angry may actually be a temptation to sin, and may lead to more temptations to sin. (Ephesians 4:26-27)
- - Anger may give the devil a foothold or an opportunity. (Ephesians 4:26-27)
- - Our anger may play into the hand of the violator or perpetrator and drag us down to his/her level.

v.20 - READ

not acting out of anger:

- - Anger is such a power-filled emotion that it readily prompts us and even pushes us to take immediate aggressive action, i.e. it has sufficient power strength and intensity to immediately make us a slave, as it did to Cain in Genesis 4:6-7.
- - Our anger can start and/or fortify an environment of ongoing attack / counter-attack or retaliation.
- - “Man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires”, therefore our anger is not useful to God, and it does not bring about the results that God wants.
- - Our anger does not accomplish righteous living and behaving, therefore our anger is a doorway to unrighteous living, i.e. our anger generates a flood of sinful temptations and responses.
- - Our anger quickly becomes a grievous sin to God unless we carefully manage it in a biblically-prescribed way. (Ephesians 4:26-31)

- - Verse 20 is saying our anger is morally and spiritually counterproductive to God, His Kingdom, and His agenda - that makes harboring it or acting on it a sin. (see Ephesians 4:26,31)
 - - Therefore, the initial natural reaction of anger in some circumstances may be non-sinful for a few moments but quickly degenerates into sin when we harbor or act upon it even for a righteous cause or motives because in man's anger we are acting in a way that will yield results that are outside of God's will of "the righteous life that [He] desires".
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BIG IDEA: When we face difficulties and trials in life, we should listen a lot, speak very little, and refrain from getting angry, because our anger will only yield results that are counterproductive to God's purposes.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Do you typically maintain discussions of disagreement at a discussion level or do you typically escalate the discussions of disagreements into arguments leading to anger?
 - - What excuses do you use to deceive yourself (v.16) into thinking that your harboring and/or displaying of anger are justified?
 - - What sinful temptations do you typically plunge into when you are angry? Exaggerating? Deception? Lying? Manipulation? Disparaging? Attacking? Yelling? Cussing? Getting off-topic? Self-pity? Intimidation? Verbal abuse or assault? Physical abuse or assault? Driving away recklessly or dangerously? Self-medicating? Gossip? Slander? Malice? ...Do you get the picture here?
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Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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