

me & My BIG MOUTH

ME & MY BIG MOUTH, PART 1: QUICK TO LISTEN

We all know what it's like to be hurt by someone who just couldn't listen long enough to understand us. Maybe in their attempt to be right, they damaged a relationship that could have been saved with a little patience and curiosity. You've probably been on the other side of that coin too. Taking the verbal offense may have won the argument, but you lost relationally. What if we didn't settle for being right, but tried to make things right instead? The longer we listen, the more we learn, and the better chance we have of protecting ourselves from our own big mouths.

SERIES BIG IDEA: Be quick to listen, slow to speak.

TODAY'S BIG IDEA: Don't settle for being right—make things right.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. We've all heard it said, "Never talk about politics, sex, money, and religion at the dinner table." What area do you think brings up the most conflict in your family or with your friends?
2. In the middle of conflict, we all have a natural response. Circle the phrases below that best describe what you're quick to do:
 - *When someone accuses me, I'm quick to:*
 - Review the facts and prepare a retort.
 - Write the person off and ignore their claims.
 - Ask clarifying questions.
 - *When someone tells me how I've hurt them, I'm quick to:*
 - Claim my own hurt.
 - Defend my actions.
 - Affirm their feelings and apologize.
 - *When I know I'm right, I'm quick to:*
 - State my case with evidence.
 - Shut down and withdraw emotionally.
 - Be curious and patient while they explain their point of view.

3. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read [James 1:19–21](#).*

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. [James 1:19–21 \(NIV\)](#)

4. When we're in conflict, most of us are quick to do something, but it's usually not to listen. How would you fill in these blanks? "In conflict, I'm often quick to _____ and slow to _____."
5. Where or when is it hardest for you to be quick to listen and slow to speak? Why?

At work

At home

Online / on social media

With my...

Parents,

Siblings,

Other

Children,
friends

Co-workers,

6. Can you remember a time when someone was quick to listen to you—your opinion or point of view? How did it change the course of your conversation?
7. Imagine you were trying to summarize these verses for a friend. What would you say in one or two sentences to explain what James was communicating?
8. Chris said, “Don’t settle for being right; make things right. If the two of you aren’t right, it doesn’t matter who’s right.” How does this statement change the way you might interact in the future with someone who believes differently than you?
9. God doesn’t want us to be right *at* one another, but right *with* one another. Who do you need to be right with currently? Describe the tensions in that relationship.
10. Chris said, “To be angry means drawing hasty, misinformed, relationally destructive conclusions about someone.” Many times we ask questions like, “I don’t know why they would say that. I don’t know why they would do that. I don’t know why they believe that.” But everything everyone does makes perfect sense to them. And everything everyone says makes perfect sense to them. And everything everyone believes makes perfect sense to them. Can you share a time which you drew a hasty, misinformed conclusion about someone and it was wrong?
11. Which of these strategies might help you best in the relationship in which you’re currently experiencing the most conflict? Why?
 - a. Ask 3 questions before responding with your side.
 - b. Avoid declarations.
 - c. Listen to understand rather than reply.
 - d. Remind yourself that everything this person does, says, and believes makes sense to them.
12. Can you think of anyone you’ve been trying to be *right at* instead of *right with*? What step can you take this week to put your relationship before your righteousness (or *rightness*)?
13. Jesus didn’t come to be right. He had every right answer, but he came to reconcile men and women to God and to reconcile us to one another. Think of a few words that describe Jesus’ approach and discuss how these characteristics can help guide your most difficult conversations.

MOVING FORWARD

When we listen to reply, we lose our chance to understand. We undermine the value of our relationships. This week, take some time to practice the hand motion that goes with James 1:19: Place your fists in your lap and when you say “Quick to listen,” open your hands and finish the verse by slowly saying “Slow to speak.”

WEEKLY READING

Handwrite James 1:19-20 and place it somewhere you’ll see it this week. Try your bathroom mirror or your desk or the dashboard of your car. Pray for God to give you the discipline to slow down and listen first when you face conflict.

me & my **BIG MOUTH**

