

James 4:11-5:6 Be Slow to Anger

This you know my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and *slow to anger*. James 1:19

James deals with this third theme in 4:1 through 5:6.

A practical outline would be:

1. The cause of anger – worldliness (4:1-5)
2. The cure for anger – humility (4:6-5:6)
 - a. When it brings repentance from sin (4:6-10)
 - b. When it brings restraint in speech (4:11-12)
 - c. When it brings reluctance to boast (4:13-5:6)

Restraint in Speech – 4:11-12

Verse 11

Conflict cannot end unless there is a cessation of critical speech.

Speaks against the law – James is probably thinking of the royal law mentioned in 2:8 (Leviticus 19:18, note verse 16 of that context speaks about not being a slanderer).

Judges the law – To disobey the law was like saying the law is invalid for me in this case.

Verse 12

When we speak in judgment of our brother we assume the role of God.

Able to save and to destroy – To preserve or take away physical life. Eternal life is not the context here.

Who are you – They must be humble enough to understand their unworthiness to pass judgment on a fellow Christian.

Reluctance to Boast – 4:13-5:6

Verses 13-14

Part of arrogance is the tendency to boast. James is thinking of Proverbs 27:1 as he reminds these believers that they have no control over the future.

Verse 15

Humility recognizes the Lord's control. They should recognize that their lives (*we shall live*) and their activities (*do this or that*) are subject to God's will.

Verse 16

You boast in you arrogance – Their proud words about their plans were a source of pride that they hoped would bring admiration from others.

All such boasting is evil – Anything we say that brings glory to ourselves instead of Christ is viewed by God as sin.

Verse 17

Sin can occur not only as a wrong act, but also as a right act that remains undone. We can *grieve the Spirit* by doing things we should not do (Ephesians 4:30). We can also *quench the Spirit* by not doing the things we know we should do (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Chapter 5

Verse 1

Come now – James repeats the words of 4:13 to tie together the theme of their materialism and worldly outlook.

Weep and howl – James uses the language of the Old Testament prophets to pronounce judgment against worldly riches.

Verses 2-3

As a prophetic announcement James sees human riches as already corrupted.

A witness against you – Either at the judgment seat or literally in the last days of the tribulation, or both!

Consume your flesh like fire – Perhaps a reference to the destruction of commercial Babylon (Revelation 18:1-19, note verse 18).

In the last days – How foolish it is to heap up worldly treasures as we anticipate the return of Christ.

Verse 4

Justice will overtake the unscrupulous wealthy people of this world.

Lord of Sabaoth – The Lord of Hosts (Revelation 19:14).

Verses 5-6

The guilt of the rich was enormous. They had lived in pleasure and luxury while they condemned and murdered the righteous.