

SERMON NOTES

From the desk of Pastor Zim Khan
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FAITH THAT WORKS

Week 3 · James 1

Slow Down



KEY PASSAGE: James 1:19–21

Mature faith listens before it reacts.

Slow down. Pay attention. Proceed carefully.

Mister Rogers and the Flashing Yellow Light

Our kids have been watching Mister Rogers' Neighborhood lately, and it is such a change of pace from everything else in front of them today. Fast cuts, bright colors, constant noise. Then Mister Rogers walks in, changes his sweater, sings a song, feeds the fish. Unhurried.

At the very start of the show there's a traffic light and the yellow light is blinking. That'll preach: a flashing yellow light says slow down, pay attention, proceed carefully.

Ask: *How many of us need a flashing yellow light in our lives right now?*

Everything Tells Us to Speed Up

Everything around us says: GO. Respond now. Answer now. Have an opinion now. And especially when something bothers us, everything inside us speeds up too... our heart rate, our volume, our assumptions, our mouths.

Irony: *the moments we most need wisdom are often the moments we're least willing to wait for it.*

Maybe you've sent the text you wished you could pull back, interrupted your spouse, snapped at your kid, gotten defensive before the other person finished. Our fastest reaction is rarely our wisest response.

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." — James 1:19

What: Slow Down Enough to Listen

Look at the speeds James gives us: **QUICK** to listen, **SLOW** to speak, **SLOW** to anger, almost exactly opposite of how we naturally operate. While you're talking, I'm often preparing my defense, not listening.

Ask: *Am I trying to understand, or am I trying to answer?*

In John 8, religious leaders demand an immediate answer from Jesus about a woman caught in sin. He bends down and writes in the dirt, refusing to let their urgency dictate His response. Just because a moment feels urgent doesn't mean your reaction needs to be immediate.

Try saying: *"Help me understand." "Give me a minute." "Let me think about that."*

The pause isn't maturity itself, the pause creates room for maturity.

Why: Anger Promises Results It Cannot Deliver

"Human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires." — James 1:20

We get angry because it feels productive. I'll make them understand, I'll show them, I'll get control. But anger promises results it cannot deliver. You can be right about the issue and wrong in your response; win the argument and damage the relationship.

Jesus did get angry. He confronted evil and overturned tables. James isn't saying anger is automatically sin; he's warning against trusting human anger to accomplish what only God can produce.

Ask: *Not just 'Am I angry?' but 'What is this anger producing in me and through me?'*

How: Humble Yourself Enough to Hear God

"Humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you." — James 1:21

This isn't just an anger-management technique, it's the posture of a disciple. Listening requires humility: maybe I don't know everything, maybe I misunderstood, maybe God is trying to change something in me.

Sometimes I need to stop talking long enough to hear the person in front of me. Sometimes I need to stop defending myself long enough to hear what God is trying to say to me.

Practice the Pause

Not seven things this week, just one. When you feel yourself speeding up: slow down. Picture the flashing yellow light... before you send it, before you answer, before you interrupt, before you raise your voice.

Ask yourself two questions:

1. Have I actually listened?
2. What will my response produce?

Pray: *"Jesus, help me respond in a way that produces what You desire."*

A Church That Knows How to Slow Down

Marriages where we listen before defending ourselves. Parents who listen before correcting. Friends who ask another question before assuming. A church where disagreement doesn't automatically become division, where we can say, "Help me understand."

A people who aren't easily provoked, who don't need the last word, who are humble enough to receive correction, and humble enough to hear God. That's mature faith.

This Week

Tomorrow, everything speeds back up. When it does, picture the flashing yellow light:

Quick to listen. Slow to speak. Slow to anger.

"God, what are You trying to say to me?"