

Quick to Listen

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Your words are powerful.

We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check. James 3:2

Your mouth is a small part that has a big influence.

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. Js 3:3-6

The mouth is untamable and constantly needs to be guarded.

All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, ⁸but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. James 3:7-8

⁹With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. ¹¹Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? James 3:9-11

Then what do we do?

- Quick to listen, slow to speak
- Own your fires

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. James 1:19-20

Connect

Think of someone who famously lost control of their words. What's your perception of this person? What consequences do you assume they faced?

Word and Reflection

Like a small spark that has the potential to scorch an entire green forest, our tongues are untamable, with the power to control our whole bodies. We have a tool that can be used to build up those around us or tear them down in just a few words. What do we do with that kind of power? We can't lock it away. But we can, by God's grace, learn to control it by being quick to listen and slow to speak.

James 1:19-20; James 3:1-12

- Which part of the message made an impact, caught your attention or challenged you?
- Who has significantly impacted your life with their words? Why is it easier to remember the harsh words of those who hurt you than the kind words of those who encourage you?
- Read James 3:1-12. Discuss the different images James paints about the power of the tongue. Which of these comparisons do you identify with the most?
- In which relationship do you find yourself most often losing control of your mouth? Have you faced any relational consequences as a result? What could you do differently next time around?
- Read James 1:19-20. What would it look like for you to be "*Quick to listen, slow to speak*"? As a group, create a list of ways you can implement this verse. (ie: ask three questions, avoid assumptions, listen to understand not just reply...)

Action

- Memorize James 1:19-20. And practice being *Quick to listen, slow to speak*.
- Review the last question and put one of these things into practice this week. As a group, hold each other accountable.

Prayer

- Pray James 1:19. Ask God to make you *quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry*.
- Pray for the people in your Grace Group and those you're reaching out to.