

THE WEEK OF
August 23rd, 2009



Prepare Yourself
James 1:19-20

"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;
for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."

James 1:19-20

It has been observed that if we were to follow one simple rule in regard to communication a lot of our problems would be solved. The rule is this: the ratio of our speaking to listening should be in direct proportion to the number of each orifice. In other words, we have two ears and one mouth, so we should listen twice as much as we speak. This axiom is valuable but it is often easier said than done, isn't it? Well, that's really the point that James is making in verses 19 and 20 of chapter one. The Proverb says, that "He who answers a matter before he hears [it], it [is] folly and shame to him." The picture that's painted is someone who reacts rather than responding. How often in marriage, the workplace and even in ministry does this get us in trouble? Someone says something we don't like and we immediately go on the defensive and lash out before they're even finished speaking. That's where the wrath comes in to the equation. The outburst is not usually one of affirmation and understanding. It's a reaction with intent to undermine and hurt or at least defend. James goes on in chapter three to write that, "the tongue [is] a fire". So much destruction has been left in the wake of an unbridled tongue. I remember growing up hearing and even saying myself, "Sticks and stones my break my bones but words will never hurt me". What a lie. Nothing is more damaging to a person than cruel, wicked and thoughtless words. And so James makes a strong warning. A warning that we should always remember and live by. The next time you're confronted and your initial desire is to react with unkind words of wrath, remember the words of James, "the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."

Read the Proverb and the section of Psalm 119 that corresponds with the calendar day *example:*
If it's the 1st day of the month, read Proverbs 1 and Psalm 119:1-8 (Aleph)

This week we consider Hell and the amazing provision God has made for redemption from it.

Mon: swift to hear: "He who answers a matter before he hears..." Proverbs 18:13

Tue: slow to speak: "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth..." Ephesians 4:29

Wed: slow to wrath: "Now the works of the flesh are evident...outbursts of wrath..." Galatians 5:19-26

Thu: Put off: "...lay aside all filthiness..." James 1:21a

Fri: Put on: "...receive with meekness the implanted word..." James 1:21b-27

Discussion Questions for Bible Café:

1. When do you find it most difficult to listen and not speak? What is wrath? How is it related to anger? What does it mean to be slow to wrath?

2. Discuss the idea James gives in verses 22-24 of chapter 1. What is the application of verse 27 of chapter 1?

PREPARING FOR CHRIST'S RETURN

Prayer Requests of your Bible Café brothers (on back):