

Let Every Man...

The epistle of James is called by some "the gospel of common sense" and with good reason. Take 10 - 15 minutes to read through the letter and be impressed with the many practical matters the writer touches. From chapter 1:19 comes this exhortation: "Ye know this my beloved brethren but let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

Let every man be "SWIFT TO HEAR." This must not to be viewed as a limitless application. Some things we should refuse to hear, such as malicious gossip, slander, dirty jokes, filthy words and blasphemous words against either God or man. Moreover, the exhortation is an exhortation that we speedily obey God's instructions. The writer had just concluded a sober reminder of how sin comes about, how we succumb to it and what is its ultimate consequence. Therefore, let none charge God with tempting man to sin but let each know that it is through our own lusts that he is led into sin. Let us guard ourselves from our own lusts and desires which invite temptation and ultimately transgression on our part. Let us be "swift to hear."

Let every man be "SLOW TO SPEAK." Likely nothing brings greater misery to man than by being swift, rather than slow, to speak. Still, in the words of another, "Silence is not always golden. Sometimes it is yellow." We do have an obligation to "Cry aloud and spare not," but we must take care that our warnings be both true and justified for many "cries" are simply unsupported gossip and rumor (Isa. 58:1). There is a time to speak, there is also a time that one hold his tongue (Eccl. 3:7). One has attained a marked degree of wisdom when he has learned which time is which! We must defend truth, God, Christ and His Church. But we must weight carefully what we say. The Psalmist wrote: "I said, I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue" (Ps. 39:1). It is right that we all pray, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah my rock and my redeemer" (Ps. 19:14).

Let every man be "SLOW TO WRATH." It is not wrong to be angry. Jesus became angry because of the hardness of the hearts of those to whom He spoke (Mk. 3:5). The Holy Spirit said: "Be ye angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26). One of the qualifications of one who would be an elder is that he be "not soon angry" (Titus 1:7). Nevertheless, remember that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Anger stirs anger. If we must be angry, let it be

"righteous indignation."

Three sound appeals to every man! Let every man hasten to comply with James' instructions!

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