



# QUICK TO LISTEN, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO ANGER

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JAMES 1:19-21 LESSON

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## JAMES 1:19-21 CONTEXT



- **1 James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion. Joy be to you! 2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 And let this perseverance bring about [its] perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete -- lacking in nothing. (Jas 1:1-4,AT)**
- **5 If any of you lacks wisdom, that person must ask God who gives to all sincerely and without reproaching and it will be given to them. 6 But they must ask in faith(fulness), not wavering in doubt. For the one who doubts is like a surge of waves on the sea, being blown by the wind and tossed back and forth. 7 That person must not expect that they will receive anything from the Lord 8 – a double-minded individual, unstable in all their ways. (Jas 1:5-8,AT)**



## JAMES 1:19-21 CONTEXT



- **9** The believer in humble circumstances must boast in their high position – **10** but the rich in their humiliation, because like a flower of the field they will pass away. **11** For the sun rises with scorching heat, and the field dries up, and its flower falls, and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed. In the same way, the rich – in their journeys [in life] – will fade away (Jas 1:9-11, AT)
- **12** Blessed is the one who perseveres trial, because having been tested, they will receive the crown of life, which [the Lord] has promised to those who love Him. **13** When being tempted, let no one say, "I am being tempted by God." For God is untemptable by evil – and He tempts no one. **14** But each person is tempted by their own desire, being lured and dragged away. **15** Then desire, having conceived, begets sin; sin, having been brought to maturity, gives birth to death (Jas 1:15, AT)



## JAMES 1:19-21 CONTEXT




- **16 Don't be deceived, my beloved brothers and sisters. 17 All good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the [heavenly] lights – with whom there is no variation or shadow from turning. 18 According to His will, He gave birth to us by the word of truth so that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.** (Jas 1:16-18,AT)
- When we are suffering at the hands of others, we often pray for **protection**. We also need to pray for (moral) **purity!** (Stulac 1:19)
- We need to hate sin more than suffering (Stulac 1:19). Testing can lead to perseverance, which can lead to being perfected; sin leads to death (Stulac 1:19).
- Sin is more dangerous! (Stulac 1:19). We have to resist the temptation to react angrily (Stulac 1:19)



## JAMES 1:19-21 CONTEXT



- 3 Set a guard over my **mouth**, Lord; keep watch over the door of my **lips**. Do not let my **heart** be drawn to what is **evil** so that I take part in wicked deeds along with those who are evildoers; do not let me eat their delicacies. (Ps 141:3-4, NIV; Stulac 1:19)
- Not just about **abiding by moral guidelines**, but by **abiding in Christ** (Stulac 1:19). Not merely **rules**, but **relationship**
- God gave us spiritual birth through the word of truth (i.e., gospel) (cf. Jas 1:18), **therefore** we should live “the righteous life that God desire” (Stulac 1:19; cf. McKnight, 135-136).
- We can’t stay in Christian infancy (Motyer, 64); the word should produce practical effects (McCartney, 114)
- We are to be servants of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Jas 1:1) – who act wisely (cf. Jas 1:5; Dauids U, 39)
- In James 1:19, James speaks of being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. He then elaborates on anger (Jas 1:20-21), listening (Jas 1:22-25), and speaking (Jas 1:26-27) (UBS, 41; Blomberg/Kamell, 83)



"Whoever  
has ears,  
let  
them hear."

Matthew 13:9

# JAMES 1:19

## UNDERSTAND THIS, FAMILY



"Whoever  
has ears,  
let  
them hear."

Matthew 13:9

- **Understand this, my beloved brothers and sisters: every person must be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger** (Jas 1:19,AT)
- **Understand this** could refer back to Jas 1:18 in summary (cf. UBS, 41; Guthrie, 224; Johnson, 199) but probably starts a new paragraph (UBS, 41; Nystrom, 89). Likely a “bridge verse” ( McCartney, 115)
- Understand this is likely **imperative** – another command (Stulac 1:19; Osborne, 38; Davids N, 91; Moo, 107; Guthrie, 224; Nystrom, 89; McCartney, 114-115 contra Johnson, 199; Martin, 44)
- Similar to Jesus’ **commanding**, “whoever has ears, they must hear” (Mt 11:15,AT; cf. 13:9, 43; Rev 2:7; Osborne, 38). Once again, James is **commanding** His spiritual family (Stulac 1:19; McCartney, 115; Blomberg/Kamell, 85)
- James may be quoting a proverbial saying (explaining the untranslated *de*; UBS, 41; Davids N, 91)
- This is like a “theme verse” for the entire letter; James will elaborate on “sinful speech and selfish anger” later (Stulac 1:19; cf. Davids U, 39, cf. 1:26; 3:1–12; 4:1–3, 11–12; 5:12; Moo, 106)
- Contrary to our current “express-your-feelings” culture (Davids U, 39)



## JAMES 1:19 QUICK TO LISTEN ...TO WHAT?



- There is no object... quick to listen to what? (UBS, 42)
- Likely means be quick to hear the word of truth – **the gospel** (Jas 1:18) (Adamson, 78; UBS, 42) – that is implanted in them (Jas 1:21) (UBS, 42; McKnight, 137)
- Likely entails to being quick to listen and **accept** the word of God (Motyer, 64; Osborne, 38; Adamson, 78)
- Not simply reading or hearing it, but **acting** accordingly (Motyer, 64 cf. Jas 1:22).
- 22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says.** (Jas 1:22, NIV)
- Listening without obeying is half-heartedness (Osborne, 38)
- Parents will often ask their children, “Are you **hearing** me?” (implying obedience)





# JAMES 1:19 QUICK TO LISTEN



- We should not only be quick to listen to God’s word and put it into practice, we must also be willing to listen to other people – **before** speaking (Osborne, 39; UBS, 42; cf. McKnight, 137)
- “Kistemaker (1986:56–57) states, ‘Listening is the art of **closing one’s mouth** and **opening one’s ears and heart**’...” (Osborne, 39)
- Biblical wisdom literature has much to say about listening (Pr 10:19, 13:3, 15:1, 17:27-28; UBS, 41)
- Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who **take advice**. (Pr 13:10, NIV)
- Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with **many advisers** they succeed. (Pr 15:22, NIV)
- 7 Whoever corrects a mocker invites insults; whoever rebukes the wicked incurs abuse. 8 Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you; **rebuke the wise and they will love you**. 9 Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning. (Pr 9:7-9, NIV)

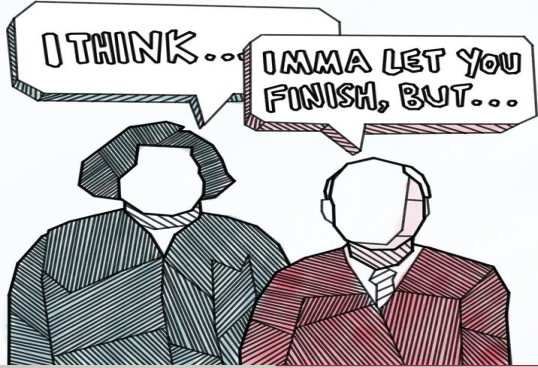




## JAMES 1:19 QUICK TO LISTEN



- When people are doing us wrong or when we are angry, we tend to do the exact opposite (Stulac 1:19) – we are slow to listen and quick to speak!
- We are often quick to speak our minds without trying to understand the minds of others (Stulac 1:19)
- Many leaders talk a lot but listen a little (Osborne, 39)
- We can do a lot of damage even we speak rashly (Stulac 1:19)
- “Good listening is a **protection** against **dissension**.” (Stulac 1:19)



## JAMES 1:19 SLOW TO SPEAK



- **Slow to speak** does not mean “Never speak” (Motyer, 65; Blomberg/Kamell, 86). We have to proclaim the truth (Blomberg/Kamell, 86; cf. Eph 4:15) and the gospel
- “This is a warning against an attitude of being too ready and eager to have something to say without due care and thought” (UBS, 42; cf. Adamson, 78; Martin, 47).
- This is the mark of a fool (cf. Pr 29:20; UBS, 42; also see Pr 11:12-13; 18:21; Osborne, 39; Moo, 107)
- Do you see a man who is **hasty in his words**? There is **more hope for a fool** than for him. (Pr 29:20, ESV; UBS, 42; Lockett/Evans, 269; Osborne, 38; Davids U, 39; Guthrie, 225; Johnson, 199; Martin, 47; Nystrom, 89)
- **Fools** find no pleasure in **understanding** but delight in **airing their own opinions**. (Pr 18:2, NIV)
- Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues. (Pr 17:28, NIV; UBS, 41; Osborne, 39; Moo, 107)
- To answer before listening— that is **folly** and shame. (Pr 18:13, NIV)



## JAMES 1:19 SLOW TO SPEAK



- Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin. (Pr 13:3, NIV; UBS, 41; Osborne, 39; Davids U, 39; Moo, 107; Guthrie, 225; Martin, 47)
- Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble. (Pr 21:23, ESV; Osborne, 39)
- When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent. (Pr 10:19, ESV; Osborne, 39; UBS, 41; Moo, 107)
- But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. (Mt 12:36, NIV; Nystrom, 89)
- We must exercise discretion when speaking (Lockett/Evans, 269)
- James will return to the theme of speech when discussing taming the tongue in James 3:1-12 (UBS, 42; cf. Jas 2:12, 4:1-3, 11-12, 5:9; Guthrie, 225; cf. Adamson, 78; cf. Jas 1:26; McCartney, 115; Blomberg/Kamell, 96)



# JAMES 1:19

## SLOW TO ANGER



- **Slow to anger** does not mean “Never be angry” (Motyer, 65)
- Being slow to anger is also a common admonition in biblical wisdom literature (UBS, 42-43; cf. Pr 16:32; Keener, 674; Lockett/Evans, 270; Johnson, 199; Blomberg/Kamell, 96; cf. Pr 29:8; Osborne, 39; Davids U, 53)
- A **gentle answer** turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (Pr 15:1, NIV; UBS, 42-43; Lockett/Evans, 270; Osborne, 38, 39; Davids U, 53; Moo, 107; Guthrie, 225; Johnson, 199; Martin, 47; McCartney, 115)
- The intelligent person **restrains his words**, and one who keeps a **cool head** is a man of understanding. (Pr 17:27, HCSB; UBS, 41; Osborne, 39; Moo, 107; McKnight, 137)
- Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is **quick-tempered displays folly**. (Pr 14:29, NIV; Keener, 674)
- A **hot-tempered man** stirs up strife, but he who is **slow to anger** quiets contention. (Pr 15:18, ESV; Keener, 674; Osborne, 39)



## JAMES 1:19 SLOW TO ANGER



- Those with good sense are **slow to anger**, and it is their glory to overlook an offense. (Pr 19:11, NRSV; Keener, 674)
- Fools show their **anger** at once, but the prudent ignore an insult. (Pr 12:16, NRSV; Davids U, 53)
- 24 Make no friends with those **given to anger**, and do not associate with hotheads, 25 or you may learn their ways and entangle yourself in a snare. (Pr 22:24-25, NRSV; Osborne, 39)
- A fool gives full vent to anger, but the wise quietly holds it back. (Pr 29:11, NRSV; Osborne, 39; Johnson, 199; Richardson, 89)
- Do not be **quick to anger**, for anger lodges in the bosom of **fools**. (Ec 7:9, NRSV; Osborne, 39; Davids U, 39; Moo, 107; Guthrie, 225; Martin, 47; McCartney, 115; Blomberg/Kamell, 96)
- Anger can lead to violence and murder (cf. Jas 4:1-2; McKnight, 138; McCartney, 115). Many of his poor, persecuted brothers and sisters may have been tempted to take violent revenge (McKnight, 138)

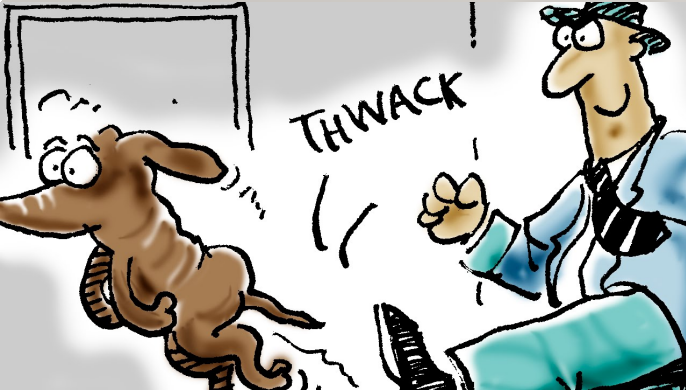


# JAMES 1:19

## SLOW TO ANGER



- Also in the New Testament (Col 3:8; Eph 4:26, 31; UBS, 42-43; cf. Gal 5:20; I Tim 2:8; Osborne, 39; Davids U, 53)
- 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away: **anger**, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth (Col 3:5-8, ESV; UBS, 42-43; Osborne, 39; Davids U, 53; Richardson, 92)
- 26 “In your **anger** do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still **angry**, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. (Eph 4:26-27, NIV; UBS, 42-43; Motyer, 65; Osborne, 38, 39; Martin, 47; Richardson, 89; cf. Ps 4:4; Davids U, 53)
- 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and **anger**, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice (Eph 4:31, NIV; Osborne, 39; Davids U, 53; Martin, 47; Richardson, 92)
- Does not necessarily apply to righteous anger against evil (UBS, 42-43; Motyer, 65-66; Osborne, 39; Blomberg/Kamell, 86) – “righteous indignation” (Moo, 107)
- Some think it means being angry at God but probably not (UBS, 42-43). Could mean don’t preach the word with contempt (UBS, 42-43) or hostile overconfidence (UBS, 45)



# JAMES 1:19

## SLOW TO ANGER



- We should not be quick-tempered or constantly ill-tempered (UBS, 42-43). “When anger comes in, listening flies out.” (Motyer, 107)
- In our anger, we often “speak too quickly and say too much”. (Moo, 107; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 86). We can’t take angry words back (Moo, 107)
- When certain people upset us, we often we take things out on **other** people (Stulac 1:19)
- Times of trials can often become occasions for people to sin against **each other** (Stulac 1:19). For example, couples often fight over money issues and say things in anger (Stulac 1:19)
- James could refer to not being angry with enemies outside the church, but he will later talk about issues **within** the church (Stulac 1:19; cf. Jas 3:1; Davids U, 39)
- What causes fights and quarrels **among you**? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? (Jas 4:1, NIV; Stulac 1:19; McCartney, 115)
- Brothers and sisters, do not slander **one another**. (Jas 4:11a, NIV; Stulac 1:19; McCartney, 115)
- 9 Don’t grumble against **one another, brothers and sisters**, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! (Jas 5:9, NIV; Stulac 1:19; Nystrom, 91)



# JAMES 1:20 ANGER OF MAN VS. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD



- For [the] anger of man does not produce [the] righteousness of God (Jas 1:20,AT)
- Contrast: anger of man vs. righteousness of God (Stulac 1:20) – “polar opposites” (Osborne, 39).
- **Man** refers to all people (Johnson, 200)
- We need to act on godly wisdom (Jas 1:5), even in humble circumstances (Jas 1:9) (Stulac 1:20) and during persecution – not on human anger
- **Produce** (κατεργάζομαι | *katergazomai* (UBS5)): similar wording to that which described how the testing of our faith **produces** perseverance (though many MSS read *ergazesthai* instead; cf. Johnson, 200; Martin, 48)
- **knowing that the testing of your faith produces [*katergazomai*] perseverance** (Jas 1:3,AT; Johnson, 200)
- Those who are led by the anger of man typically don't produce the righteousness of God (Stulac 1:20)
- Instead of being **productive**, anger can **consume** like a fire (cf. Davids U, 39). When angry, I am not typically **productive**, but **destructive!**





## JAMES 1:20 ANGER OF MAN VS. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD



- Such anger goes against Jesus' teaching (Davids U, 39)
- “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is **angry** with a brother or sister, will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. (Mt 5:21-22, NIV; Stulac 1:20; Osborne, 39; Davids U, 39; Blomberg/Kamell, 96)
- We are to turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, love our enemies (Mt 5:39-44; Stulac 1:20; Davids U, 39)
- Such anger “usurps the role of God as the only judge and vindicator” (Davids U, 39). Vengeance is mine saith the Lord (Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30-39; Davids U, 39; cf. Adamson, 79; Richardson, 89; cf. Dt 32:35; McCartney, 116).
- God's people must be patient and let God handle it (Jas 5:7-9; Davids U, 39; Adamson, 79; McKnight, 142; Nystrom, 91)
- When people do wrong/do us wrong, it is not our place to try take matters into our own hands (Davids U, 39; cf. **Ex 2:11-16**, Davids U, 40)



## JAMES 1:20 RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

- Can mean righteousness **from** God (genitive of origin) (UBS, 43). The “verdict of acquittal” God gives us, which bring about salvation (UBS, 43; cf. “righteous status”; Php 3:9, Moo, 108; cf. Rom 5:17; McCartney, 115; cf. Ro 1:17; 3:5, 21, 22, 25, 26; 10:3; 2 Co 5:21; Php 3:9; Blomberg/Kamell, 86). But James does not likely refer to imputed righteousness (i.e., justification) here (cp. Rom 1:17, 3:22; Osborne, 37; cf. McCartney, 115; Blomberg/Kamell, 86)
- Can mean the **righteous plans** of God (cf. Mt 3:15; Motyer, 65, 66; cf. McKnight, 139) that will be brought about on the Last Day (Davids U, 39)
- Can mean righteousness **of** God (subjective genitive) (UBS, 43; Osborne, 37) – “a quality of God’s character” (UBS, 43; cf. Moo, 108). Human anger does not produce that which conforms to God’s character
- Can mean righteousness **of** God (objective genitive) (UBS, 43) – the righteous **standard** that God demands (UBS, 43; Stulac 1:20; Davids U, 40; Moo, 108; Guthrie, 225; Adamson, 80; cf. Ac 10:35; McCartney, 115; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 86).
- This previous understanding (above) is most likely (UBS, 43) – or a combination of the last two (Osborne, 37)
- The righteousness of God here likely refers to the “**righteous behavior** God demands” (Osborne, 39; cf. Moo, 108; Guthrie, 225; Johnson, 200); cf. Ps 15:2; Adamson, 80; Nystrom, 91-92)



## JAMES 1:20 RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

- Could also mean the **justice** of God (Osborne, 39; Moo, 107; McCartney, 115; McKnight, 139). Or the “saving activity and rule” of God (Blomberg/Kamell, 86; cf. McKnight, 139)
- Some Jews were militant and used force against the oppressive rulers of Rome (Keener, 674) – thinking that they were as “agents of God’s righteous indignation” (Keener, 674; cf. Osborne, 37) ushering in the kingdom of God by force (e.g., the Zealot movement; Blomberg/Kamell, 86, McKnight, 142)
- James, in contrast, links righteousness with peace (Jas 3:18) and not taking matters into one’s own hands (Jas 5:7; Keener, 674; cf. Nystrom, 92; Blomberg/Kamell, 97)
- If we are striving for the crown of life (Jas 1:12), we need to abide by God’s **righteous standards** – living morally upright in all we do (Stulac 1:20)
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for **righteousness**, for they will be filled. (Mt 5:6, NIV; Stulac 1:20; cf. **Mt 5:20**; Davids N, 93; **cf. Mt 5:10**; Nystrom, 91)
- 33 But seek first his kingdom and his **righteousness**, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Mt 6:33, NIV; Davids N, 93; McCartney, 115)
- How can we do this...? (Stulac 1:20) James tells us in the next verse



## JAMES 1:21 STRIP OFF



- Therefore, stripping off all [moral] filthiness and [the] abundance of evil, humbly accept the implanted word, which can save your souls. (Jas 1:21, AT)
- **Strip off** (ἀποτίθεμαι | *apotithemai*) can be used to describe removing dirt from oneself but often refers to **stripping off clothing** (cf. Ac 7:58; UBS, 44; cf. Lockett/Evans, 270; Guthrie, 225; Johnson, 201; McCartney, 116; cf. 1 Pet 3:21; Nystrom, 92) – “throwing away old, dirty, unwanted clothes” (Osborne, 40; cf. Davids U, 40; Richardson, 90)
- Metaphorically, Christians are told to put off or strip off the **old self** – one’s former sinful patterns of behavior (UBS, 44; cf. Heb 12:1; EDNT, 146; Osborne, 40; Davids U, 53)
- 22 You **took off** [*apotithemai*] your former way of life, **the old self** that is corrupted by deceitful desires; (Eph 4:22, HCSB EDNT, 146; Lockett/Evans, 270; Stulac 1:21; Osborne, 40; Davids U, 53; Johnson, 201; Martin, 45; McCartney, 116; Blomberg/Kamell, 87)
- 25 Therefore each of you must **put off** [*apotithemai*] falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. (Eph 4:25, NIV; EDNT, 146; Lockett/Evans, 270; Stulac 1:21; Osborne, 40; Guthrie, 225; Johnson, 201; Martin, 45; Nystrom, 92; McCartney, 116)



## JAMES 1:21 STRIP OFF



- 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us **cast off** [*apotithemai*] the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. (Rom 13:12, ESV; EDNT, 146; UBS, 44; Lockett/Evans, 270; Osborne, 40; Johnson, 201; Martin, 45; McCartney, 116)
- Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us **throw off** [*apotithemai*] everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us (Heb 12:1, NIV; EDNT, 146; Osborne, 40; Davids U, 53; Guthrie, 225; Johnson, 201)
- 8 But now you must **get rid of** [*apotithemai*] all such things—**anger**, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have **taken off your old self** with its **practices** 10 and have put on the **new self**, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. (Col 3:8-10, NIV; EDNT, 146; UBS, 44; Lockett/Evans, 270; Osborne, 38, 40; Johnson, 201; Martin, 45; Richardson, 89; McCartney, 116; Blomberg/Kamell, 97)
- Therefore, **rid yourselves** [*apotithemai*] of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. (1 Pet 2:1, NIV; EDNT, 146; UBS, 44; Stulac 1:21; Davids U, 53; Moo, 109; Guthrie, 225; Johnson, 201; Martin, 45; Nystrom, 92; Nystrom, 93; McCartney, 116; Blomberg/Kamell, 87)
- 2 Like newborn babies, **crave pure spiritual milk**, so that by it you may **grow up** in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. (1 Pet 2:2-3, NIV; Stulac 1:21; Osborne, 40; Moo, 109; Nystrom, 93; Blomberg/Kamell, 87)



## JAMES 1:21 STRIP OFF



- This expression about stripping off moral filthiness may have been a formula used during conversions (UBS, 44; Blomberg/Kamell, 87) and baptisms (EDNT, 215; UBS, 44; Osborne, 40; Johnson, 201; McKnight, 141; Martin, 45; Blomberg/Kamell, 87).
- People would take off their old clothes before they were baptized and exchange them for new ones (Martin, 48)
- Conveys the thought of turning from one's former sinful lifestyle to God (UBS, 44; Nystrom, 92). — “both the renunciation of vices and assumption of virtues” (McKnight, 141)
- It's hard to grow if we are still trying to justify sinful living (Davids U, 40)
- We must remove “everything that contrary to the word of truth” (Richardson, 90)



## JAMES 1:21 MORAL FILTH



- **Filthiness** (ῥυπαρία | *rhyparia*) can refer literally to dirt (NIDNTTE, 218; Lockett/Evans, 270; Guthrie, 225; Johnson, 201; Blomberg/Kamell, 87, cf. Richardson, 91)
- Later it is used to describe the filthy clothes of a poor man (Jas 2:2; Martin, 48; cf. Zec 3:3-4; Moo, 110; Johnson, 201; Nystrom, 92; McCartney, 116)
- Here is likely concerns “moral defilement” – anything that is “unacceptable to God” (UBS, 44-45; cf. Lockett/Evans 270; Motyer, 68; Davids U, 40; Guthrie, 225; Richardson, 91; Blomberg/Kamell, 87)
- Metaphorically, the former clothes are **too filthy to be salvaged** – they must be thrown away! (Osborne, 40)
- Moral filth is inappropriate for a community of believers (Guthrie, 226)
- 27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being **polluted** by the world. (Jas 1:27, NIV; Johnson, 201)
- Culture exposes us to much moral filth (Nystrom, 103)
- “There is no shortage of candidates for a list of American vices that qualify as ‘moral filth.’ Alcohol, drugs, laziness, pornography, abuse, hedonism, premarital sex, adultery, lying, and cheating are but a tithe of the candidates” (Nystrom,



## JAMES 1:21 ABUNDANCE OF EVIL



- **Abundance** (περισσεία | *perisseia*): likely means “abundance” or “overflowing” evil (UBS, 45; cf. Rom 5:17; 2 Cor 8:2; Davids U, 54; Moo, 110)
- The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the **abundance** [*perisseia*] of the heart that the mouth speaks. (Lk 6:45, NRSV; Stulac 1:21; Davids N, 94; McCartney, 117)
- Evil more specifically may refer to “unrighteous anger” (Jas 1:20; Keener, 674; Davids U, 40), evil speech (Davids U, 40; cf. Jas 3:1-12; Guthrie, 226), and malice (Richardson, 92; McCartney, 117)
- There is an abundance of **various** evils; wickedness is **prevalent** (Moo, 110)
- There are wicked weeds all around. When they are uprooted, they can quickly reappear (Motyer, 68)





## JAMES 1:21 IN HUMILITY



- **Humility** (πραΰτης | *prāytēs*): “the quality of not being overly impressed by one’s self-importance” (BDAG, 861; NIDNTTE, 123; Guthrie, 226)  
Gentleness, meekness (BDAG, 861; NIDNTTE, 123; Guthrie, 226)
- “A combination of being gentle, modest, humble, patient, submissive, and having a **teachable** spirit” (UBS, 46; cf. Motyer, 68-69; Johnson, 202; Nystrom, 92)
- 3 (Now Moses was a very **humble** [πραῦς | *praus*] man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.) (Num 12:3, NIV; cf. Ps 34:2, 147:6, Zeph 3:12; Johnson, 201)
- In contrast to the anger mentioned in Jas 1:19-20 (UBS, 45; Osborne, 40; Johnson, 201; Richardson, 93; cf. McCartney, 117) – perhaps arrogant overconfidence in the word (UBS, 45)
- To Greeks, “meekness was weakness” (Osborne, 40; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 88); the Greco-Roman world emphasized self-reliance and having power over others (e.g., patronage system) (Osborne, 40)



## JAMES 1:21 IN HUMILITY



- From a wise, godly perspective, humility is a virtue – a fruit of the Spirit (**Gal 5:23**; Davids U, 40; Johnson, 202; McCartney, 117; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 96)
- 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 **gentleness [praÿtēs]** and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:23, NIV; Davids U, 40; Johnson, 202; McCartney, 117; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 96)
- 13 Who is **wise** and **understanding** among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the **humility [praÿtēs]** that comes from wisdom. (Jas 3:13, NIV; BDAG, 861; EDNT, 146; Davids U, 40; Guthrie, 226; Johnson, 201-202; Adamson, 79-80; McKnight, 137; Richardson, 93; McCartney, 117)
- James is not necessarily talking about being humble towards others here, but being humble before God (Motyer, 68-69; Davids U, 41).
- Also humble does not = “doormat” (McCartney, 117; Blomberg/Kamell, 87), nor self-deprecating (Blomberg/Kamell, 97)
- A humble heart **simply obeys God and His word** – and is ready to learn (Motyer, 69; cf. Osborne, 40; Davids U, 41; McKnight, 143). **We must humbly accept that God’s wisdom far surpasses our own** (Nystrom, 92)





## JAMES 1:21 IN HUMILITY



- Humility is Christ-like:
- 28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am **gentle** [πραῦς | **praus**] and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Mt 11:28-30, NIV, Motyer, 68; Johnson, 201; Richardson, 93; McCartney, 117)
- “Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, **humble** [**praus**], and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Mt 21:5, NRSV; Johnson, 201)
- And being found in appearance as a man, he **humbled himself** by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Php 2:8, NIV; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 88)
- Blessed are the **meek** [**praus**], for they will inherit the earth. (Mt 5:5, NIV; Davids U, 40; Johnson, 201; Richardson, 93; cf. Jas 2:5; McCartney, 117)

I Agree



## JAMES 1:21 ACCEPT



- **Accept** (δέχομαι | *dechomai*): “to indicate **approval** or **conviction** by accepting” (BDAG, 221). The gospel is often accepted (Ac 8:14, 11:1; cf. Mk 10:15; EDNT, 292; cf. 2 Cor 11:4; Johnson, 202). Elsewhere, **accepting** the gospel refers to conversion (Moo, 111)
- Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they **received** [*dechomai*] the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true (Ac 17:11, NIV; EDNT, 292; Johnson, 202; McCartney, 117)
- 6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed [*dechomai*] the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7 And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. (1 Th 1:6-7, NIV; EDNT, 292; Davids U, 54; Johnson, 202; McCartney, 117)
- 13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you **accepted** [*dechomai*] it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe (1 Th 2:13, NIV; EDNT, 292; Davids U, 54; Johnson, 202)



## JAMES 1:21 ACCEPT



- 13 Those on the rocky ground are the ones who **receive** [*dechomai*] the **word** with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. (Lk 8:13, NIV; EDNT, 292; Johnson, 202)
- Here, these Christian brothers and sisters have **already** accepted the gospel (Moo, 111).
- By **accept**, he likely means that they need to truly accept the gospel by **putting its principles into practice** (Moo, 111; Adamson, 81; McKnight, 143; McCartney, 117), taking it to heart (Blomberg/Kamell, 88) – it should “become the norm for their existence” (Johnson, 205)
- We can’t just be **convinced** about Jesus; we must be **committed** to Jesus – which is evidenced by a changed, increasingly Christ-like lifestyle (Davids U, 40)
- “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and **puts them into practice** is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (Mt 7:24, NIV; McCartney, 118)
- A **humble acceptance** of the gospel should manifest itself in our lives – we should **bear godly fruit** (Moo, 111)

James 1:21



**JAMES**  
THE IMPLANTED WORD

## JAMES 1:21 IMPLANTED WORD



- James again changes metaphors – from a clothing metaphor to a planting metaphor (UBS, 45)
- **Implanted** (ἐμφυτος | *emphytos*): “**permanently** established in the individual” (BDAG, 326; cf. Moo, 111), “with the implication of development” (LN, 726; cf. Moo, 111)
- Likely refers not to something already in us, but the **gospel** that has **taken root** within us (UBS, 46; Osborne, 40; Davids U, 40, 54; Moo, 110; Martin, 49; McCartney, 118; )
- **According to His will, He gave birth to us by the word of truth so that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures** (Jas 1:18, AT; UBS, 46; Motyer, 62; Osborne, 40; Guthrie, 226; McKnight, 143; Martin, 49; Nystrom, 92; McCartney, 118; Blomberg/Kamell, 88)
- Likely refers to the gospel message as in Jas 1:18 (UBS, 46; Osborne, 40; Davids U, 40; Johnson, 202-203) – a gift that comes from our Father above (Jas 1:17; Osborne, 40; Davids N, 94)
- “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will **put my law in their minds** and **write it on their hearts**. I will be their God, and they will be my people. (Jer 31:33, NIV; Moo, 111; Guthrie, 226; Blomberg/Kamell, 88; cf. Mt 26:28; Rom 11:27; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:8-12, 10:16; McCartney, 118; cf. **Eze 36:24-32**; Moo P, 87; cf. Dt 30:1, 11-14; McKnight, 143)

James 1:21



**JAMES**  
**THE IMPLANTED WORD**

## JAMES 1:21 IMPLANTED WORD



- 11 Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. 12 It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, “Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, “Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” 14 No, the word is very near you; **it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.** (Dt 30:11-14, NIV; McKnight, 143; cf. Rom 10:6-8; Grisanti, 766)
- **Thy word have I hid in mine heart**, That I might not sin against thee. (Ps 119:11, KJV)
- 23 For you have been **born again**, not of perishable **seed**, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring **word of God**. 24 For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” 25 And this is the word that was preached to you. (1 Pet 1:23-25, NIV; McCartney, 119; Nystrom, 93)
- 6 I planted the **seed**, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. (1 Cor 3:6, NIV; Davids U, 54; Martin, 49)

James 1:21



**JAMES**  
THE IMPLANTED WORD

## JAMES 1:21 IMPLANTED WORD



- Reminiscent of the Parable of the Sower (Mt 13:1-23; UBS, 46; Davids U, 54; McCartney, 119; cf. Mk 4:20; Motyer, 67; Osborne, 40; cf. Adamson, 81).
- 3 “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell **along the path**, and the birds came and devoured it. 5 Other seed fell **on rocky ground**, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. 6 And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. 7 Other seed fell **among thorns**, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. 8 And other seeds fell into **good soil** and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” 9 And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” (Mk 4:3-9, ESV)



James 1:21



**JAMES**  
**THE IMPLANTED WORD**

## JAMES 1:21 IMPLANTED WORD



- 14 The sower sows the word. 15 And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. 16 And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. 17 And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. 18 And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, 19 but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. (Mk 4:14-19, ESV)
- 20 But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who **hear** the word and **accept** it and **bear fruit**, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” Motyer, 67; Osborne, 40; Moo, 111

James 1:21



**JAMES**  
THE IMPLANTED WORD

## JAMES 1:21 IMPLANTED WORD

GOT FRUIT?



- **“What kind of soil are you?”** (Osborne, 40)
- When the word of truth – the gospel – is planted in us, growth should follow!  
(Motyer, 67; Moo, 111; Nystrom, 93)
- The implanted word is necessary for our “perfection” (cf. Jas 1:4; Nystrom, 93)
- Uprooting moral filth and wickedness and fertilizing with humility should lead to growth (Motyer, 68)
- **If the gospel takes root, the gospel makes fruit!**



## JAMES 1:21 SAVE YOUR SOULS



- Though **soul** [ψυχή | *psyche*] can refer to our inner self that “transcends the earthly” (BDAG, 1099), **soul** here likely refers to a “**whole person**” (UBS, 47; Osborne, 40; Blomberg/Kamell, 89; cf. **Dt 6:5; Jn 10:11**; Job 33:28; Mk 8:35; Ac 2:41; Davids U, 54; cf. McCartney, 118).
- 11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his **life** [*psyche*] for the sheep. (Jn 10:11, NIV; Davids U, 54)
- The gospel can save our entire selves (Blomberg/Kamell, 88)
- Though it may refer to one’s life being **preserved** by avoiding violence (McKnight, 144), likely refers to being **saved** on the Last Day, the Day of Judgment (Davids U, 54; Adamson, 81-82; cf. Jas 2:14, 4:12; UBS, 47; cf. Jas 1:12, 2:12-14, 3:1, 5:5, 7, 15; Osborne, 40; cf. Moo, 112; Johnson, 202-203; McKnight, 144; McCartney, 119)
- 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will **save** them from **death** and cover over a multitude of sins. (Jas 5:20, NIV; UBS, 47; McCartney, 119). Being saved likely refers to having **eternal life** (NIDNTTE, 732)
- James is not referring to a Christian’s **conversion** but to a Christian’s **culmination** (Moo, 111)



## JAMES 1:21 SAVE YOUR SOULS



- Salvation can be spoken of in **past tense** – Christ’s sacrificial death that saved us is already done (cf. **Jn 19:30; Tit 3:4-7**; Motyer, 66; cf. Rom 8:24-25; Nystrom, 93)
- 30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “**It is finished.**” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (Jn 19:30, NIV; Motyer, 66)
- Salvation can be spoken of in the **present tense** (cf. 1 Cor 15:2, 2 Cor 2:15; Motyer, 67; cf. 1 Pet 1:9; Osborne, 40; cf. 1 Cor 1:18; Nystrom, 93)
- 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Cor 1:18, NIV; Nystrom, 93)
- Salvation can be spoken of in **future tense** – since it will not be consummated until Jesus comes back (cf. 1 Pet 1:5; Rom 5:9; Motyer, 67; cf. Rom 13:11, Php 2:12; 1 Th 5:9; 1 Tim 4:16; 2 Tim 4:18; Osborne, 41; cf. Moo P, 88; cf. Guthrie, 226; cf. Rom 8:21-23; Nystrom, 93)
- 27 Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to **bring salvation** to those who are waiting for him. (Heb 9:27-28, NIV; Osborne, 41; Moo P, 88)



## JAMES 1:19-21 OUT WITH THE WORLDLINESS, IN WITH THE WORD

- **Contrast: Humbly accept** the truthful word; **strip off** moral filth (Stulac 1:21; cf. Osborne, 40)
- To fear the Lord is to **hate evil**; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. (Pr 8:13, NIV)
- Let those who love the Lord **hate evil**, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked. (Ps 97:10, NIV)
- 9 Love must be sincere. **Hate what is evil**; cling to what is good. (Rom 12:9, NIV)
- **Contrast:** Though evil is prevalent **outside**, we must allow the word to take root on the **inside** (Stulac 1:21)
- **Contrast:** Moral filth and evil **kills**, the implanted gospel message **saves** (Stulac 1:21)



## JAMES 1:19-21 CONCLUSION



- **Because** God gives us spiritual birth through the word of the gospel (Jas 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23), we should strip off all evil (Jas 1:21; 1 Pet 2:1), and accept and crave God’s word (Jas 1:21; 1 Pet 2:2; *Nystrom, 93; cf. McCartney, 119*)
- Especially in times of trials, we need to humbly accept that being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger is the godly, righteous course of action (*Stulac 1:21*). Accepting the word humbly is better than speaking words angrily (*Nystrom, 89*)
- We need to tame our tongues – not gossiping or speaking rashly in anger (*Nystrom, 103*), Be wise: we often think God is on our side (*Nystrom, 103*); are we on God’s side?
- Sticks and stones... Words are powerful; they can “wound and heal” (*Nystrom, 103*)
- “The **great talker is rarely a great listener**, and never is the ear more firmly closed than when anger takes over.” (*Motyer, 65*). “A bad temper is opposed to God’s holiness” (*Osborne, 39*)
- “The truly wise and godly person in scripture is not the one who always has something to say but the person who listens to others, prayerfully considers, and only then speaks in measured tones.” (*Dauids U, 39*)



## JAMES 1:19-21 CONCLUSION



- “A simple but effective set of rules is this: Could the sharing of this information have the effect of harming someone? Is there any possibility that my motivation for sharing this information is less than pure? If the answer to either is yes, then perhaps the matter should not be pursued.” (Nystrom, 104)
- Accepting and acting upon God’s word can save us from destructive courses of sinful action (Stulac 1:21)
- Unrighteous anger does not produce the righteous conduct that God requires of us – nor the right relationships between people He desires (Johnson, 200; Blomberg/Kamell, 86), nor God’s justice.
- There is a difference between righteous (e.g., the prophets: Amos 4:1-3; Nystrom, 105; cf. Amos 4, 6; Blomberg/Kamell, 96) and self-righteous anger (Nystrom, 105). The OT Prophets often spoke harshly and even with sarcasm – as God’s mouthpieces (Is 44:6-20; Jer 7:1-8:3; Amos 4, 6; Blomberg/Kamell, 96)
- Christ cleared out the temple (Mt 11:15-19), both Jesus and Paul had strong words for hypocrites and false teachers (Matthew 23; Gal 1:6-9; Php 3:2-6; Blomberg/Kamell, 97; cf. 1 Cor 16:22)



## JAMES 1:19-21 CONCLUSION



- We shouldn't use religious language and act like we have righteous indignation when our motives are really self-centered (Blomberg/Kamell, 97)
- During trials, let's ask God to help us to continue to act godly (including being slow to anger (cf. Ex 34:6-7; Blomberg/Kamell, 96)
- We should always be quick to listen to God's word
- James is known/infamous for his emphasis on works; but he emphasizes the "the saving power of God's word, which when it grows strong within us creates Christian character that results in righteous action." (Nystrom, 93)
- **If the gospel takes root, the gospel makes fruit!**
- **Is it in you?**





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