

# SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO WRATH

**SCRIPTURE** - (James 1:16-20) Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. {17} Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. {18} Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. {19} So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; {20} for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

## INTRODUCTION

- A. Our tongue gets us in trouble more than almost any other part of our body
- B. (James 3:2-9) For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. {3} Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. {4} Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. {5} Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! {6} And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. {7} For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. {8} But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. {9} With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

## I. SWIFT TO HEAR

- A. YOU HAVE TWO EARS AND ONLY ONE MOUTH THEREFORE YOU SHOULD LISTEN TWICE AS MUCH AS YOU SPEAK
- B. JESUS OFTEN SAID "HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR LET HIM HEAR"
- C. WE NEED NOT TO BE DULL OF HEARING - (Heb 5:11) of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.
- D. LISTENING BRINGS WISDOM
  - 1. (Prov 1:5) A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,
  - 2. (Prov 8:33) Hear instruction and be wise, And do not disdain it.
  - 3. (Prov 15:31-32) The ear that hears the rebukes of life Will abide among the wise. {32} He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding.
  - 4. (Prov 19:20) Listen to counsel and receive instruction That you may be wise in your latter days.

## II. SLOW TO SPEAK

- A. QUICK SPEAKING BRINGS SHAME
  - 1. (Prov 18:13) He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him.
  - 2. (Prov 29:20) Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- B. THINK BEFORE SPEAKING - (Prov 15:28) The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.
- C. BE SURE THE TIME IS RIGHT - (Prov 15:23) A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, And a word spoken in due season, how good it is!
- D. WHEN YOU DO SPEAK, SPEAK SOFTLY AND CALMLY - (Prov 15:1) A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.
- E. LACK OF SPEECH CONTROLS MAKE OUR RELIGION USELESS - (James 1:26) If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

### III. SLOW TO WRATH (ANGER)

- A. WRATH BELONGS TO GOD (Rom 12:17-21) Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. {18} If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. {19} Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. {20} Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." {21} Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
- B. OUTBURSTS OF WRATH OR ANGER ARE NOT FITTING FOR CHRISTIANS
  - 1. (2 Cor 12:20) For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;
  - 2. (Gal 5:19-21) Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, {20} idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, {21} envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
  - 3. (Eph 4:31-32) Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. {32} And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.
  - 4. (Col 3:6-10) Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, {7} in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. {8} But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. {9} Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, {10} and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
  - 5. (1 Tim 2:8) I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;
- C. BEING SLOW TO ANGER IS WISE
  - 1. (Prov 14:17) A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of wicked intentions is hated
  - 2. (Prov 14:29) He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly.
  - 3. (Prov 15:18) A wrathful man stirs up strife, But he who is slow to anger allays contention.
  - 4. (Eccl 7:9) Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools.
- D. DO NOT KEEP ANGER WITHIN
  - 1. (Eph 4:26-27) "Be angry, and do not sin" • do not let the sun go down on your wrath, {27} nor give place to the devil.
  - 2. (Eccl 7:9) Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools.

### CONCLUSION

- A. It's not always easy to listen with deep understanding, especially if what you are hearing is not pleasant to you
- B. It's not easy to refrain from speaking when you have a strong desire to say something
- C. It's not easy to control feelings of anger which cause us to lash out at others
- D. It's not easy to make your religion real and apply it to your daily life but that's what God expects us to do
  - 1. (James 1:26) If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.
  - 2. (1 Pet 3:8-12) Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; {9} not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. {10} For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. {11} Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. {12} For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."