



WEEKLY STUDY

Week Four

Pastor Gary led us in learning from a deep “pearl of wisdom” from the book of James. James wrote, “be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry”. When considering the state of our own hearts and the state of the world around us today, these simple words show us what it looks like to follow Jesus more closely.

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional question at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture, follow the daily prayer prompt, and then pray this or your own prayer.

God,
Thank you for the people you have placed in my life that share pearls of wisdom. Help me to see them.
Thank you for the words that guide me in my pursuit of Jesus. Help me to hear them.
Thank you for the transformation these words can bring. Help me to live them.
Today, let me be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.
Steady my heart to your heartbeat, Lord.
Amen

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: JAMES 1.19-25

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.²¹ Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

- This seems to be the core of James' message. The positioning of our hearts before God's word impacts everything. If we are going to live out God's word, we first have to hear it. Upon taking God's word into our hearts and minds, we can actually do what it says. Can you think of a time when after sitting before God's word, in your personal time of study or in corporate worship, and you walked away fully aware that you didn't hear the word? It happens to all of us when we are distracted. Instead of beating ourselves up, we can simply return to God's word and humbly listen. We might be changed!
- *Pray that this teaching would become your filter throughout the day. Ask, "am I quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry in this situation?"*

TUESDAY: JAMES 3.13-16

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵ Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

- In a very real sense, living out of wisdom that comes when you are slow to speak or become angry, is a pathway to avoid envy, selfish ambition and all evil practices. James' words pose another question we might ask of ourselves, "Are my deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom? Or am I acting out of other motives?" How can you know the difference?
- *Pray for God to expose envy and selfish ambition that creeps into your heart. Ask God to transform your motives.*

WEDNESDAY: PROVERBS 13.3, PROVERBS 17.27-28

*Those who guard their lips preserve their lives,
but those who speak rashly will come to ruin. Proverbs 13.3*

*The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint,
and whoever has understanding is even-tempered.*

²⁸ *Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent,
and discerning if they hold their tongues. Proverbs 17.27-28*

- James is inviting us to yet another shift in perspective. When we have moments in our lives that seem perfect, we might be tempted to give credit to ourselves or our own actions. But God gives us good and perfect gifts and gives us life so that the good gifts might grow.
- *Repeat this prayer today, "God and Father of heavenly lights, every good and perfect gift is from you."*

THURSDAY: EPHESIANS 4.29-32

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

- Paul writes about what happens when we do begin to speak out of wisdom that comes through listening. As we speak to others in ways that build them up, they will want to listen. This both requires and leads to the removal of all kinds of division in the community. Can you picture your community living in this way? What would change?
- *Pray for words that will build up those you are in community with.*

FRIDAY: ECCLESIASTES 3.1,7

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be silent and a time to speak,*

- Ecclesiastes is full of wisdom. This passage from chapter three is probably the most well known section. There is a time to be silent and a time to speak. We don't have a lot of silence in our world today. What about in your prayer life? Do you leave room for God to speak to you?
- *Listen to God in prayer today. Leave plenty of space to listen for the voice of God.*

SATURDAY: PSALM 4.4

*Tremble and do not sin;
when you are on your beds,
search your hearts and be silent.*

- David records these words knowing that there will be trembling, fear, and even anger in this life. His call here is that God's people would not react out of that fear, rather that they would listen in the quiet. The world tends to slow down at night when we are preparing for sleep. What are the quiet spaces in your daily life where you can search your heart and be silent before God?
- *Pray in the quiet spaces of your day. Pray that your actions would not be born out of fear or anger but from the voice of God.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Pastor Gary shared these words:

“We learn to do by doing. These are hard and difficult words so let’s practice them:

- I am sorry
- I was wrong
- I need help
- I don’t know

These four phrases are liberating. They are pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, and full of mercy and good fruit. They speak to the very heartbeat of James. These four phrases will give birth to something new and beautiful in you. They are the fruit of the wisdom that comes from above.”

Where can you incorporate these words into your daily routine?