

## Scripture (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup> So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; <sup>20</sup> for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. <sup>21</sup> Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

## Lesson

James again addresses the reader in his love as a brother in Jesus. He continues to encourage his audience, perhaps realizing his writing will likely be a rebuke, and one in love. He cares so much for them (and us) that he keeps us reassured of his heart for us, and also **that he is subject to the same Lord.**

As God has promised, He has set out to transform each of us into a new creature, someone who will become more and more like Jesus. And why? Because it is for His Glory we would want to become like Jesus as much as possible, because what He is is good, because in doing so it furthers His Kingdom, and because we are in service to God. **James addresses all three defensive fronts of our person, circling in from the outer perimeter, then revealing each layer, to finally get to the heart.** This is the goal of God's Word, and only the Word can do it.

The change God promises is not easy or automatic, but requires our work as well. Dealing with us as His children, He lovingly provides the means to make this happen through the Word and It's conviction in our heart. **Our responsibility is to keep ourselves in the Truth as much as possible (Mk 4:9), and once in It, to do everything we can to make the most of It.** We must be always alert to the opportunity to hear the Message.

Our first line of defense, for both the good and the bad passing by us every day, is in choosing what we allow ourselves to hear. **To be brought next to our consideration, we must first choose to listen.** As for God's Word, we must always be quick in opening our ears to hear His Truth. Always, ask the Holy Spirit for understanding of the Truth as you consider every teaching's value before allowing it any closer to your heart. **(Jn 14:16-18, Jn 14:26)** God always gives us the opportunity to flee or embrace.

**Choosing to hear, next we must contemplate what has been presented,** but not come to any premature conclusions. God has made us so it is impossible to speak and listen in the same instant. We should patiently consider the issue, because it takes time to contemplate. **(Ps 1:2, Josh 1:8)** The Truth is meant to be meditated on, and a bridled tongue is an asset when confronted with a conviction to change.

The Word is often offensive to our fallen heart because It challenges the core of who we are when It reveals our sin, and It's demands can be difficult. But this is exactly what It is for! **(2 Tim 3:16-17)** Once Saved, we undergo a transformation of our hearts and mind under the discipline of the Holy Spirit. Nothing else can get to the bottom of the problem except God's Word. **The Word is special in It's nature that It is 'implanted', grafted into the believer's heart.** Praise God! He provides us with the Word to make that change. **When faced with conviction from the Word, or in any means of God's teaching you, don't resist in anger, but embrace the opportunity to learn and change.** A response in 'wrath' is a response of rebellious denial of the Spirit's Work.

So, in following God's direction by His Word, we must follow through with the opportunity to change given to us. **The sin, revealed to the believer, once confessed, must be repented of.** The outward behavior which once was rooted in that sin should change, now that it's root has been cut off by the Sword of the Word. (**Heb 4:12**) And with this sin set aside, there is now one less issue hindering the next opportunity to receive Truth from God. **When the next opportunity to hear the Truth comes, it is in meekness we should approach It, again removing all of our objections and obstacles, because this is the way that God will change us.** We must obey our new heart from God, the Heart of Christ – our job is to obey this heart and live accordingly. God does not take away the evil we might practice from the heart, nor the opportunities to continue to exercise it through trial and temptation. Our training is in learning to embrace the new parts of our heart, as the Spirit continues to renew it, in the face of our flesh's fallen nature. Through the voucher of Jesus, who knows His flock through a personal and real relationship, our sins are forgiven already, and as of now God already calls us His children. But this is all based on the Promise of Jesus to stand in our place for payment on Judgment Day. And there is no surer Promise to be fulfilled! But until then, there is much work to be done, and God has promised to take us through it. **The Word, Jesus, in the Spirit, 'is able to save your soul.'** **Our Sanctification is directed by this alone.** The Mighty Power of God, hidden from the world in seemingly mere text. (**Mk 4:12**) The world considers it all folly, for it hasn't the key of Faith, necessary to deliver It's payload into our hearts. It is our responsibility to do our part and make the most of this opportunity as good stewards, while acknowledging it is possible only through Him.

## Cited Scripture

### Mark 4:9

<sup>9</sup>And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

### John 14:16-18

<sup>16</sup>And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- <sup>17</sup>the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup>I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

### John 14:26

<sup>26</sup>But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

### Psalms 1:2

<sup>2</sup>But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

### Joshua 1:8

<sup>8</sup>This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

### 2 Timothy 3:16-17

<sup>16</sup>All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

### Hebrews 4:12

<sup>12</sup>For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

### Mark 4:12

<sup>12</sup>so that

"Seeing they may see and not perceive,  
And hearing they may hear and not understand;  
Lest they should turn,  
And their sins be forgiven them."