

### **More Wisdom From a Half Brother**

I don't know about you but I talk way too much and listen way too little. Somehow I tend to think that my ideas are better than other people's ideas. James reminds us that we really need to reverse that process. In the book of James Chapter 1 verse 19 James tells us this

*"Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters. You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has power to save your souls. But, don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise you are only fooling yourselves."*

That is powerful stuff. These verses speak of anger that erupts when our egos get bruised. They focus on our needs and not the needs of others. If you and I were to put a mental stopwatch on our conversations, and keep track of how much we talk and how much we listen, how would that balance out for you? To be honest I am a little afraid to even think about that one.

James, I think, knew exactly how we would feel about the notion our speaking more than listening because he goes on to say in verse 23:

*"For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But, if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says, and don't forget what you heard, God will bless you for doing it."*

James reminds us that we need to care for the needs of others before we care for the needs of ourselves. He reminds us that there is freedom in following a perfect God. Think about that for a moment. James says *"there is freedom in following the perfect law."* The reality of life is that we can never find happiness in ourselves. We can only find freedom and happiness in following God and caring for God's people.

My challenge for this week is to make it your mission to listen more than you speak. Take someone out to lunch and spend more time talking about what is going on in their life than what is going on in yours.

Until next week

Jeff

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