QUICK, SLOW, SLOW

"My dear brothers (and sisters), take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires." James 1:19-20

I can't tell you how many times I've read James; it's one of my favorite books because James seems to have a pretty good grip on our humanity and the challenges we face simply because we have made the choice to believe in God's Word. He tells it like it is; no guessing needed about what he is trying to say. Non- (or pre-) believers don't have as much of a struggle with a lot of things having to do with attitudes that believers do because they're not using the same standards of behavior. These verses were pointed out again to me yesterday and I think I always need to be reminded to take stock and pay attention to where my heart is.

James says"***everyone should be quick to listen***". **IF I REALLY PAY ATTENTION** *to those words I have to admit I have that part and the next part* ***("slow to speak")*** *backwards. I'm more* quick to *speak* and slow to *listen*. *Do you ever catch yourself preparing your next words while someone else is speaking? Dennis reminded me that we also heard* **"when our <u>mouths</u> are moving, we're not listening"** *and it's the same thing as* **when our *<u>minds</u>* are moving we're not listening with our *<u>hearts</u>*.** *I*

really have to practice listening with my heart to not just the words being spoken but the emotion behind them instead of preparing my reply before whoever I'm talking with is finished. ***Hearing*** *is not the same as* ***listening.*** *Jesus was a perfect example of this because He listened to people's words (and their perceived needs) and then spoke to the deeper needs of their hearts.*

"Slow to speak" means just what it says: don't be so quick with a reply. Col.4:6 says, ***"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."*** Being ***"slow to speak"*** also reminds us to allow people finish what they are saying before we jump in. When we do that, we're communicating non-verbally that what they're saying isn't near as important as what we have to say. Ouch! If we are responding with grace and using Jesus' example, we will know ***"how to answer everyone"*** with wisdom rather than just spouting off the first thing that comes to mind. The implication of this phrase is that *we don't know how* to answer and need tools that have been provided for us by our God who knows us inside out.

Finally, we must to be ***"slow to anger".*** If we think about the circumstances when we become angry or respond in anger to the words of others, we may ***sometimes*** find it is either that the words ***hurt*** us or we feel our ***"rights" or value*** have been diminished. I know that is true for me: I grew up not being allowed to have anger so my deep emotion will feel like hurt or fear rather than anger. When we understand our need for being ***"quick to listen"*** and ***"slow to speak",*** we may be able to have a better hold on our tempers; responding with grace and love and not reacting in anger, hearing people's hearts rather than their words and choosing to not take offense. Where does our anger come from? ***"Man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires." James 1:20***

Key phrases for this week-----

QUICK TO LISTEN…..SLOW TO SPEAK……SLOW TO BECOME ANGRY

Realtors say the most important thing is location, location, location but I say the most important thing is practice, practice, practice and process, process, process as we are in training to become ***"mature and complete, not lacking anything."*** James 1:4

Practice makes perfect!!
Georgia