

LIFE IS HARD

Part 4

Key Scriptures: James 1:19-20; 21; 22-26; Ephesians 4:29; Proverbs 15:1

1. Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What is a way you might be critical but in a kind way? (Like “Bless your heart” from a southern Mom might really mean “You so crazy!”)
- What is a pet peeve that you have? Explain how it might be fine for everyone else, but you just can’t take it.
- Which person in your life causes you to feel the biggest emotions? Why?

2. Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- How does an angry reaction lead to more problems?
- What comes to mind when you hear this: “When you have an angry reaction, you have more than just a problem to solve, you have a conflict to resolve”?
- Asking questions leads to a better understanding of others. James says it this way, “human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.” So what does produce righteousness? Why?
- What are harsh, filthy, and unwholesome words? (Not a list, but what kind of words are they?!) Why does James say, “Get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent” especially in regards to words?

3. Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- James was writing this to a group of people who were juggling a lot of problems. How do you handle an extra problem thrown at you?
- Highly effective people seek first to understand and then to be understood. On a scale of 1 (never listens) to 10 (always listens) how well do you listen? Why?
- Why does James say we need to keep a tight rein on our tongues? Is there any value in sayings like, “Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”?
- Do you just listen to what God’s word tells you to do? Or do you do what God’s word tells you to do? What is the difference?

4. Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Pray that God reveals to you this week the harsh, unwholesome, and filthy words that you may use (or think) and start to remove them from your vocabulary.
- Pray and observe how listening and asking good questions avoid conflict and pray for ways to resolve and forgive conflict that already exists in your life.

5. Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- May a list of whom you need to go and resolve conflicts that you created with harsh words. Ask forgiveness and practice listening and asking clarifying questions with them.
- While you may not have time to learn how to juggle, have perspective on how many problems you or others are juggling and try to solve one instead of adding one.

