



CHOOSE LISTENING



Highlight Scripture: “Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.” **James 1:19**



Explain: We live in a world of talk. Talk, talk, talk. Speak, speak, speak. Everyone, it seems, wants to be heard. We have become a culture full of talking heads, regardless of where we find ourselves. And the chatter is deafening. Into this noise comes the words of James in chapter 1 verse 19, “Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.” This verse is almost impossible to understand by a culture intent on talking. We have it backwards: we are quick to speak, slow to hear.

Do you remember the story of Martha and Mary in Luke chapter 10 verses 38 through 42? Luke offers us a helpful contrast in speaking and listening. Martha was frantically trying to make dinner preparations for Jesus and the disciples. I envision her running around the house, uttering things under her breath like, “I can’t believe Jesus is here on such short notice” and “Why doesn’t Mary get in here and help me?” Unlike Martha in verse 39, it tells us what Mary was doing: “And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to His teaching.”

Not surprisingly, Martha gets a bit frustrated at Mary’s lack of effort with the event. So Martha does what we probably all would do under similar circumstances - she starts talking. In verses 40 through 42, it says, “But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.’” We are not left to wonder which course of action Jesus commands. We see it in His gentle rebuke: “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

Mary was quick to listen and slow to speak. She knew when to be quiet. In a culture full of chatter, I want to learn how to be silent, so I can hear what the Lord wants to teach me. He’s speaking. Am I listening?



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Apply: Today we are going to use our Gospel Tool as a reminder to stop talking and start listening to God and others. Also, we will use The Cause Circle to help us be more intentional about sharing Jesus' message.

- Pass out the W.A.I.T. Stickers (Why Am I Talking) and place them on your binder or phone as a reminder to choose daily to listen.
- Then pass out The Cause Circle and explain: Prayer - Care - Share
 - **Prayer:** It all starts with prayer! Praying for the people we are seeking to reach with the Gospel prepares their hearts to hear the Good News of Jesus.
 - **Care:** Jesus modeled how important it is to care for people's needs. In the same way, we must love those we are trying to reach. We do this by listening to them and caring for them.
 - **Share:** After prayer and care, we must lovingly share the Gospel message clearly and confidently. When we invite someone to put their faith in Christ, we are inviting them to make the best decision of their lives.



Respond: Let's take some time before we leave and fill out our The Cause Circle card.



Bottom Line: Choose today what James suggests in our highlight scripture; be quick to listen and slow to speak.

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