

# 27: MEASURED PACE, MEASURED WORDS: STRENGTH ON THE TRAIL

By [John Leavy](#)

In [Week 6: Character Under Pressure](#)

3 Min read



***“Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” — James 1:19-20***

Epictetus (c. 50–135 AD) is credited with saying, “We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.”

James 1:19–20 speaks to something most men don’t like to admit—we are often more reactive than we realize. We call it decisiveness, leadership, and passion. But beneath the surface, its impatience, pride, or the feeling we know better.

Here’s what often goes unsaid: reacting feels powerful in the moment. Raising your voice, shutting down a conversation, firing off the sharp text—it creates the illusion of control. But Scripture is clear. The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. It produces distance. Regret. Collateral damage on the trail behind us.

Responding is different than quickly reacting. It requires restraint and listening long enough to understand, rather than preparing a counterattack. On the trail of discipleship,

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maturity is measured less by how quickly a man speaks and more by how steadily he listens.

## **APPLICATION**

To respond rather than react, a man has to slow his internal pace. That's not easy to do. Many of us live with engines constantly revving—mentally rehearsing arguments, defending our positions, anticipating disrespect. So, when pressure comes, reaction is already locked and loaded.

James gives us a sequence: quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. Notice hearing comes first. Not fixing, not correcting. Hearing. That alone challenges most men. Men are wired to solve problems.

On the trail, wise hikers pause at unstable ground. They test their footing. They look ahead. Responding works the same way. When criticism hits or conflict surfaces, pause. Breathe. Ask a clarifying question instead of delivering your opinion. Often what triggers us is not the issue itself but what it touches—our ego, our insecurity, our need to be right.

We need to understand that uncontrolled reactions reveal areas where Christ's hand still needs to work. The Spirit is not in the business of shaming a man for noticing his anger. He wants to teach him to master it.

Over time, steady responses build trust. Your wife feels safer. Your kids open up. Other men lean in. Not because you are loud, but because your footsteps are firmly planted.

## **LIVE IT OUT**

This week, don't speak immediately or offer a sharp response. Ask one question before offering one opinion. Practice listening without interruption. Let James 1:19 guide your pace. Strong men are not the quickest reactors; they are the most disciplined responders on the trail.

### ***PRAY THIS..***

*"Lord, help me listen more and offer my opinion less."*

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*Information lays the foundation—  
Practice builds the man.*

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