



MAIN SCRIPTURE:

James 1:19 NIV

MAIN POINT:

You never win an argument if you lose the relationship.

JESUS CONNECTION:

When we have faith in Jesus, our broken relationship with God is restored.

THE WHAT

WHAT are we talking about and WHY does it matter to me? (2-4 min)

ME

- Today our world is pretty divided on a lot of things. No matter who you are, where you live, or what kind of personality you have, you have experienced what it feels like to be in an argument.
- Speaker Note: Tell a personal story about the way you argued growing up, including who you most often argued with and what about.
- Everyone has a go-to style for arguing. In the same way, nearly everybody
 has something they want to fight for—a subject that gets you ready to
 throw down.

WE

- Our worlds are full of arguments and the options are endless.
- When the world around you is in constant conflict, most people tend to do one of three things:
 - o Go straight to anger.
 - o Feel torn.
 - Couldn't care less.
- When we *really* get involved in an argument, we all just want one thing: to win.
- We all have a few tactics that we've practiced to help us win—through yelling or silence, ghosting or fighting, talking to the person or talking about them so everybody else knows how wrong they are, etc.
- Whether in our homes, on social media, or in the culture we observe around us, we are surrounded by big questions with big arguments FOR and AGAINST nearly everything.
- With that in mind—in a time with unavoidable arguments—what are we supposed to do?

TRANSITION

How can we get better at arguing?

SO WHAT

So WHAT does this mean for my faith and life with God? (6-8 min)

GOD

 We're going to look at a passage from the book of James, who was the brother of Jesus.

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SO WHAT CONTINUED

GOD CONTINUED

- What makes James so interesting is that he didn't grow up thinking that Jesus was the Son of God. He grew up thinking that Jesus was just his older brother.
- Can you imagine your older brother walking around acting like he was God? (Okay, some of you can but that's a different story).
- The point is we can assume James responded in anger sometimes because they were siblings. They may not have fought about the remote control, TikTok, or Snapchat, but I'm willing to guess they had conflict. That's why it's interesting to read what James had to say about conflict, tension, and convincing others that you're right. James writes this...
- READ JAMES 1:19 NIV.
- When Jesus left home and started teaching in the Judean countryside and travelling around with messages about what God was like, what did James do? He stayed away.
- The point is we can assume James responded that way because they were siblings. I'm willing to guess they had conflict.
- That's why it's interesting to read what James had to say about conflict, tension, and convincing others that you're right.
- James probably spent most of his life doing what most of us have done
 with our siblings—being quick to speak and slow to listen. From what
 we read in the Gospels, James wasn't super supportive of what Jesus
 was doing. I could even imagine that he was probably...
 - O Quick to tell others that his brother was crazy.
 - Quick to tell Jesus that there was no way He was who He claimed to be.
 - Quick to defend what he thought and why he thought it.
 - O Quick to make a point, take a stand, and defend his position.
 - o Quick to fight.
 - Quick to try and convince everyone that he was right.
- That is, until James realized he had been wrong about all of it. By
 listening, most likely to Jesus' friends and followers before, or even
 Jesus himself, James began to see something he didn't see before. His
 brother wasn't acting like God. He was God in a body.
- When James changed his mind about Jesus and saw Him for who He really was, it put everything else in perspective—including conflict.
- James instructs us to listen first. Hear things from the other person's perspective. Listen first with the intent of learning instead of trying to change someone's mind.
- James said that we should be slow to speak and slow to become angry.
- And this is important, because it doesn't mean that we shouldn't speak at all. It doesn't mean we sit back and take everything thrown at us.
- It means that we don't speak *reactively*. We pause, take a deep breath, and compose our thoughts and emotions before speaking.
- We all know what it's like to be quick to speak and quick to become angry. Often the people we're fighting with will matter far longer than the thing we're arguing about.
- You never win an argument if you lose the relationship.
- Maybe, instead of asking how do I win the argument, the question we should be asking is, "How do I win the relationship?"

JESUS CONNECTION

- Our relationships with God are broken because of sin. Sin is anytime we go our own way instead of God's way. So telling a lie, being mean to someone, cheating on a test, these are all sins and because we are born with a sin nature our relationships with God are broken.
- Just like we don't want a broken relationship with others, God didn't want a broken relationship with us.

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NOTES

JESUS CONNECTION CONT. **NOTES** Our relationships with God So God sent Jesus to die on the cross to rescue us from our sin and death; we are saved by having faith in Jesus Christ. When we have faith in Jesus, our broken relationship with God is restored. **TRANSITION** God wants good for our lives and that includes good relationships. **NOW WHAT** NOW that I know, HOW can I live this out? (2-4 min) YOU Figuring out how to handle arguments or conflict or disagreements has been one of the hardest parts of being a mature human being. It's not easy, but there are a few tips I've discovered that make it a little more possible: Memorize this one verse. (Communicator note: Have students repeat the verse out loud after you. The second time, have them say it with you. The third time, have them say it on their Pause and Pray. Empathize. (Walk a mile in their shoes: Why might they feel the way they do?) WE We may not be able to change the way people behave when it comes to conflict, arguing, or fighting, but we can change how we behave in those situations. That's one of the reasons we think small groups are more important than ever! So, as you head out, think about one relationship that would be better if you practiced this verse. Then, challenge yourself to do just that: be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry with (fill in the blank with their name). **PRAY** Close your time together in prayer.