

*This week's focus is "Living in the Dash" devotional series, focusing on how we **react** to criticism—not just with words, but with our **expressions, tone, and attitude**.*

Day 2: Reactions That Reflect Christ

Scripture:

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires." — James 1:19–20 (NIV)

Devotion:

It's not just *what* we say when we're criticized—it's *how* we react that speaks volumes about our character and our walk with Christ.

Sometimes, even when we don't say a word, our body language does all the talking. An eye roll. A sarcastic smirk. A heavy sigh. A clenched jaw. A cold shoulder. These non-verbal cues often reveal the condition of our heart more clearly than any words could.

Other times, our tone betrays us. We may respond with sharpness, sarcasm, or passive-aggressiveness—all ways of defending ourselves without appearing outright hostile. And of course, there are moments when anger rises quickly, and we respond with words we later regret.

God calls us to a different standard.

James reminds us to be *quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry*. This doesn't mean we ignore hurtful comments or bottle up our feelings. It means we pause, breathe, and invite the Holy Spirit into our reaction. Our instinct may be to lash out or shut down—but God's way is to respond with grace, maturity, and peace.

Reactions are often instant. But as followers of Christ, we are called to be intentional. Instead of snapping, we stop. Instead of hardening, we humble

ourselves. Instead of showing offense on our face, we reflect the gentleness of Jesus in our countenance.

The truth is, we don't just live out our testimony in the big moments—we live it in *the dash*. The daily, subtle choices. And one of the most powerful choices we make is how we respond when we feel misunderstood, misjudged, or misrepresented.

Prayer:

Lord, help us to respond—not react. Teach us to guard our words, our expressions, and our attitude when we face criticism. Give us a gentle and humble heart that reflects You, even when we feel wronged or hurt. We surrender our reactions to You, and we invite Your Spirit to shape our response. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Discussion Questions:

- Think about the last time someone criticized you. What was your immediate reaction—verbally or non-verbally?
- Why do our facial expressions and tone matter when we're trying to reflect Christ?
- What practical step can you take to pause and process before responding in anger or pride?