



James – The Lightning Bolt

Adapted from “12 Disciples” series by Dennis Marquardt.

If there is one thing that can keep a Christian from being a productive servant of Christ, it is the beast we call “temper.” A quick temper has ruined more believers’ testimonies than many other issues, hence the many warnings in the Bible about the wrong use of “anger” such as *fighting*, *murmuring* against one another, or disputing.

Anger that expresses itself in ungodly ways only creates more pain for those who unleash it as well as for those who are its object!

A man named Ralph Milton had a temper problem.

One morning Ralph woke up at five o’clock to a noise that sounded like someone repairing boilers on his roof. Still in his pajamas, he went into the back yard to investigate. He discovered a woodpecker on

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his T.V. antenna pounding its little brain out trying to poke a hole in the metal antenna.

He was so mad at the stupid bird that he picked up a rock and threw it at the bird, it sailed high but missed the bird. Traveling over his house the stone came down on the other side with a crashing sound of glass shattering! He had hit his car's windshield and broke it!

Now angry at the bird who continued to peck away on the antenna, and now with a broken windshield, he kicked a nearby clod of dirt in anger – only to remember too late that he didn't have any shoes or socks on! The pain signals running up from his injured foot reminded him of the high price of a quick temper, as did the price tag on the new windshield!¹

Among the Disciples, James was the "lightning bolt." However, the Holy Spirit tames his quick temper and sense of superiority. The James who learned to be controlled by the Spirit of God instead of his own quick temper became one of the great leaders in the early

¹ "Anger is Its Own Reward," Preaching Today, February 1996, <http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/1996/february/1597.html> (accessed July 21, 2017).

church. The Bible teaches us that God desires to tame our quick-tempered spirit if we have a tendency toward one. Once channeled, the fire of the "lightning bolt spirit" can be quite powerful, but if it strikes without thought, it can leave nasty scars and terrible damage.

“COURAGE” Level Questions

Exercise #1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Mark 3:17 (ESV) James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder);

Mark 10:35–45 (ESV) And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” And they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know

that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

C1: In these verses, Jesus called James “*Boanerges*,” (pronounced *BO-uh-NER-jus*) which means *Son of Thunder*. Why do you think Jesus called him this?

C2: From these verses, why do you think the other disciples began to feel indignant with James? Have you ever acted in a way that made others feel indignant towards you? Describe the situation.

C3: If someone was to nick-name you based upon your reputation, what name(s) might they give you? Why do you think that is?

C4: James came from an influential family. How do you think this might have impacted his “quick tempered” nature?

C5: James and his brother asked Jesus for a place of honor without realizing the cost. Describe a time in your life when you wanted a place of honor without realizing the cost involved?

Exercise #2: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Luke 9:51–56 (ESV) When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a

village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.

C6: In these verses, you can see how a fiery spirit can cause you to want to harm others, but Jesus calms the situation with a peaceful resolution. Describe a time in your life when you allowed your anger or temper to control the situation? What was the outcome?

C7: Are there situations or occasions where having a “fiery spirit” might be a good thing, and useful in the hands of God?

C8: How can a man with a *fiery spirit* discipline or submit himself to God so as to be more used by the Holy Spirit?

Exercise #3: Over the next 30 days write down four examples of how a man may be considered a “son of thunder” in how he allows anger to govern him, rather than the Spirit of God.

Example 1:

Example 2:

Example 3:

Example: 4

“STRENGTH” Level Questions

Exercise #1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Mark 3:17 (ESV)

Mark 10:35–45 (ESV)

S1: In these verses, Jesus calls James to follow Him and later gives him the nick-name “*Boanerges*” (pronounced *BO-uh-NER-jus*), which translates to, “*Son of Thunder.*” Why would Jesus give him this nick-name and how much did James’ reputation have to do with it?

S2: James allows his social status to ask Jesus to sit in a place of honor without understanding the cost. Describe a time in your life when you have sought a place of honor because of your status?

S3: James' request to sit in a place of high honor next to Christ caused the other disciples to become indignant with him. Have your attitude or actions ever caused you to bring a similar division or disruption to your family or church community? If so, how can you resolve any division(s) you may have caused?

S4: James had a quick temper and a sense of superiority, but both were eventually calmed by the Spirit of God. How can you allow the Spirit of God to do a similar work in you?

Exercise #2: Please read and answer or discuss the following.

Luke 9:51–56 (ESV)

S5: James is often called *the lightning bolt* due to his fiery temper. Has your anger, when out of control, caused you to be considered a *lightning bolt* of sorts? Why?

S6: Is it ever ok to be angry? What is the Bible's admonition about being angry?

S7: How can a man master his anger to a place where he can be angry, but not sin?

S8: Having a fiery spirit can be a good thing when used in the power of the Holy Spirit. Give specific examples in your current walk with Christ, and in your local church community, where that fiery spirit can be used to advance the Kingdom of God?

Exercise #3: Discuss the following situations and base your potential reaction as either a fiery reaction to the circumstances or having a fiery spirit but operating by the Spirit of God. Then discuss how you can improve your reactions to these situations.

- After working all day, you come home to find the house a mess.

- Driving home, someone cuts you off in traffic.

- You see a person on the corner who appears to be in great need, but in your heart you resent him/her because they seem healthy enough to work.

- A co-worker knows how to easily get you angry and frequently does so. He or she starts “pushing your buttons” on a really bad day.

“ENDURANCE” Level Questions

Exercise #1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Mark 3:17 (ESV)

Mark 10:35–45 (ESV)

E1: Jesus meets James and gives him the name “*Boanerges*”, (pronounced *BO-uh-NER-jus*), which translates to, “*Son of Thunder*.” This name is primarily based upon the reputation of James. How would your reputation stand up to sharing Christ with others? How can you improve your reputation?

E2: James had a sense of superiority because of his social status. Have you allowed your status somewhere to define your walk as a godly Christian man?

E3: When James requests to sit in a place of high honor next to Christ, Jesus answers, *“Those who want to be great or first shall be a servant/slave of others.”* When you hear the word servant, what comes to your mind? How do you rate your servanthood?

Exercise #2: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Luke 9:51–56 (ESV)

E4: In these verses, James wants to **call down thunder** in a situation that does not go his way. Have you ever felt that way about a situation or a conflict? Did the Holy Spirit prick your heart about it after?

E5: A quick and fiery temper can keep you from being a productive witness of Jesus Christ. Describe some times when your temper may have hindered your effectiveness as a witness for Christ?

E6: Out-of-control anger can cause division within families and churches. But righteous anger can spark change, motivate hearts, and aid in spiritual warfare. How can a man allow the Spirit of God to use his fiery spirit to disciple and lead other men?

Exercise #3: Write out a plan to help gently disciple another man who has a *fiery nature* that has caused division in his family?