

## **Still Pursuing the Dream: Pursue the Ministry of Presence**

### **Ready:**

“Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.” — James 1:19

### **Set**

“I left my wallet.”

These were the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. before boarding a late plane in my hometown of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Ahead of speaking earlier that night at Mt. Zion Baptist Church on March 19th, 1968, Dr. King desired to take a short nap at a nearby church of a friend. His name was Father Peter Quinn.

Though of different races and denominations, Dr. King and Father Quinn had worked together during the turbulent '60s in Mississippi. When Dr. King spoke that night, many listened—many who felt like they didn't have a voice. Father Quinn, beloved by so many in the community, also listened but took what he had heard for years from Dr. King a step further. He pursued relationship.

Prior to the raising of Lazarus from a closed tomb, Jesus said, *“Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me”* (John 11:41-42).

Jesus acknowledged openly, perhaps for the hope of divine and brotherly relationships, that God always listens. **Always.**

When Dr. King said, “I left my wallet,” on that cold night, Father Quinn again listened. After Dr. King's plane departed, Father Quinn went home and found the wallet. Early the next morning, he traveled over 100 miles to give a friend his wallet. Two weeks later, Dr. King was assassinated.

James 1:19 speaks to this piece of history and gives perhaps tools on how to pursue, love, and serve better.

As we celebrate Dr. King and his legacy and as coaches and athletes in our communities, remember:

- **BE QUICK TO LISTEN:** Incline to hear with hopes to pursue relationship.
- **BE SLOW TO SPEAK:** Reserve your voice with hopes to pursue understanding.
- **BE SLOW TO ANGER:** Delay being offended with hopes to pursue community.

### **Go**

- How can we practice listening intentionally?
- In what ways can we be more present?
- Does true community begin inside or outside of us?

## **Workout**

Philippians 4:9; Proverbs 20:12; Hebrews 10:24

## **Overtime**

“Lord, I know You as my Father. You always hear me. Please help me to not only listen intentionally but to choose wisely the life-giving words to speak and to control any unhealthy emotions while pursuing relationships. We humbly ask in the name of Jesus, Amen.”

## **Bible Reference:**

James 1:19

Philippians 4:9

Proverbs 20:12

Hebrews 10:24



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