

May 29, 2022

Attitudes In Conflict, Part 2

by Warren Berkley

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Prov. 15:1)

One of my earliest memories of an oft quoted tidbit of wisdom was, “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me.” Parents and teachers used the little rhyme to soothe and calm us when we were the objects of verbal bullying.

Long after my childhood I encountered a retort: “The blow of a whip raises a welt, but a blow of the tongue crushes the bones,” (Sirach 28:17, RSV).

Which is it? Let’s take Prov. 15:1 as authentic: “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Words can kill relationships (Jas. 3:1-12), discourage children (Col. 3:21), lead people into sin (Matt. 7:15), destroy neighbors (Prov. 11:9), spread conflict (Prov. 16:28), and utter blasphemy against God (Jas. 2:7).

So let’s recognize the value of “soft answers.” This isn’t just about volume, though volume is sometimes a strained function of anger. True. Yet, the “soft answer” of Prov. 15:1 is guarded, not insulting, attentive and with righteous aim. Jesus teaches us that “... each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces

evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks,” (Lk. 6:44,45). The “soft answer” is a response well-thought out, from a good heart. The “hard answer” would be impulsive, selfish and damaging. Perhaps more damaging than sticks or stones.

“A harsh word stirs up anger.” Before we speak, write or post on social media, internal discipline must clarify exactly what our aim is. A common problem is discovered when our responses and remarks are offered quickly. Discipline takes some time; discipline is well-thought out, not impulsive. James offered this simple wisdom, sometimes a challenge: “...let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger,” (Jas. 1:19). Lots of conflict is produced by being too quick to speak. Animosity can just roll off our tongues and into the hearts of those who have done nothing to deserve such invectives. Insults are generally not planned but acts of momentary agitation, hopefully followed by almost instant regret. Political debates quickly degenerate into name-calling, slurs and hyperboles. Religious discussions between opposing parties sometimes become shouting matches where truth is secondary.

And sometimes the harshness is conveyed in how we say something. The words may be correct, but our countenance and tone may not be in harmony with our words and our intent. Beware of the

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.

Important Dates

Our summer meeting with Mike Walls is scheduled for June 19-22

Our fall meeting with Zeke Flores is scheduled for September 18-21

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.

haughty look (Psa. 101:5).

“Anger, expressed in a tumultuous outburst or a hot retort, is not good for the transmitter nor the receiver, and it will cause a bad situation to become immediately worse. How sad that we have not learned this simple lesson. A tongue, out of control, is a terrible thing.”
[1] – Dee Bowman

Prayer Requests

Jack Wilson is still struggling with pain and limited mobility.

Jerry Richardson is still undergoing treatments to strengthen his immune system.

Karen Hallmark has improved but continues to struggle and could use our prayers.

Dinah Williams is in rehab for her foot.

Don Simmons is home and still struggling with his breathing; he is on oxygen at all times.

John Miller (Dyanne Turner's brother) has one chemo treatment left, later this month. He says he feels stronger, and is getting around better

Debbie McMurray had her last chemo treatment but will begin radiation soon.

Jimmy Stinnett is having an irregular heart rhythm.

Sylvia Stinnett is having pain in her neck.

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord's body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord's will.

We are not a part of any larger organization - we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

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