

## Speak Softly and Be Wise!

Most of us have probably heard this: "If you can't say something nice, don't say nothing at all." This phrase has been passed down for generations. Who was the wise man that said it? Paul? Solomon? Jesus? It was none other than Thumper, the rabbit from the movie Bambi. Wise words for a little rabbit, but it was Solomon that spoke the wise words from Proverbs 15:1.

It is not always easy to be the "bigger" person when tempers flare, and we have been told to sometimes "fight fire with fire." Solomon advises the exact opposite, and use gentle words to deflect anger. Think back on your own experiences: how many times when you responded to anger with anger did you feel better? Do you think the situation was improved? It is certainly not the case in my experience. Fighting fire with fire, anger with anger, only begets more fire and anger. The wise man replies with a cooler head, a softer answer, to turn away wrath.

If a person is angry with you, it is almost always better to respond gently, even apologetically. Anger and conflict resolution was a matter of life, death, peace, and war in the times of Solomon, but are times so different today? Think of what is going on in the world today: would the world not be a much better place if proud people approached each other gently?

Do not proliferate anger and hate. The Bible gives many examples of how to react in wrathful situations and the kind of people that God rewards:

Proverbs 15:18, "A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife."

Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

Proverbs 15:28, "The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things."

Be a peacemaker in the world! Choose your words wisely, wait your turn, be slow to anger, and respond gently. It seems so simple but as we all know, it can be so difficult. Luckily we have the Lord, Jesus, and all of his disciples as examples. Even the wisdom of a little rabbit from Bambi can give us a lesson to live by.