

A GENTLE ANSWER

BY ANGUS BUCHAN



We are living in turbulent times and we don't have to be a prophet to see that. Everywhere we look there is anger, there is confusion, there are malicious words being spoken without thought, and there's a lot of hurt taking place.

Early this morning while praying about using this subject as a column, I felt the Holy Spirit direct me to go to The Book of John 8, and to read the story of the adulterous woman and the Pharisees. The story is very simple. The Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus, not primarily for justice, but to try and catch out the Lord so that they could eventually accuse Him and kill Him. Is it not amazing that so often harsh words are just the cover up for alternative reasons and motives which are unseen at the time? The Pharisees came to Jesus and they said, "According to the law of Moses this woman should be stoned, because she was caught in the act of adultery, but what do you say?" Jesus stooped down and He wrote on the ground with his finger (we don't know what He wrote, but He was totally calm and at peace). They continued to provoke Him and question Him. Eventually He stood up and said in John 8:7 (NKJV), "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." Then He stooped down again and commenced to write on the ground.

Proverbs 15:1 says "A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger." Jesus then asked the woman, "Where are your accusers?" She said, "There are none!" He replied, "I don't accuse you either, go and sin no more! Your sins are forgiven." Like never before we need to watch what we say. I read that a harsh word is a word of pain. It is normally a word that causes a lot of hurt and a wise word will promote calm interactions. We need to encourage

one another rather than discourage one another. Sarcasm is the lowest form of wit, because you are always sarcastic at someone else's cost and not your own. We need to be very careful how we speak. The Bible tells us in The Book of James that the tongue is almost like a spark that can start a forest fire. We have seen that happen in our own beloved South Africa. A foolish, careless word spoken can cause so much pain, damage and could even cause a revolution.

But those of us who are ambassadors for Jesus Christ need to start to practice using gentle answers, especially when we are provoked unfairly. People will do that especially if they know that we are followers of Christ. They will try to manipulate and make us angry, but we must respond the same way as our Master, because He says we need to turn the other cheek and go the extra mile. It is not an easy thing to do, especially when those people that are doing it to us are purposefully trying to cause us to deny our stand for God. May the Lord bless you as you follow in His footsteps. ✠