

Strife and the Power of Our Words

I. Looking for Strife in all the Wrong Places!

II. Proverbs 17 – Metaphors for our Words

Better is a dry morsel with quiet
than a house full of feasting⁹ with *strife*.

⁹Whoever covers an offense seeks love,
but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

¹⁴The beginning of strife is like letting out water,
so quit before the quarrel (*strife*) breaks out.

¹⁹Whoever loves transgression loves *strife*;
he who makes his door high seeks destruction.

²⁷Whoever restrains his words has knowledge,
and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.

²⁸Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise;
when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent. – Pvbs. 17:1,9,14,19,27-28

Words of Strife are Oil, Words of the Spirit are Water; They Don't Mix!

III. What is Strife?



IV. What Causes Strife?

What is causing the *quarrels (strife)* and fights among you? Don't they come from the *evil desires* at war within you? – James 4:1

Hatred stirs up trouble, but love forgives all wrongs. – Proverbs 10:12

Where there is strife, *there is pride*, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. – Proverbs 13:10

A *greedy man* stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the LORD will be enriched. – Proverbs 28:25

A *wrathful man* stirs up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeases strife. – Proverbs 15:18

A *troublemaker* plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends. – Proverbs 16:28

So, Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.

²Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. ³And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the Lord. ⁵And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents,⁶so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, ⁷and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock.

⁸Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no *strife* between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen.⁹ ⁹Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left." - Genesis 13:1-9

Now Korah...and Dathan and Abiram...took men. ² *And they rose up* before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. ³ They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then *do you exalt yourselves* above the assembly of the Lord?" ⁴ When Moses heard it, he fell on his face,... ⁸ And Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: ⁹ is it too small a thing for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do service in the tabernacle of the Lord and to stand before the congregation to minister to them, ¹⁰ and that he has brought you near him, and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you? And *would you seek* the priesthood also? ¹¹ Therefore it is against the Lord that you and all your company have gathered together. What is Aaron that you grumble against him?" – Numbers 16:1-11

"For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder." - 2 Corinthians 12:20

V. Strife's Impact (Like a Storm)

"...that they may be one even as we are one." – John 17:22

VI. You might be a quarrelsome person or a person of strife if...

1. You defend every conviction with the same degree of intensity.
2. You are quick to speak and slow to listen.
3. Your favorite Jesus ministry moment is when he cleared the moneychangers tables with a whip.
4. You don't see nuances, and you do not believe in qualifying statements.
5. You're not likely to give the benefit of the doubt.
6. You have no unarticulated opinions.
7. You are unable to sympathize with people different from you.
8. Your first instinct is to criticize; your last instinct is to encourage.
9. You have a small grid, and everything fits in it.
10. You have never changed your mind.

VII. Yes to the Spirit, No to Strife!

1. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. – 2 Timothy 2:23
2. But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. - Titus 3:9
3. Do not bear false witness against your neighbor. – Exodus 20:16
4. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. – Romans 15:2

5. Speak the truth in love. – Ephesians 4:15