

Even So the Tongue...

In our daily walk we are in a constant struggle with several stumbling blocks. Controlling our emotions is one of the difficulties we deal with. The book of James is filled with most valuable advice that relates to human emotion. James said, *“For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!”* (James 3:2-5). Christians who would never consider expressing anger through physical violence nevertheless can lose control and express their anger through sharp words and insults. This shows a clear lack of self-control, and is not appropriate for any who would wear the name Christian.

Again in James we find some of the most prudent advice; *“So then my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”* (James 1:19-20)

Most often anger is expressed in words. This is where men, including Christians, often struggle. However, the tongue can be a tool to bring about peace. *“A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger”* (Proverbs 15:1).

As we recently sang this song, there was one verse that stood out to me;

Angry words are lightly spoken,
bitterest thoughts are rashly stirred,
brightest links of life are broken,
by a single angry word.

The last lines hit me the hardest. I have been singing this song for years and have never realized the impact this verse has: the brightest links, the dearest relationships are broken, most often, forever by a single angry word. That has happened countless times to innumerable very close relationships.

We can tear apart with our tongues. But remember the consequence: *“But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned”* (Matthew 12:36-37).