

“A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.

Gentle words are a tree of life; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.” Proverbs 15:1, 4 NLT

lectio // Proverbs 15:1-6

I am NOT an enneagram 8, let's get that straight! I've been put in positions where “eight-ness” is required, but I'm never comfortable with it. And, I have learned to lean in rather than lay down and ignore the obvious. But man oh man, I need diplomacy! I have such a hard time being diplomatic that I rarely even remember the word. Gentle, gentle, gentle - that's a mantra I must remember. But I notice in verse 4 that truth must still be spoken. I can imagine the impact that harsh, angry, deceitful, false words can do to a person - it's way worse! But truth spoken in love, gentleness, that's the high road, that's the way of God. Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit as well. And, I'm guessing it's best used when tensions are high and conflict is begging for a brawl. GENTLE! Every time I pray for diplomacy, I believe God sends another high-stakes, low tolerance conflict my way and says, “Here ya go son, let's practice some more.”

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Dad,

I pray for diplomacy and you give me plenty of opportunities to practice it. I beg you to help me be gentle, speak gentleness and let love and truth find their way to resolve and even wholeness in others. I will focus today on GENTLE answers, but if I get clawed or punched, I'm gonna say, “I told you this was rough!”

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root