

August 18, 2026

Check Your Tone

August Series: Christ-Centered Relationships

Week Focus: Say It With Grace

Scripture – Proverbs 15:1 - *“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”*

Devotional Reflection

Sometimes the problem in a conversation is not necessarily what was said but how it was said. The words may have been technically correct, yet the tone communicated frustration, disrespect, sarcasm, impatience, or contempt. Proverbs 15:1 reminds us that **“a gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger,”** showing us that how we deliver our words can influence what happens next in a conversation. If we want healthier communication, we must pay attention not only to our words but also to the spirit in which those words are delivered.

Tone can make someone feel safe enough to listen or defensive before the conversation has really begun. This is especially important in our closest relationships, where familiarity can sometimes cause us to exercise less restraint than we would with strangers. Gentleness does not mean weakness, silence, or avoiding necessary truth; it is strength under control that allows us to communicate honestly without making hostility our method. We cannot always control how another person enters a conversation, but through God’s wisdom, **we can take responsibility for what we contribute to it.**

Jesus demonstrated that grace and truth do not have to compete. He spoke truth clearly, confronted what was wrong, and never compromised righteousness, yet His communication remained submitted to the character and purposes of His Father. Jesus shows us that difficult truth does not require a destructive spirit; **we can be honest without being harsh, clear without being cruel, and firm without being disrespectful.**

As followers of Christ, His Spirit should increasingly shape not only the content of our conversations but also our delivery. Before saying, **“But I’m right,”** we can ask, **“Does the way I’m communicating what is right reflect Christ?”** The right message delivered with the wrong spirit can still cause unnecessary damage, and sometimes spiritual maturity does not require changing the truth we need to communicate—it requires surrendering our tone.

Today, pay attention to how your words sound, particularly when you are frustrated, tired, correcting someone, or discussing something important. Listen for the raised voice, dismissive response, sharp edge, sarcastic remark, or impatient interruption that may have become so familiar that you barely notice it anymore. Ask God to give you not only the right words but also the right spirit in which to deliver them, because **when Christ shapes both our message and our manner, even difficult conversations can become opportunities to say it with grace.**

Focus for Today

The right words can still cause unnecessary harm when they are delivered with the wrong spirit.

Practice

- Choose one relationship today in which you will intentionally pay attention to your tone.
 - Before responding—especially if the conversation becomes difficult—ask: **“What am I communicating beyond my words?”**
 - Consider: **Is my tone helping or escalating this conversation? Am I trying to be understood, or am I trying to win?**
 - Ask yourself: **“Can I say the same truth with greater gentleness?”**
 - If you recognize that your tone has already caused hurt, practice humility by acknowledging it without defending yourself.
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Prayer

Father, help me recognize that how I communicate matters as much as the words I choose. Guard me from harshness, sarcasm, impatience, and disrespect. When difficult conversations arise, give me the strength to remain gentle without compromising truth. Let the character of Christ shape my words, my attitude, and my tone. Where my delivery has caused unnecessary hurt, give me humility to acknowledge it and make it right. May people hear Your grace not only in what I say, but also in how I say it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Reflection Question

If the people closest to me described my tone when I am frustrated or disagreeing with them, what would they say—and what might God be asking me to change?