



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Links Players

Slow Down

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. (James 1:19-20)

I'm having a U.S. Open experience at O'Hare Airport as I write this. Thunderstorms have delayed numerous inbound flights, which in turn have delayed my outbound flight and canceled many others.

People are lining the corridors, like spectators line the fairways at professional golf tournaments, six and seven deep, trying to catch a glimpse of the action.

Frustration has travelers on edge with airline representatives, and like a frustrated golfer, if they had a club, they'd slam it into the ground.

I don't swear, but I was tempted to because I was told I'd have a five-hour layover in Chicago, with "iffy" being the prospect of an on-time departure due to a new weather front moving in.

If you think golfers were frustrated at Oakmont, you should see the frustration the weather has caused among the people standing around me at the Guest Relations counter.

I just heard an announcement that another flight has been canceled. I admire the patience and calming demeanor of the American Airlines representatives. They must have read today's verse.

James' strategy for dealing with irritation applies to golfers, travelers, married couples, and parents. Let's face it, it's a good tactic for whatever situation you find yourself in.

Slow to speak does not mean speaking slowly; it means being deliberate in one's words. It has nothing to do with the number of words per minute. It means that we should slow down before responding.

We should pause and consider the impact of our words before we let them fly. One irate passenger, after swearing at an American representative, was told, "Sir, when I realized you were on that flight, I ordered the thunderstorm." Bam! Several in line silently applauded.

One author I read suggests that we ask ourselves a variety of questions and consider the impact of our words before we let them fly. "Do I understand the circumstances that have stirred me up to say something I may regret? Do I fully grasp other people's motives? Am I about to say something that may misrepresent me? Before I respond, do I need to back up and explain myself more calmly?"

"If I were the other person who is about to receive my verbal barrage, would I feel dishonored, devalued, or ignored? Would I feel threatened or like I had been beaten up?"

If you claim to be a Christ follower, will your words honor Christ or bring reproach on His name? To serve or to be served, as Jesus put it? Does my response reflect the fact that I am a sinner who deserved wrath but instead received grace?

The question that has saved me on many, but not all, occasions of frustration is, would I be so quick to speak if I knew Jesus was standing next to the person who would be the object of my comments?

I've been schooled in the past, either by the Holy Spirit's conviction or by my wife, on occasions when I've been too hasty with my words. Why do we have to keep learning these lessons?

No one has ever said after being bombarded by my words, "Thanks. That was very helpful. I can tell by how you said that you really care about me."

Now, having listened to some impatient verbal responses, I was next in line to rebook my now-canceled flight. As the passenger ahead of me let fly some crude words, Colossians 4:6 flashed through my mind, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt..." "You're next," the American Representative said, "How can I help you?"

Prayer: Lord, today may I be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, because I know human anger does not produce the righteousness You desire.

—

Bill Crawford

Copyright 2025 Links Players International

The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.