

Starting a Quarrel

By Jennifer Brown

Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam, so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.
Proverbs 17:14.

What relationship are you struggling with? Who do you dread spending time with during the holidays? As we enter the holiday season of frenzied festivities with family and friends, I think this is the best advice I can give you.

Proverbs 17:14 is the very first scripture I memorized. I had not yet read the Bible, but had been exposed to some women who did. I thought they were a bit weird, but they seemed to have a peace and knowledge that I knew nothing about. And they claimed it came from the Lord and their Bibles. So when I found myself heading in a desperate situation, needing to repair an important relationship that was going astray, I decided to give God a try.

My Bible was a huge leather-bound wedding present that sat on a beautiful oak stand in my living room. It was for displaying, not reading. I remember putting the kids down for naps and crawling into my big comfy chair. I hefted the Bible onto my lap, closed my eyes tight, flipped through gilded pages, and finally put my finger down on one of them. When I opened my eyes, I read the scripture my finger landed on, "Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam, so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out."

That was just the advice I needed. I memorized the verse and spent the next week in close quarters with the person, reciting Proverbs 17:14 over and over, "Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam, so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out. Shut up, Jennifer! Starting a quarrel..."

It was the turning point in that relationship.

That is the power of the Word of God.

C. S. Lewis said, "Quarreling means trying to show the other person is in the wrong." Think about that. The only point of arguing is to prove that someone else is wrong and we are right. Does it matter who is right or wrong?

"Of course it does," you say, "I'm always right!" I understand; my husband would quickly confirm that I am at the very front of this wrong line of needing to be right.

But think back over the arguments you have with others. Does it really matter who is wrong and who is right? I would guess that in at least 95% of the arguments and disagreements we have, it does NOT matter who is right and who is wrong. But 100% of those unnecessary arguments leave us and the other person wounded in some way.

There is a story in Numbers 12 that I think of often. Moses is wrongfully opposed and accused by his own brother and sister. Yet instead of arguing and fighting with them, he leaves the matter in God's hands and trusts God to defend him.

We don't need to argue. We don't need to be right. We simply need to trust God. Even if it leads to unfair decisions, or us getting the short end of whatever it might be, we can trust God. He will be our defense and provide everything we need. Take His wisdom in Proverbs 17:14, commit it to memory, and use it to change your relationships for the better this holiday season.

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