

“Pillow Fight”
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Introduction

- The book of Proverbs is a collection of independent verses that offer divine wisdom for everyday life.
- These are not empty slogans or guaranteed formulas, but timeless principles that teach us how to live in a way that pleases the Lord.
- Proverbs takes ordinary situations
 - our words, our attitudes, our relationships, our decisions
 - and shows us the extraordinary wisdom of God.
- It teaches us not only what is right, but also how to walk wisely in a world that desperately needs God’s truth.
- Have you ever watched a pillow fight?
 - It is one of the funniest kinds of fights.
 - People swing with all their strength, but the pillow gets in the way.
 - The harder the punch, the more the pillow absorbs it.
 - It never punches back.
 - It simply takes the impact and keeps the fight from becoming more painful.
- Most conflicts in life are nothing like that.
 - Someone says something hurtful,
 - and the natural reaction is to answer with something even sharper.
- We assume strength means hitting harder.

- God teaches something completely different.
- According to Proverbs, real strength often looks like a pillow.
 - It absorbs the blow instead of sending it back.
- Today we see three different Proverbs.
 - Together they reveal the surprising strength of a gentle spirit.

1. A SOFT ANSWER CHANGES THE ATMOSPHERE

Proverbs 15:1

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

- Angie, my wife, wife and I could probably never have one of those really loud, dramatic arguments where people throw harsh words at each other.
 - Is that because we're pastors?
 - No.
 - Is it because we're Christians?
 - Well... not really!
 - The real reason is that English is my second language.
- If we ever got into a serious argument, I'd have to keep stopping and saying,
 - "Hang on... what I'm trying to say about you is... um... what's the English word for that?"
 - She would probably help me find the word,
 - we would both start laughing,
 - and just like that, the whole argument would be over.
- So, in a strange way, my limited English has been pretty good for our marriage!

- Anger is like fire.
 - And harsh words are gasoline.
 - Gentle words are water on a fire.
- Every disagreement reaches a moment when someone decides what happens next.
 - One sentence can calm everything
 - or make everything worse.
- During an argument, many people act harshly for fear of being weak.
 - It takes great strength to remain calm when emotions are running high.
- Jesus lived this truth.
 - He was insulted, misunderstood, and falsely accused,
 - yet He refused to answer with bitterness.
 - Then He gave His followers this command in Matthew 5:39:
 - "If anyone slaps you on the right cheek,
 - turn to them the other also."
- Jesus was teaching His disciples not to let evil determine their response.
 - Someone offers hatred.
 - A follower of Christ refuses to return it.
- Think again about the pillow.
 - It does not pretend the punch never happened.
 - It simply refuses to pass the force along.
- Now, let us picture together something really common: a family dinner.
 - One sarcastic comment lands on the table.
 - Another person answers with another sarcastic comment.
 - In a short time, everyone gets upset.
 - Nobody even remembers how the argument started.
- Now picture the same dinner with one difference.

- The first comment still comes,
- but someone answers gently.
- Suddenly the argument loses momentum.
- Fire cannot keep burning without fuel.
- Many prayers for peace begin with one decision:
 - "I will not answer anger with anger."

2. WISE WORDS HEAL INSTEAD OF WOUND

Proverbs 12:18

Rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

- Some words cut like swords.
- A sentence spoken in five seconds can remain in someone's heart for fifty years.
 - Many adults still remember words spoken to them as children.
 - Couples sometimes carry one careless sentence for decades.
 - Friends separate because of words they wish they could take back.
- God never treats words as harmless.
 - They leave wounds that cannot be seen but are deeply felt.
- Then Solomon gives the other side of the picture.
 - The tongue of the wise brings healing.
 - Our words can become medicine.
- Think about a cracked windshield.
 - It usually begins with one tiny crack.

- Ignore it, and every bump makes it spread until the whole windshield is damaged.
- Relationships work the same way.
 - One careless sentence creates a crack.
 - Pride refuses to repair it.
 - More harsh words follow.
 - Eventually the relationship barely resembles what it once was.
- Healing begins with different words.
- They could be:
 - "Please forgive me."
 - "I understand."
 - "How did you feel about it?"
 - "Sorry, I didn't realize my words sounded that way."
- Those simple sentences carry tremendous power.
- Jesus knew how to speak truth without cruelty.
 - He corrected people often.
 - He confronted sin while offering hope.
 - Even on the cross He prayed,
 - "Father, forgive them.
- Followers of Christ should never use truth as an excuse for harshness.
 - Truth and kindness belong together.
 - Wisdom knows not only what to say
 - but also how to say it.
- Every conversation presents a choice.
 - Carry a sword,
 - or carry medicine.

3. Humility Breaks the Cycle

Proverbs 13:10

By insolence the empty-headed person makes strife, but wisdom is with those who take advice.

- Here Proverbs reaches the heart of the matter.
- Most arguments continue because pride refuses to let them end.
 - Pride says, "Win."
 - But humility asks,
 - "What honors God?"
 - Pride wants the last word.
 - Humility wants peace.
- Many conflicts stop being about the original issue.
 - They become competitions over who will apologize first.
- Imagine two mountain goats meeting on a narrow bridge.
 - Both are strong.
 - Neither wants to move.
 - They lower their heads and begin pushing.
 - One wrong step sends both into the river.
- Now imagine one goat stepping aside.
 - Was that weakness?
 - Not at all.
 - The stronger goat cared more about reaching the other side than winning the contest.
- This is humility.
- Jesus showed this better than anyone.
 - He possessed all authority,
 - yet He willingly accepted rejection, suffering, and the cross.
 - He turned the other cheek.

- He trusted His Father instead of defending Himself at every opportunity.
- The cross proves that humility is not weakness.
 - Humility is strength under control.
- Pride promises victory but often leaves
 - broken families,
 - divided churches,
 - damaged friendships,
 - and restless hearts.
- Humility may feel costly for a moment,
 - but it produces peace,
 - and helps us to get to the other side of the bridge.
- When someone attacks with harsh words,
 - pride says,
 - "Hit back."
 - Wisdom says,
 - "Answer gently."
- When someone wounds with words,
 - pride reaches for another sword.
 - Wisdom reaches for healing.
- When conflict grows,
 - pride asks,
 - "How do I win?"
 - Humility asks,
 - "How can Christ be seen?"
- That is the wisdom Proverbs calls us to embrace.

CONCLUSION

- Remember the pillow.
 - It absorbs the blow instead of passing it on.
- That is what Proverbs teaches.
 - A soft answer cools anger.
 - Wise words heal wounds.

- Humility breaks the cycle of conflict.
- None of this comes naturally.
 - Our first instinct is usually to strike back.
- That is why we need the Holy Spirit every day.
 - And we need the Spirit's help to practice more and more,
 - to teach our brains,
 - our hearts
 - and our souls
 - to use healing words.
 - The intentional practice will help us to memorize the way we should act.
- The next difficult conversation may happen before this day is over.
 - When it does, remember the pillow.
 - Remember the wisdom of Proverbs.
- Above all, remember Jesus,
 - who taught us to turn the other cheek
 - and then showed us exactly what that looks like.
- Real strength is not found in speaking the loudest.
- Real strength is found
 - in giving a soft answer,
 - speaking words that heal,
 - and walking in humility.