



Anger, Conflict, and Peace

Proverbs 6-29

14:29; 15:17–18; 16:32; 19:11; 22:24–25

- God's people are slow to anger.
- When God described Himself to Moses in Exodus, He said He is “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Exodus 34:6).
- He demonstrated His character time and again throughout Scripture; as His people continually betrayed Him, God showed Himself to be slow to anger.

14:29; 15:17–18; 16:32; 19:11; 22:24–25

- James said every believer should also be “quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger” (James 1:19).
- James has often been called the wisdom literature of the New Testament; it reflects the same type of wisdom as Proverbs.
- As God’s people, we should be reflecting God’s character to the world. We should love others the way God loves us.

14:29; 15:17–18; 16:32; 19:11; 22:24–25

- Any time you are in a relationship with another human being, you will experience conflict and disagreement at some point.
- We cannot avoid it. The question is how to deal with it.
- When you practice being slow to anger, you can take the time to think through the conflict and handle it appropriately. This can actually make your relationships stronger in the end.

14:29; 15:17–18; 16:32; 19:11; 22:24–25

- Being slow to anger doesn't mean ignoring conflict.
- Anger itself isn't sinful. Jesus displayed anger in the Bible.
- Anger can be a righteous emotion when you're angry at evil in the world.
- But being "easily angered" means letting every little thing get to you and getting angry about things Jesus wouldn't.

6:16–19; 10:12; 16:7, 28; 17:19; 20:3; 29:22

- God's people are peacemakers.
- The seven things Proverbs 6 says God hates are specific, personal attitudes and actions.
- These line up in a contrasting parallel arrangement with the Beatitudes in Matthew 5.
- Those seven blessed things answer these seven hated things (Proverbs 6:16–19).

6:16–19; 10:12; 16:7, 28; 17:19; 20:3; 29:22

- A loving church community should be one which seeks unity, peace, and harmony.
- When there is conflict, they will work through it in a humble, kind, gracious and loving way.
- When we see a church community that is full of quarrelling, gossip and drama, that church is not submitting to the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:33).

6:16–19; 10:12; 16:7, 28; 17:19; 20:3; 29:22

- The first church in Acts were “of one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32).
- There were thousands, from many different nations and backgrounds, but they were unified and lived in peace with one another.
- The same disciples who often fought for power and status were unified in purpose because the Holy Spirit had been poured out on them.

6:16–19; 10:12; 16:7, 28; 17:19; 20:3; 29:22

- This doesn't mean we just “go along to get along,” avoid conflict, or suppress truth to keep a semblance of “unity.” Unity that avoids conflict is a false unity.
- God calls us to be peacemakers, not just peacekeepers.
- Making peace is not easy or simple. It takes a great deal of humility, patience, wisdom and grace, all qualities that are the opposite of the abominations God hates.

Proverbs 15:1, 18; 17:14; 26:17–21

- The way we speak can either defuse a conflict or fan the flame.
- The way we speak in tense situations can make a huge difference in where the conflict goes.
- With just our words, we can either calm everyone down or add fuel to the fire. Have you ever been in a situation where you were able to calm flaring tempers because you used a “soft answer” instead of a “harsh word” (15:1)?

Proverbs 15:1, 18; 17:14; 26:17–21

- These proverbs share this practical truth with several images – stirring up, letting water out of a dam, adding fuel to a fire, and grabbing a dog’s ears.
- The Hebrew word for “stir up” can be used for an attack in war, meddling in a situation, or provoking someone to anger.
- An English idiom we use for making trouble is “stirring up a hornets’ nest.”

Proverbs 15:1, 18; 17:14; 26:17–21

- Proverbs gives us another strong image by telling us that meddling in someone else's quarrel is like grabbing a dog by its ears.
- You may likely get bitten (26:17).
- When we stir up trouble, we not only cause harm to others, we end up hurting ourselves as well.

Proverbs 15:1, 18; 17:14; 26:17–21

- Solomon said that once a fight breaks out, it's like letting water out of a dam (17:14).
- That rush of water can destroy everything in its path.
- Water held back by a dam is contained and controlled, but water that breaks through the dam will go everywhere.
- Solomon's advice is to stop a quarrel before it gets out of hand.

Proverbs 15:1, 18; 17:14; 26:17–21

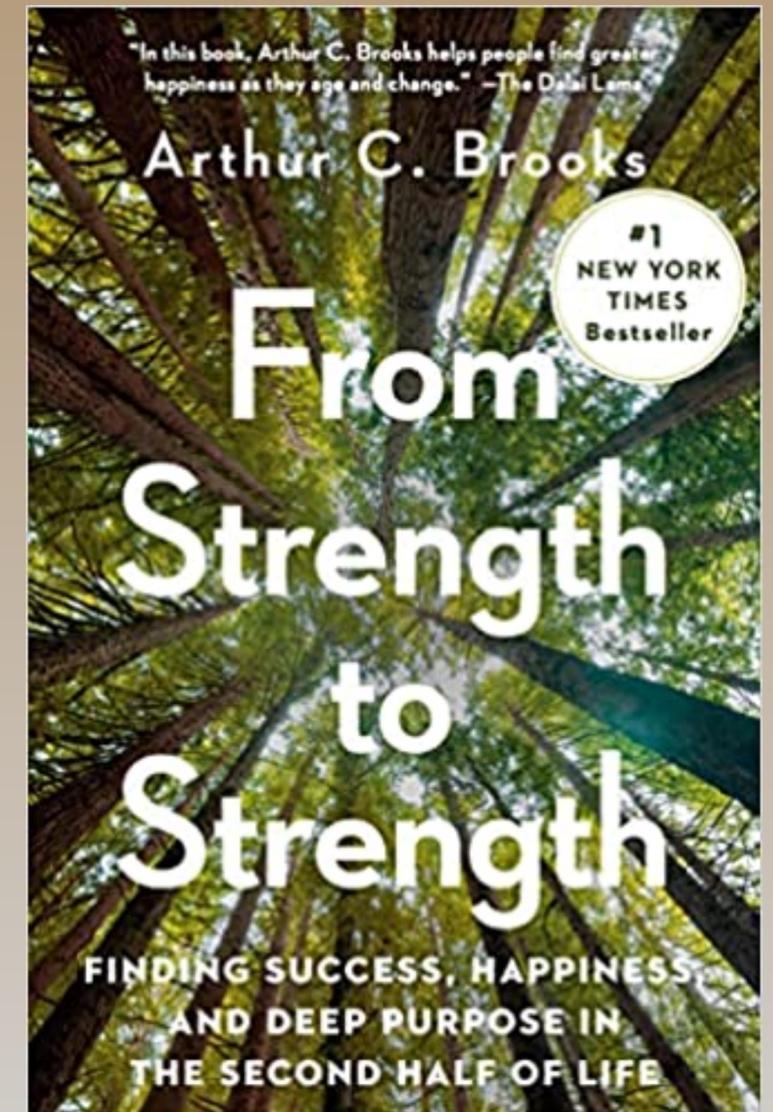
- In the same way, a fire contained in your fireplace can be beneficial. It can warm your whole house.
- But a fire that gets out of hand can burn down your house and everything in touches.
- Solomon is clearly telling us that our words can either fuel the fire or put it out (26:20–21). James agreed with Proverbs when he said that “the tongue is a fire” (3:6).

Proverbs 15:1, 18; 17:14; 26:17–21

- We must choose our words carefully in a conflict. Remain calm, think rationally, and speak the truth seasoned with grace (Colossians 4:6).
- James said “no human being” can tame the tongue; it takes the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit (3:8).
- We must also remember to rely on the Spirit and pray for His power to stay calm, mediate conflict, and make peace.

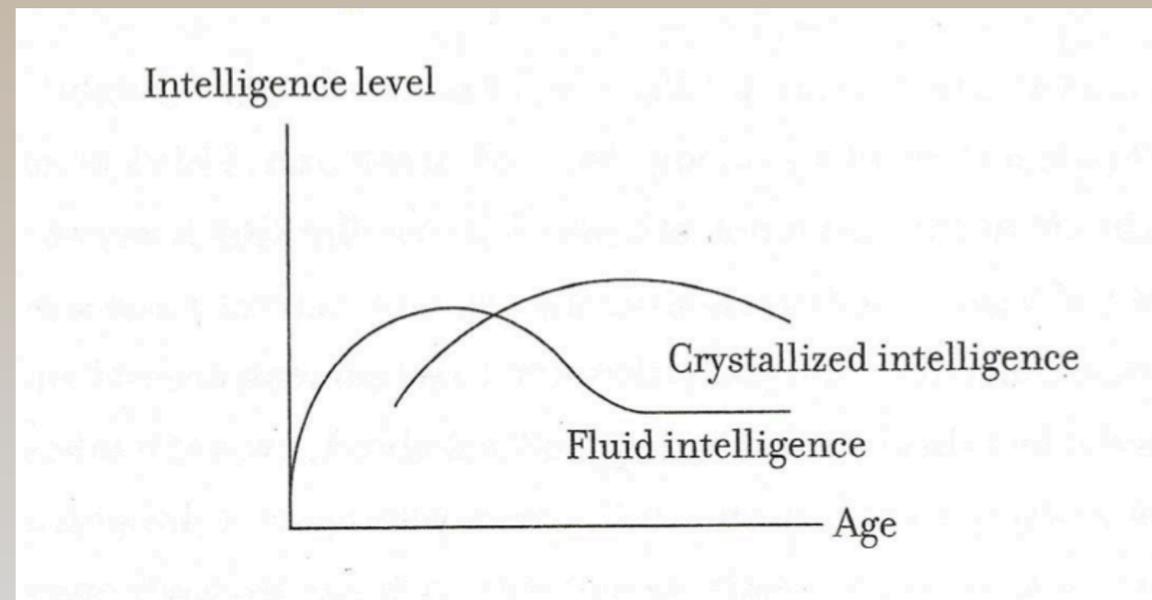
Arthur Brooks, *From Strength to Strength*

- *From Strength to Strength: Finding Success, Happiness, and Deep Purpose in the Second Half of Life*
- In the first half of life, people embrace a simple formula for success.
- But they later discover that the second half of life is governed by different rules.



From Strength to Strength

- Introduction – “The man on the plane who changed by life.”
- Your professional decline is coming much sooner than you think:
example: Charles Darwin
- The second curve – two types of intelligences:
 - fluid intelligence
 - crystallized intelligence



Seven Principles

1. Kick your success addiction

Successful woman on Wall Street - “Maybe I would prefer to be special rather than happy.”

Harvard Business Review – average CEO works 62.5 hours per week compared to 44 hours by the average worker.

Seven Principles

2. Start chipping away

A “bucket list” – Google it and you get 80 million hits

Satisfaction = getting what you want or continually having more than others

Start chipping away in order to manage your wants – the reverse bucket list.

Seven Principles

3. Ponder your death

CEO - “I won’t decline. I’ll just go harder and harder, until the wheels come off.”

Walt Disney feared death, threw himself completely in his work.

In his book, *The Road to Character*, David Brooks distinguishes between “resume virtues” and “eulogy virtues.”

Seven Principles

4. Cultivate the aspen grove

An individual tree is part of an enormous root system

Loneliness is not the same as being alone.

The Harvard Study of Adult Development - 638 men from all walks of life, seven predictors of “being happy.”

Seven Principles

5. Start you Vanaprastha

First stage (youth and young adulthood) and second stage (building career and family) and third stage (devoted to wisdom).

J.S. Bach – finished his musical scores with Sola Deo gloria –
“Glory to God alone.”

Developing spiritual life - the “Nicodemus syndrome.”

Seven Principles

6. Make your weakness your strength

Who was the most successful entrepreneur in history?

Answer: Apostle Paul

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 – his “thorn” was the source of his strength.

Seven Principles

7. Cast into the falling tide – ocean fishing in Puget Sound

Liminality – *Life Is in the Transitions: Mastering Change at Any Age* – Bruce Feller.

Midlife doesn't have to be a crisis.

Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life – Gail Sheehy

"In this book, Arthur C. Brooks helps people find greater happiness as they age and change." —The Dalai Lama

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From Strength to Strength

FINDING SUCCESS, HAPPINESS,
AND DEEP PURPOSE IN
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