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Apples of Gold

By Elise L. Moore

Read James 3:1-13

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. — Proverbs 25:11 (KJV)

Our neighbors have apple and pear trees in their yard. Oddly, deer come and eat every apple within their reach, but they don't touch the pears. Maybe the pears are too tart or too hard. Maybe deer just don't like pears. Whatever the reason, the deer can tell the difference.

We human beings are keenly aware of differences also. We can tell the difference between words spoken in season (Prov. 15:23) and prideful words. Words of inspiration, encouragement, and kindness bring reconciliation and healing. Words that are harsh and bitter drop to the ground unwanted.

Unfortunately, kindness and crossness can grow side by side, like apples and pears. I might speak patiently with customers all day at work and then come home and snap at a neighbor, as I recently did. I thought this neighbor was ignoring a long-standing request I had made. And although he fulfilled my request within a few days, my harsh words created a wall between us. But I learned a lesson. If I had prayed before I spoke, God could have given me helpful words — "apples of gold." I am resolving to pray more often before I speak so that I let God's words fill my mouth.

Prayer: O Lord, fill our mouths with sweet words, and help us trust your ability to resolve differences that occur between others and us. Amen.

Thought for the Day

When we ask, God will give us the right words to say.

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Prayer "Focus: MY NEIGHBORS