

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

**Proverbs 15:1 – A proverbial story**

**By Ted Hildebrandt using Chatgpt**

The sun was setting, bleeding orange and red across the city skyline, putting the blinding sun in Daniel's review mirror as he navigated the crowded, congested freeway. He hated rush hour, especially when construction made the traffic worse. There was the endless stop-and-go, the clatter of horns, and the tension that just seemed to hang in the air like a toxic smog. All he wanted was to get home, microwave some leftovers, and forget about the lousy day he'd had.

A black pickup truck came barreling up behind him, weaving between cars, even using the shoulder to pass the stationary cars illegally. Daniel barely had time to glance in his rearview mirror before the truck swerved into his lane, cutting him off so closely he had to slam on the brakes.

Anger flared hot in his chest. Reflexively, Daniel lay on his horn and muttered a curse under his breath. His heart pounded as the pickup's driver brake-checked him, as if triumphantly sneering, "in your face, buddy, I'm ahead of you now." Daniel was forced to stop short once again.

At the next light, Daniel pulled up alongside the truck driver who rolled down his window. He was a burly man with a thick beard and fire in his eyes, he shouted at him, "You got a problem, man? You wanna do something about it?"

Daniel's first instinct was to snap back, to hurl an insult and match the man's fury with his own. But then — like a ripple through his thoughts — his grandfather's voice echoed in his memory from when he used to fight with his brother: "A soft answer turns away wrath, Danny." He paused and took a deep breath.

The burly man's face was tight with rage, knuckles white on the steering wheel, ready for an altercation.

Daniel rolled down his window and called out, calmly, "Hey — sorry if I startled you back there. Traffic's rough, huh?"

The man hesitated, caught off guard. His glare flickered.

"I wasn't trying to crowd you," Daniel added, his voice steady. "Just trying to get home before midnight like everybody else."

The light changed. For a beat, the truck driver said nothing.

Then he gave a short, awkward nod and muttered, "Yeah... you're right," before gunning the engine and driving off, a little less recklessly this time.

Daniel exhaled, the knot in his chest loosening. The traffic still crawled with stop-and-go traffic, the city still hummed with its usual stress, but the anger storm had passed — not because someone won, but because one of them decided “a soft answer turns away wrath.” There was too much anger today, he thought. The soft answer was the better choice, leaving him somewhat happy with himself.

After he merged onto the next exit and down a local lane heading home, Daniel smiled faintly. Grandpa’s wise old proverb did it again, reaffirmed amidst the road rage of a busy rush-hour highway — **a soft answer truly turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger (Proverbs 15:1).**