

I love Words with Friends, the online game that resembles Scrabble. I often have close to a dozen active games going at one time with various people. I have learned lots of interesting words like qi and za or zori. And, did you know there are NO two letter words beginning with “c” or “v”? How often I have wished there were!

However, I have not yet had the experience of one Australian couple where Words with Friends literally proved a lifesaver. Georgie Fletcher met Beth Legler from Missouri through a game with a random opponent. In the course of the game, Georgie told Beth about some health problems her husband Simon was having. Beth’s husband Larry was a doctor, so she mentioned it to him.

Larry recognized the symptoms and told Beth to tell Simon to get to a hospital fast. It turns out that Simon’s heart was 99% blocked and he could have had a deadly heart attack at any minute.

“Had Larry not sent that message I don’t think Simon would have gone to the doctor that day,” Beth said.

Three months later, Simon is alive and well and very thankful for Words with Friends. “I owe Larry everything...I’m really lucky to be here,” admits Simon.

The New Testament letter of James has a lot to say about words, specifically about being careful what we say. Sometimes, we can be too careful. We hesitate to get involved. We rationalize and think that the other person surely knows how serious a matter is. Thankfully, Larry didn’t do that. He spoke up, through a computer game, to someone he didn’t know and changed his life.

We too have words that can change lives. Words of kindness. Words of hope. Words of love, mercy and grace. Words of life.

In the first chapter of his letter, James writes that we should “welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls” (James 1:21b). I would amend that to be let the Word of God, who is Jesus, be implanted deep within us. Jesus promises that the Spirit will be with us with the right words to speak when we aren’t sure. When the Word is planted firmly in our lives and we trust the Spirit, we just need to know when and where to open our mouths and let the words come out. Or when to start a new game with a friend.