

# Foolproofing My Temper

Lesson 02 of the series: "Foolproof"

Foolproof = fool (a thickheaded person) + proof (resistant) = to make safe against the incompetence of a fool

## A. If I don't control my temper, I will do foolish and harmful things.

"A quick-tempered person does foolish things..." Proverbs 14:17 (NIV)

"A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control." Proverbs 29:11 (NIV)

"People with understanding control their anger; a hot temper shows great foolishness."

Proverbs 14:29 (NLT)

*Note:* Controlling my temper can be very hard to do.

"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."

Proverbs 16:32 (NKJV)

**Good News!** The Holy Spirit gives us the power to do hard things.

"God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him." Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

"...we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." Romans 8:37 (NLT)

## B. Five things I can do to foolproof my temper:

1. I can accept responsibility for the way I express anger.

"Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs." Proverbs 19:11 (NLT)

"A person with a quick temper stirs up arguments and commits a lot of sins." Proverbs 29:22 (NLT)

"In your anger do not sin." Ephesians 4:26 (NIV)

2. I can identify circumstances/situations where I easily lose my temper and develop strategies to avoid them.

"If you churn milk, you get butter. If you hit someone's nose, it bleeds. If you stir up anger, you get into trouble." Proverbs 30:33 (NLT)

"Avoiding a fight is a mark of honor; only fools insist on quarreling." Proverbs 20:3 (NLT)

"Don't sin by letting anger control you. Think about it overnight and remain silent." Psalm 4:4 (NLT)

3. I can choose to de-escalate explosive situations.

"A hot-tempered person starts fights; a cool-tempered person stops them." Proverbs 15:18 (NLT)

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Proverbs 15:1 (NIV)

"When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed low before him. She fell at his feet and said, 'I accept all blame in this matter, my lord. Please listen to what I have to say. I know Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man; please don't pay any attention to him. He is a fool, just as his name suggests. But I never even saw the young men you sent. Now, my lord, as surely as the Lord lives and you yourself live, since the Lord has kept you from murdering and taking vengeance into your own hands, let all your enemies and those who try to harm you be as cursed as Nabal is. And here is a present that I, your servant, have brought to you and your young men... don't let this be a blemish on your record. Then your conscience won't have to bear the staggering burden of needless bloodshed and vengeance...' David replied to Abigail, 'Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you to meet me today! Thank God for your good sense! Bless you for keeping me from murder and from carrying out vengeance with my own hands. For I swear by the Lord, the God of Israel, who has kept me from hurting you, that if you had not hurried out to meet me, not one of Nabal's men would still be alive tomorrow morning.'" 1 Samuel 25:23-35 (NLT)

"If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you." Proverbs 25:21-22 (NIV)

4. I can choose to hang around people who bring out the best in me and are not hot-tempered.

“Don’t befriend angry people or associate with hot-tempered people, or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul.” Proverbs 22:24-25 (NLT)

“Hot-tempered people must pay the penalty. If you rescue them once, you will have to do it again.”

Proverbs 19:19 (NLT)

“Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”

Proverbs 13:20 (ESV)

5. I can surrender my temper to the Lord.

“Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.”

Proverbs 1:7 (NLT)

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT)

“The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust.” Psalm 103:8-14 (NLT)

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### Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the following definition: “Foolproof”: to make safe against the incompetence of a fool. From “fool” (a thickheaded person) and “proof” (to make resistant, as in waterproof). How do we make our lives foolproof if we are the ones who do foolish things?
2. What do the following proverbs teach us about anger?
  - 4:29
  - 15:18
  - 22:24-25
  - 29:11

What makes you angry? Would you describe yourself as hot-tempered, even-tempered, or somewhere in between?

3. Read Matthew 18:15-17 & Ephesians 4:26-27. Why do you think the Bible puts so much emphasis on resolving conflicts quickly?
4. Read Proverbs 15:1,18, & 19:11. Discuss the benefits of overlooking an offense and “sleeping on it” before reacting to a problem?
5. Proverbs 1:7 says, “Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge...” What does this mean?
6. Read 1 Samuel 25. To which character in this story can you best relate? (Have you ever worked for someone like Nabal? Have you ever been furious over being insulted? Have you ever been forced to intervene to stop a fight?)
7. Spend some time as a group praying for people you know who need to learn to control their tempers. Ask God to help them:
  - accept responsibility for the way they express anger.
  - identify circumstances/situations where they easily lose their temper so they can develop strategies to avoid them.
  - choose to de-escalate explosive situations.
  - hang around people who bring out the best in them and are not hot-tempered.