



Thursday Thought

by Pastor Myron D. Atkinson

Out of control temper 5/5/2016

Verse for today: Ecclesiastes 7:9 (NLT) “Control your temper, for anger labels you a fool.”

Several years ago I was driving a church bus one summer afternoon, taking home children from Vacation Bible School. As I was driving, I looked over and there was a man in his yard who was very visibly angry. His face was red and his arms were flinging around as he was yelling at his wife. It was at that moment I saw him slap his wife and was getting ready to hit her again when I started honking the horn. He looked over and stopped but not before I got the house number. When I dropped the child off I asked the parent to call the police and report what was going on, and then met the police officer back at the church to file the report. I'm not sure what caused the man to get so angry, but I do know that he was allowing his anger to control him.

Emotions.... We all have them: anger, depression, grief, joy, indifference, sadness, fear, etc. One piece of advice that I was given many years ago and have passed along to others is: **“Learn to control your emotions rather than allowing them to control you!”** This is true for all of the emotions, but I think especially true for anger. **Proverbs 29:11** (NLT) says, **“Fools vent their anger, but the wise quietly hold it back.”** It's easier said than done to control our anger sometimes!! So what are some ways we can help control our anger? I took these from: <http://www.apa.org/topics/anger/control.aspx>

1. **Relaxation** – Breathe deeply, slowly repeat a calm word, visualize a relaxing experience, etc.
2. **Cognitive Restructuring** – Change the way you think by being empathetic and wise. Be careful with words like “never” and “always”. Remind yourself that getting angry is not going to fix anything. Use logic because it defeats anger, because anger, even when justified, can quickly become irrational.
3. **Better Communication** – Angry people tend to jump to conclusions and act on incorrect assumptions. Listen to understand.
4. **Use Humor** – Humor can help diffuse rage in a number of ways, including helping to gain a more balance perspective.
5. **Change your environment** - Make sure you have some "personal time" scheduled for times of the day that you know are particularly stressful.

A great reason to learn to control our anger is because as **Psalm 37:8** (NLT) says, **...it only leads to harm.** The man that I referred to earlier not only harmed his wife but harmed himself because he ended up getting arrested. The consequences for out of control anger are not healthy and can lead to a lot of regret. It's much better to learn to control our temper rather than allowing it to control us.

Question to ponder: What steps do you need to take today to control your temper?