

## An Illustration For Controlling One's Temper

There once was a young man who was having a serious problem being able to control his temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him, that every time he lost his temper, he should hammer a nail into the back of the wood fence.

On the first day, the young man had driven several nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he was learning to control his temper, the number of nails which he hammered daily were gradually dwindling down. He was finding that it was easier to control the temper than it was to hammer nails into the fence. Finally the day came when the temper was so under control that he would not have to hammer any nails into the fence. When he told his father of his accomplishment, His father suggested that now the boy should pull one nail out of the fence for every day that went by with him being able to be in control his temper. The days passed and finally the boy was able to tell his father that all of the nails had been removed from the fence.

The father put his arms around his son's shoulder and led him to the fence. He then said to him, "You have done well, my son, but look at all the holes that were left in the fence. The fence will never be the same! When you do or say things in anger they leave a scar on people just like these holes in the fence. You can put a knife into another person, and draw it out, but no matter how many times you tell that individual that you are sorry, the scar of the wound will always remain there. And we must remember that a verbal wound is just as damaging, and will leave a scar, just as much as a physical wound. The holes which we make in the fence will always remain there, even after we have repented of our wrong."

This is why the Lord tells us to think before we speak and be slow to anger as well (**James 1:19**). An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. It is much easier to take time being careful and not making a mess than it is to go about carelessly and hastily and then have a mess to clean up. Let us consider carefully the effect that actions and especially our words have on others. Discipline yourself so that it becomes "second nature" to refrain from saying something harmful to someone who has just offended you. Also plan to say something that will build others up (**Ephesians 4:26-29**). Better yet, discipline your spirit so that you are not so easily offended (**Eph. 4:31-32, Ecclesiastes 7:21**). This way your soul will be whole, and, instead of making holes, you will help the souls of others be whole.