

TEMPERS FLARED

LESSON 59 → Proverbs 16:32; Luke 21:34-36 (Spirit) | Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (Time)
1 Corinthians 9:25-27 (Desire) | James 1:26; 3:2 (Tongue)

Levi and Parker learned a lesson in temperance.

“Stomp! Stomp! Stomp!” “You stop talking, Ruby!” shouted Mrs. Bradley. The class grew quiet as Ruby blushed and quickly turned around in her chair.

Levi and Parker glanced at each other and tried not to

laugh. Levi wondered if Parker was thinking the same thing he was thinking. The last few days they had decided that Mrs. Bradley was certainly not their favorite teacher. She had an awful temper.

On the way home from school, Levi looked at Parker and

rolled his eyes. “Listen, Parker, don’t ever make me laugh when Mrs. Bradley is mad. She’d probably throw me out into the hall.”

“I guess there’s really nothing funny about it,” Parker replied. “But she gets mad so often that it’s almost a joke. She can



I WANT TO GLORIFY GOD.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. — 1 Corinthians 10:31

stomp her foot louder than anyone I've heard."

"She's had a lot of practice!"
Levi said, grinning.

The boys neared Levi's house where his mom was outside getting a bag of groceries from the car. "Come on over and shoot some baskets after dinner," Levi said to Parker. "And remember, we'd better practice not laughing!"

"Okay, see you later!"
Parker replied.

"What was that about?" Levi's mom asked. "Not laughing? You mean you two are finally getting serious?"

"Oh, we're afraid we'll get into trouble for laughing when Mrs. Bradley gets mad," Levi explained. "She always stomps her foot and yells at whoever is talking, and she pounds her fist on the desk at least fifty times a day to get the class to listen to her. It almost makes us laugh!"

"WOW!" said his mom, as Levi finished the story. "It's too bad your teacher gets so upset she can't control herself. Now grab the bag of groceries for me will you, please?"

An hour later the thump-swish-thump of a basketball alternated with the shouts of the two boys.

"C'mon, slow poke! Get the ball!" Get the ball! You haven't made one basket and I've made lots!" Levi hollered at Parker.

Parker stopped mid-court and whirled on his friend. "If I played like you . . ." Parker's temper flared.

"You'll never play like me, you're not good enough," interrupted Levi.

"If I played like you, I'd win! . . ." You know very well you've been breaking all the rules. All that shoving and putting your hand in my face! No ref would let you get away with it!" Parker shouted. He jumped in front of Levi and wrenched the ball away. Then he headed for the other end of the garage with the stolen ball.

"Just give me the ball and get out of here if you're going to play like that!" Levi screamed. He darted after the ball, snatched it away from Parker and gave it a heave over his shoulder.

CRA-A-S-S-H-H! Shatter, tinkle! "Oh, no!" groaned Levi. "Mom's jars of peaches are ruined!"

Hearing the terrible commotion, Levi's mom ran to the garage. The angry shouts she'd been hearing still rang in her ears as she surveyed the scene.

"Well, 'Mrs. Bradley!'" she remarked with a wry look at the two boys. "What are you doing in my garage?"

The boys glanced about, startled. Mrs. Bradley? They looked at each other. Slowly, the light dawned. Their tempers had flared just like Mrs. Bradley's.

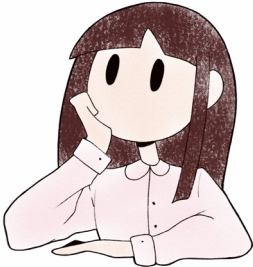



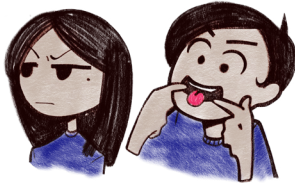

"Okay, Mom, I see what you mean," Levi said sheepishly. He looked at Parker. "I'm sorry. My mouth got me into trouble again."

Controlling our tongue is an important part of temperance. We read in James 1:26, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

God wants us to show self-restraint. Don't go overboard in anything—eating, drinking, working, playing—at home, school, or on the job. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, gives us good advice: "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Philippians 4:5).

HOW WILL YOU REACT?

Temperance is self-control. Each of the pictures below presents a situation where your self-control will be on trial. In the rows provided write a reaction which shows a lack of control and below that one which shows self-control.

		
Early curfew by parents	Caught jaywalking by police	Ignored by a friend
		
Bad grade at school	Annoyed by a brother	Stormy weather on picnic day