

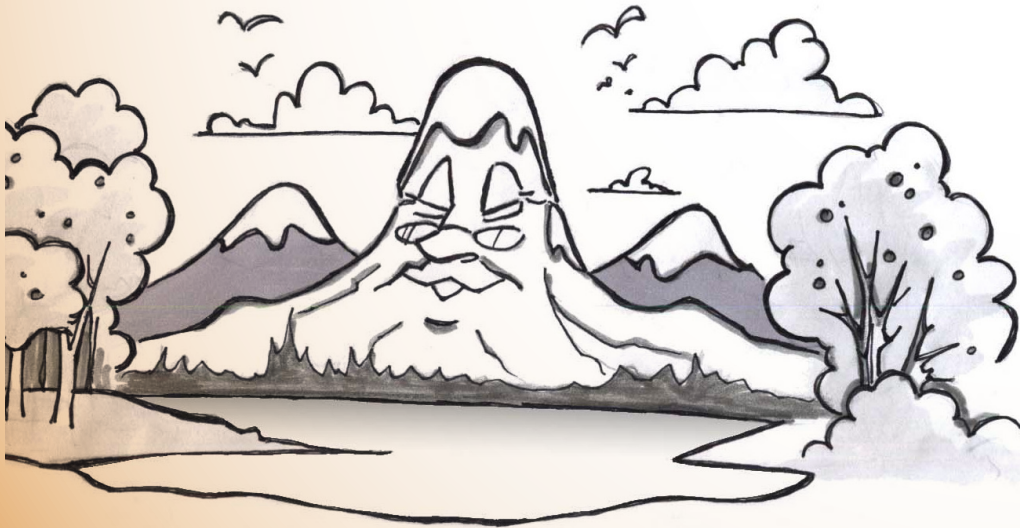
TAME THE VOLCANO

PICTURE THREE LARGE VOLCANIC MOUNTAINS.

THE FIRST MOUNTAIN STANDS MAJESTICALLY, DISPLAYING FINE SLOPES, GRASSY INCLINES, AND ELEGANT TREES. NATURE SEEMS TO FLOURISH DESPITE THE FACT THAT THIS ONCE WAS AN ACTIVE VOLCANO, BUT IS NOW EXTINCT. THE MAGMA (MOLTEN ROCK) THAT ONCE CHURNED WITHIN IT HAS COOLED AND SOLIDIFIED, BECOMING PART OF THE MOUNTAIN.

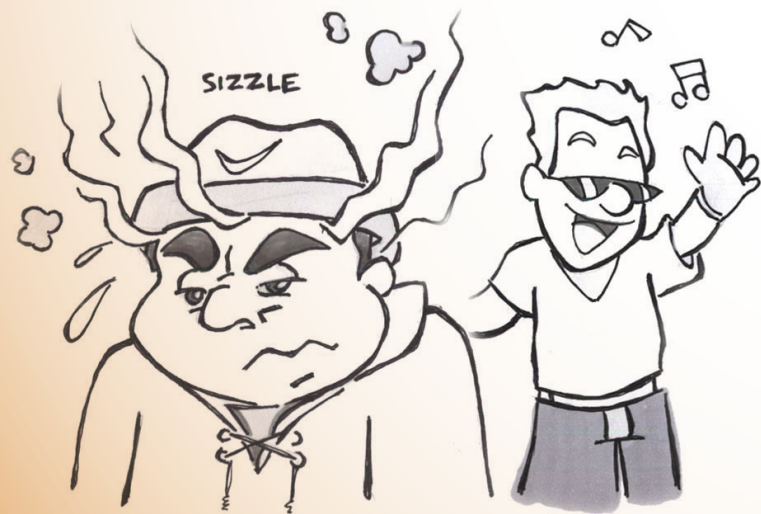
THE SECOND VOLCANO ALSO HAS LUSH VEGETATION CLIMBING UP ITS CLIFFS, BUT WITHIN THE MOUNTAIN, THE MAGMA HAS NOT COOLED AND SOLIDIFIED BECAUSE THIS IS A DORMANT VOLCANO. WHILE IT SEEMS PEACEFUL ON THE OUTSIDE, INSIDE THE HOT MAGMA STILL FLOWS. AND ONE UNSUSPECTING DAY, IT COULD ERUPT WITH FORCE AND POWER, SPEWING OUT ROCKS AND LAVA TO DESTROY WHAT GROWS AND LIVES ON ITS SLOPES.

VEGETATION AND ANIMAL LIFE DO NOT THRIVE ON THE THIRD VOLCANO. IT IS AN ACTIVE VOLCANO, CONSTANTLY SPEWING OUT HOT LAVA. NOTHING HAS A CHANCE TO GROW ON ITS INCLINES, AS MAGMA CONTINUALLY SPITS FROM ITS DEPTHS, BURNING AND DESTROYING EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH.





ANGER CAN BE LIKENED TO A VOLCANO. THE HEATED FRUSTRATION CAN SEETHE WITHIN YOU, AND WHEN LET LOOSE, THIS FRUSTRATION CAUSES HURT AND PAIN. SOMETIMES YOU LET IT SHOW FREQUENTLY, LIKE THE ACTIVE VOLCANO, AND WHEN YOU'RE FRUSTRATED, ANNOYED, OR FEELING MISUNDERSTOOD, HOT, ANGRY WORDS SPEW FROM YOUR MOUTH, HURTING THOSE YOU DIRECT THEM AT.



OTHER TIMES YOU HOLD ANGER IN; YOU HESITATE TO COMMUNICATE ABOUT THE THINGS THAT FRUSTRATE OR BUG YOU. SLOWLY THE ANGER BUILDS UP WITHIN YOU, LIKE THE MAGMA GRADUALLY BUILDING UP ITS POWER AND INTENSITY WITHIN THE BELLY OF THE VOLCANO. IT BUILDS UP UNTIL ONE DAY, LIKE THAT ONCE DORMANT VOLCANO, YOU EXPLODE IN ANGER, SPOUTING OFF ANGRY WORDS, HURTFUL COMMENTS, AND UNLOVING ACTS.

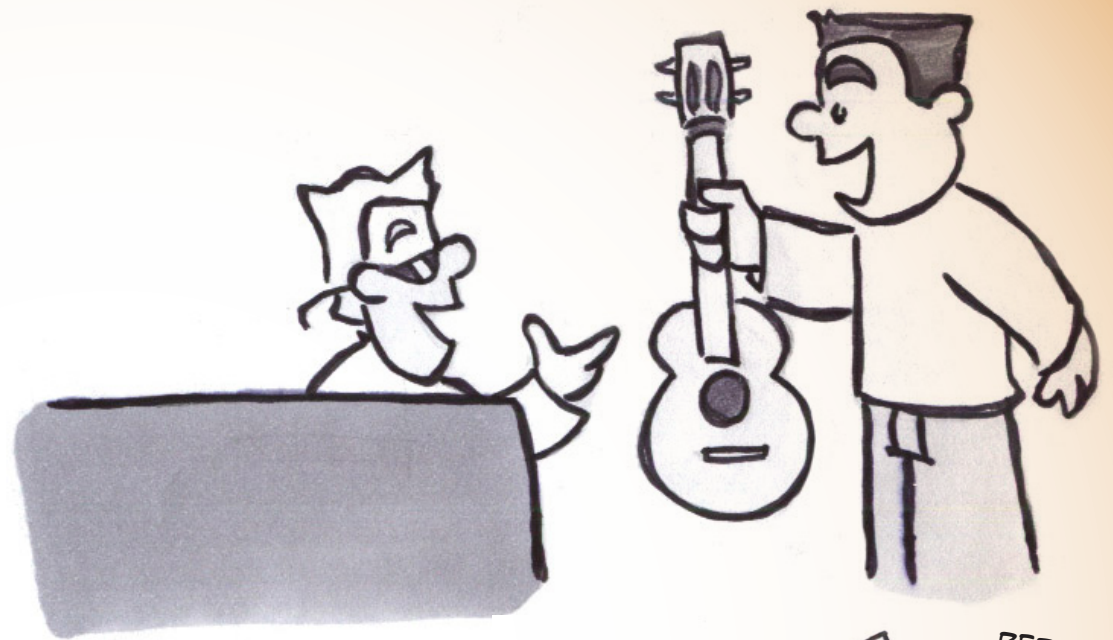
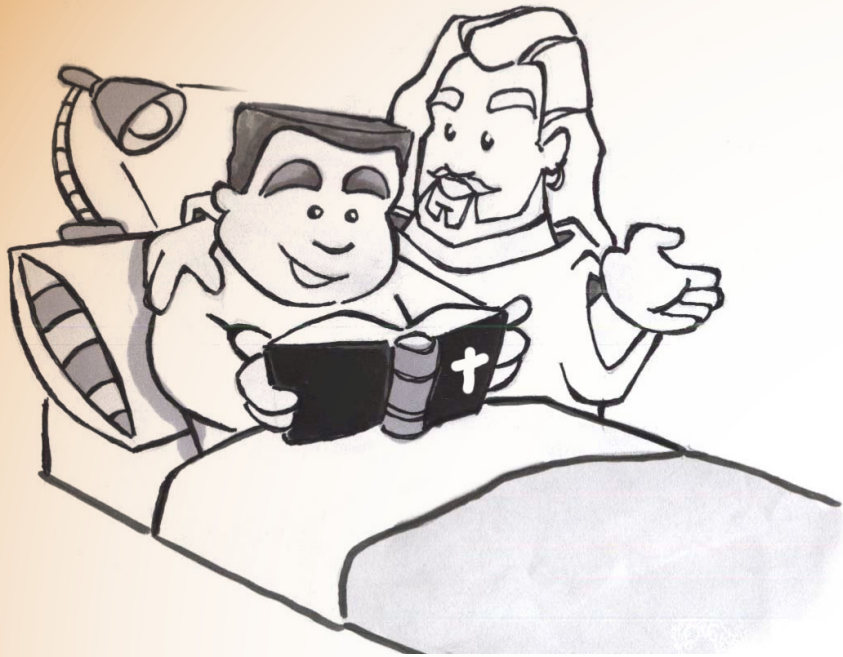
KING SOLOMON WROTE THAT "IT IS HARDER TO WIN BACK THE FRIENDSHIP OF AN OFFENDED BROTHER THAN TO CAPTURE A FORTIFIED CITY. HIS ANGER SHUTS YOU OUT LIKE IRON BARS."¹ ANGER HURTS AND OFFENDS THOSE WHO LOVE YOU AND CARE FOR YOU; YOU PUSH THEM AWAY WITH YOUR ANGER. IN THE END YOU ALSO HURT YOURSELF, BECAUSE THE PAIN CAUSED BY ANGER PLACES BARRIERS BETWEEN YOU AND OTHERS.



THE BIBLE SAYS, "IF YOU ARE ANGRY, DON'T SIN BY NURSING YOUR GRUDGE. DON'T LET THE SUN GO DOWN WITH YOU STILL ANGRY—GET OVER IT QUICKLY; FOR WHEN YOU ARE ANGRY, YOU GIVE A MIGHTY FOOTHOLD TO THE DEVIL."² ANGER DOES NOT WORK THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD; IT IS RARELY A GOOD THING.

WHEN YOU FIND ANGER BUILDING UP IN YOU, TAKE A STEP BACK FROM THE EVENT OR SITUATION THAT IS CAUSING YOU TO FEEL ANGRY. IT NEVER BENEFITS YOU TO ALLOW THE CONFRONTATION TO ESCALATE. BY TAKING A STEP BACK—FOR EXAMPLE, LEAVING THE ROOM, CHANGING THE SUBJECT, OR KEEPING YOUR MOUTH SHUT—YOU ALLOW YOURSELF A CHANCE TO CALM DOWN AND OBSERVE THE SITUATION FROM A DISTANCE. IF YOU STAY, READY TO ARGUE OUT THE ISSUE, YOU BECOME FURTHER EMBROILED IN THE PROBLEM AND CAN FEED THE HURT, ANIMOSITY, AND FRUSTRATION YOU FEEL, WHICH OFTEN IS A DISTORTED AND EVEN EXAGGERATED PERSPECTIVE OF THE ORIGINAL CONFLICT.

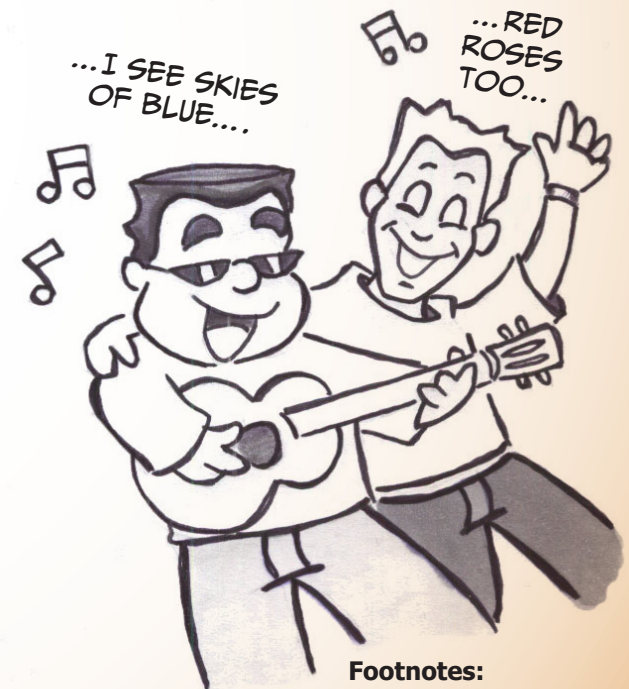




DON'T SPEND TIME ANALYZING WHO HAS THE RIGHT OR WRONG VIEW OF THE SITUATION; INSTEAD LOOK FOR WAYS TO PRESERVE THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN YOU. AS THE BIBLE SAYS, "CONTROL YOUR TEMPER, FOR ANGER LABELS YOU A FOOL."³ A SMART PERSON CONTROLS HIS TEMPER BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT ANGER CAN LEAD TO MAKING MISTAKES—MISTAKES THAT MAY NEVER BE FULLY REPARABLE.

GOD'S SPIRIT CAN HELP YOU TO BE MORE LIKE HIM—SLOW TO ANGER, PATIENT, KIND, SYMPATHETIC, FORGIVING, AND UNDERSTANDING. LISTENING TO THE GUIDANCE OF HIS STILL SMALL VOICE SPIRIT CAN CALM YOUR TROUBLED SPIRIT AND BRING YOU PEACE AND COOL THE HOT, FIERY MAGMA-LIKE ANGER. THIS WILL BEGIN WITH YOU TAKING THE STEPS TO FIRST DISENGAGE YOURSELF FROM THAT CONFRONTATION OR SITUATION WHERE YOU FEEL ANGER BEGIN TO BUBBLE, AND THEN TAKING TIME TO THINK ABOUT THE SITUATION AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO BRING CALM AND UNDERSTANDING BACK TO YOUR SPIRIT.

LEAN HOW TO TAME THE VOLCANO OF ANGER, AND YOU WILL PRESERVE FRIENDSHIPS, BECOME CALMER IN SPIRIT, AND FIND YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS MORE PLEASANT.



S&S link: Character Building: Values and Virtues: Resolving Conflicts-2b and 2i

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Footnotes:

¹ Proverbs 18:19 TLB

² Ephesians 4:26–27 TLB

³ Ecclesiastes 7:9 NLT