

VIDEO GAME EXPLOSION



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(Based on a true story)

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty"
(Proverbs 16:32).

Jared's thumbs flew over his video-game controller. This was it! He was *finally* going to beat his big brother!

Trees and rocks flew past on the TV screen as Jared's car zoomed into the last stretch of the final lap.

BAM! Travis's car came out of nowhere, pushing Jared's car off the racetrack. A second later, Travis flew across the finish line.

"Yes!" Travis said. "Still the champ!"

"That wasn't fair!" Jared said. "I want a rematch."

"That *was* a rematch," Travis answered with a laugh.

"Face it, little bro. I'm a blast from the past made of nothin' but *fast!*"

Usually Jared liked joking around with Travis when they played video games. But this time he didn't feel like laughing. "Let's race again," he said.

"Are you sure?" Travis asked. "You seem kind of mad."

"I'm not mad!" Jared said loudly. "Come on. One more race."

Travis shrugged. "OK. But last one."

By the end of the second lap, Jared's car was in third place. His heart started thumping harder. Then halfway

through the final lap, he finally caught up with Travis's car. It was now or never! Jared's thumbs flew as he did his best passing move.

BAM! At the last second, Travis crashed into Jared's car, sending it off the track—again!

"Aaaugh! Not again!" Jared felt anger filling up inside him like a water balloon ready to pop. He threw the controller down and jumped off the couch. Then he ran and kicked the wall next to the TV.

CRUNCH!

Jared stared down in disbelief. He pulled his foot slowly out of the hole in the wall he'd just made with his foot.

"Whoa," Travis said. "That's not good."

Suddenly Jared's anger vanished. Now he was just plain scared. Not only about what Mom and Dad were going to say but because he'd never felt that mad before. And all over a dumb video game!

"Hey, bro. I'm sorry," Travis said. "I wasn't trying to be mean."

"It's not your fault," Jared said. "I can't believe I just did that."

Jared spent the rest of the afternoon dreading the time when Mom and Dad would get home from their date. What would he tell them? He couldn't even explain it to himself. He went to his bedroom to pray. He asked for forgiveness and



for help in knowing how to talk to Mom and Dad.

As soon as he heard their voices, Jared ran out to meet them. "Mom! Dad! I'm so sorry!"

Dad stopped laughing. "Sorry for what?" Jared showed them the wall and explained what had happened.

"We're glad you told us the truth," Mom said. They all agreed that Jared would do extra chores to help pay for fixing the wall. That was only fair.

Dad's face softened. "The wall isn't what has me worried. Can you help me understand how you got so angry?"

Jared tried to put into words how he'd felt when he kept losing over and over.

"It sounds like you started feeling really frustrated,"

Dad said. "Do you think it might be a good idea to cut back on video games for a few weeks?"

Jared nodded. That made sense. Maybe he and Travis could go on more bike rides.

"We love you," Dad said, pulling Jared into a hug. "If you have any more problems like this, we can figure it out together."

Jared said a quick prayer after Mom and Dad left the room. "Thank Thee for helping me talk to Mom and Dad."

He felt a warmth spread in his heart. *This is the best feeling I've had all day*, he thought. *Things are going to be OK.* ●

