



Helping Kids Grow in Self-Control God's Way

When Saying “No” is the Best “Yes”

Raising Christ-Centered Kids | Character | The Fruit of the Spirit: Self-Control

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“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

(2 Timothy 1:7, ESV)

Key Takeaway

Self-control is saying “yes” to God and “no” to what leads us away from Him.

The Biblical Meaning of Self-Control

Self-control is a gift of the Spirit that helps us master our impulses and desires so that we can live in a way that honors God. Scripture compares a person without self-control to “a city broken into and left without walls” (Proverbs 25:28)—unprotected and easily conquered by temptation. But God, in His mercy, provides His Spirit to rebuild those walls from the inside out.

This fruit of the Spirit is not about perfection or pressure. It's about surrender. Through grace, God trains us “to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives” (Titus 2:11–12). The Spirit gives us real strength and power to resist what harms us and courage to choose what pleases God. Every moment of restraint becomes an act of worship, showing that our hearts belong to Him (2 Timothy 1:7).

Understanding Self-Control: When Temptation Feels Too Strong

Everyone—kids and adults alike—knows the tug-of-war between “I want to” and “I shouldn't.” Whether it's yelling when angry, sneaking extra screen time, or eating that last cookie, temptation always whispers that self-control is too hard. But the Spirit whispers louder. He helps us pause long enough to ask, “Will this bring me closer to God or lead me away from Him?”



Parent Guide | *The Fruit of the Spirit: Self-Control*

Self-control doesn't mean missing out. It means gaining peace and freedom. When children learn that saying "no" to what's wrong is really saying "yes" to God's best, they start to see their choices as part of something bigger—a heart being shaped by God's Spirit. Over time, those small "no's" grow into a strong, steady "yes" to following Jesus in everything.

Practical Steps: Growing in Self-Control with God's Help

1. **Stop and Think** – Pause before acting and ask, "Will this choice honor God?"
2. **Pray for Strength** – Pray, "Holy Spirit, help me choose what's right."
3. **Use Scripture as Armor** – Memorize verses like 2 Timothy 1:7 or Titus 2:12 to guard your heart when tempted.
4. **Practice Small Choices** – Strength grows with practice: waiting your turn, stopping yourself from arguing, or choosing one treat instead of two.
5. **Celebrate Wise Choices** – Notice and affirm when your child shows self-control. Acknowledge effort, not perfection by saying, "I saw you pause and pray before reacting. That's growth!"

Scripture for Parents and Kids

- "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age," (Titus 2:11–12, *ESV*)
- "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls." (Proverbs 25:28, *ESV*)

Encouragement for Parents

Self-control may feel like the hardest fruit to nurture especially in a world that says, "Do whatever feels right." But remember, God doesn't expect instant mastery; He invites daily surrender. Growth happens when we guide our children not just to resist wrong, but to love what is right. Each small moment of self-control—every pause, prayer, or second thought—is evidence of the Spirit at work.

Model this fruit by letting your children see you pause, pray, and choose peace over an impulsive self-centered reaction. Over time, they'll understand that true strength comes from the Spirit, not sheer willpower. Saying "no" to sin always opens the door to the deeper "yes" of joy, peace, and freedom in Christ.

CTMP Corner: Kingdom Kids in Action

- **Connect:** Share a time when saying "no" felt hard—but later brought peace or blessing.
- **Teach:** Tell your kids about Joseph in Genesis 39 and how he trusted God enough to walk away from temptation.
- **Model:** Practice a ten-second pause before reacting in frustration. Let your kids see you breathe, pray, and respond calmly.
- **Pray:** Ask the Holy Spirit to help your family grow in wisdom and strength to say "yes" to God's best.