



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

SELF-CONTROL

Family Study Guides

FRUIT OF GOD’S SPIRIT
“Self-Control”
Family Study Guide

Objectives:

- Family members will define self-control and examine where and how self-control is needed in daily life.
- As a family identify how Christ used self-control.
- Explain how Joseph exercised self-control in very difficult situations and was blessed for it.
- Identify the tools God gives us to grow in self-control and create a plan to use them.

Memory Verse:

1 Corinthians 9:25 *And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things...*

Definition: Self-Control is restraint over thoughts, words and actions. It is the ability to say “no” to yourself. It is being temperate; moderate in one’s emotions or actions; self-restraint; not excessive or extreme.

1 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV) *[Love] is not self-seeking, is not easily angered...*

Question: Which fruit of the Holy Spirit is evident in people who are disciplined? This particular fruit is that attribute of God that gives one the power to have a good command over themselves and to resist temptation. They are careful to follow the spirit as well as the letter of the law. They are moderate in all that they do. It means keeping your temper, not speaking harshly to others, not over eating or over drinking. Which fruit is this? It is probably one of the hardest fruit for people to practice.
(Answer: SELF-CONTROL)

Review Christ’s examples of using self-control with Satan’s temptations

Matthew 4:1-2

Jesus went out into a desolate area to fast, where there were no people. God sent His angels to watch over Jesus. Christ fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. God the Father gave Jesus extra physical strength to be able to fast that long, and gave him spiritual strength to be able to resist the Devil. Fasting is an excellent way to gain strength from God, and grow closer to Him.

Jesus wanted to be especially close to God His Father, because He knew God was going to allow Him to be tempted by Satan. This would give Jesus an opportunity to overcome Satan and qualify Him to replace Satan as the ruler of the earth. He would also set an example to show us how, with His help, we can overcome Satan the same way.

Satan tempted Jesus in three different ways. Let’s review each of those.

1. Matthew 4:3-4 or Luke 4:1-13. Read together as a family.

Satan’s first temptation attempted to get Jesus to prove that He was the Messiah by turning rocks into bread. Satan knew how hungry Jesus would be. Jesus knew that He was given power to spread God’s

word, not to feed Himself. But Jesus met the temptation with the sword of God's Word. *"Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."*

Satan wanted Jesus to use his power selfishly rather than for good. In a similar way, Satan also attacks us where we are most vulnerable. For example, if it was really important to a person to get an A on a test, Satan may tempt that person to cheat.

Here Jesus was showing we must remember that the Bible is like spiritual food that we need every day just as we need physical food. Physical food keeps our physical body alive, but spiritual food is what keeps us close to God. Always put God and His will before our wants and needs. Satan will use the things we want most to tempt us with, but God will always provide a way for us to beat the devil. God is more powerful than Satan, and can prevent him from harming us.

2. Together read Matthew 4:5-7. What do we learn from Satan's second temptation?

Satan took Jesus into Jerusalem all the way up to the highest part of the temple. Satan then goaded Jesus. He said, *"If You are the Son of God, show that you are not afraid to jump down from this high building. After all, God says in the Bible that He will send angels to catch you."*

Satan wanted Jesus to make God prove that He would send His angels to catch Jesus if He jumped. Jesus explained that we should not tell God He has to prove to us He is God by a miracle. Jesus correctly quoted Scripture when He said we should not test God.

Satan was trying to play on a person's tendency for vanity and pride. Have you ever had someone "dare" you to do something you know you should not do? Maybe call you "chicken" or coward if you don't do it. It takes self-control to react or respond properly.

3. Read Matthew 4:8-10. What was the third thing Satan tempted Jesus with?

Satan took Jesus up to a high mountain. He wanted Jesus to throw Himself down and have the angels raise Him up. He was trying to appeal to Jesus' pride and desire for power. Satan told Jesus that he could have all the kingdoms of the world right then if He would fall down and worship Satan.

Jesus knew he would soon have to suffer and die in sacrifice for all mankind. After his death, he would be resurrected—and given authority to rule all the kingdoms of this earth. Satan here was trying to convince Jesus that he could take a shortcut—that He didn't have to go through all that suffering. *"Just worship me,"* Satan said, *"and you can have it all nice and easy."*

How does Satan tempt us? Through lies, pride, selfish desires, fake shortcuts. Back to our student who wants good grades really bad—he can go about it the right way, by working hard and studying or he can take a shortcut and cheat. Emotions like jealousy, anger, selfishness and greed often lead us to do wrong. He'll try to tell us it's ok. He'll use things we want to keep us from helping others.

After Satan failed with this third temptation, Jesus told Satan with great authority to go away. And Satan had to leave.

How will God help us resist Satan? Read **1 Corinthians 10:13**. God provides a way to overcome each temptation. It may not be easy, but it's there. Read James 4:7. Like Christ, if you resist Satan and trust in God, he will retreat.

By overcoming Satan, Jesus also showed us how we can overcome Satan when he tempts us to do evil. He shows us that we need to remember important verses in the Bible and put them in our mind so we

will know what we should do. For example, we can be tempted to lie sometimes; but can be reminded to have self-control to not lie when we remember that scripture says God hates a lying tongue. We can resist Satan as it says in James 4:7, and he will flee from us as he fled from Jesus.

Discussion Points:

- ✓ Why would self-control be such an important fruit in this situation?
- ✓ Discuss the ways Jesus demonstrated self-control over his thoughts, words and actions.
- ✓ Look at **Luke 2:46-52**, **Luke 3:21-22**, and **Matthew 4:1-2** before the temptation of Jesus. What did Jesus do to prepare for this moment? Was he relying on his own human abilities?
- ✓ Think of a time you were tempted to do something you knew was wrong. Was the incident similar to anything Jesus went through? (Example: If you were tempted to steal—it was because you wanted something that was not yours to possess. Satan told Jesus he could have possessions that he had not yet qualified to be given.)
The point of this lesson is that we need to ask God to give us the power of His spirit so we can have the self-control to obey Him. We cannot defeat Satan on our own!
- ✓ Looking at the example of Jesus, how should we prepare our hearts and minds to exercise self-control?

Old Testament Example: Joseph—Genesis 37-47

The life of Joseph was one marked with many difficulties. One reason Joseph is such a hero is the example of self-control he set in the most difficult of circumstances. From enduring his brothers' hatred, to being sold into slavery, to imprisonment, to temptation to hold a grudge, Joseph overcame hardship by using self-control and giving glory to God.

In **Genesis 37**, Joseph's brothers had so much hatred toward him that they sold him into slavery for 20 pieces of silver. He was taken into Egypt and sold to Potiphar, an officer of the Pharaoh. Joseph was far from his family, and didn't know if he would ever see his father again. The grief and betrayal that Joseph experienced must have been terrible.

Even though he became a slave in a foreign country, Joseph served Potiphar loyally and treated him with respect. He did not allow anger or pity to take over.

Notice this important phrase in **Genesis 39:2 (NLT)** "*The LORD was with Joseph, so he succeeded in everything he did...*"

KEY POINT: While Joseph did indeed practice self-control, it was God with him that enabled his success!

Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned (**Genesis 39:2-5**).

God blessed everything that Joseph did in Potiphar's house, and soon he had much power.

Consider several ways that Joseph used self-control to gain the trust of his boss:

- He did not steal—although he probably could have “gotten away” with taking a few things from his wealthy boss.
- He worked hard—even if he may have felt like being lazy.
- He did not lust—even though there were beautiful women in the household.
- He was respectful—but probably had to fight resentment for being a slave.

Soon, he was tested when Potiphar's wife wanted to possess Joseph for herself. Joseph refused her advances because she was another man's wife and he would be breaking the Seventh Commandment. Joseph refused to even be near her (**Genesis 39:10**). He controlled both his thoughts and actions.

However, Potiphar's wife eventually lied to Potiphar, accusing Joseph of taking advantage of her. Potiphar believed his wife and had Joseph thrown in prison. It seemed like his use of self control did no good, but God blessed Joseph again, and he found favor in the eyes of the prison warden. Joseph was put in charge of all the prisoners because God was with him!

Eventually, Joseph was freed from prison because God helped him to interpret a dream for the king. Joseph told the king that there would be seven years of abundant food and seven years of famine. He remembered to give all the credit to God for the interpretation, keeping control of his words. The king was amazed and Joseph was soon put in charge of all Egypt under the king. As God worked with Joseph his wisdom and work ethic ended up saving the nation from famine.

Joseph continued using God's spirit instead of being controlled by self. As a result of the famine—Joseph's brothers eventually came to Egypt for food. Joseph could have allowed anger and resentment to control his reactions for what they had done to him, but instead he used God's spirit to help him control his thoughts, words and actions. When Joseph finally revealed himself to his brothers, he said, *"I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you"...* And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them" (**Genesis 45: 4, 5, 15**). The love and forgiveness Joseph had, instead of anger, is perhaps his greatest example of self-control.

God saw that Joseph wanted to obey His Commandments—so God helped him with the fruit of self-control and He blessed Joseph in every circumstance. God does the same for us when we want to do His will and pray for the help to exercise self-control. We must do our part in gaining self-control by finding time each day to pray to God and to study His Word. Then God will help us and bless us in our efforts.

Discussion Points:

- ✓ What is self-control?
- ✓ Identify several ways in Joseph's story that he demonstrated self-control.
- ✓ How did Joseph end up in prison and what was his attitude?
- ✓ How did God bless Joseph in the long run for his actions?

What are some areas in your life where it would be a good idea to exercise self-control? (Homework, sports, chores, spend time with God, speak to others with respect, etc.) **Example** of saving up grain equals the good example of saving money instead of spending everything, just because you have it.

⇒ **Saving takes self-control.**

Make a habit of praying for self-control, and God will help you just as He helped Joseph.

Possible Family Discussions or Activities:

- ✓ How does God bless us when we exercise self-control and obey Him? (Happy marriages because of being faithful; if we save money we have benefits of buying a home, etc.)
- ✓ As a family, play a game or activity (build a card house, shoot free throws or fold laundry). Talk about how controlling our actions, words and thoughts helps to master a skill.
- ✓ Look at the example of Daniel and discuss how he used the fruit of self-control.
- ✓ Discuss these points from Mr. Petty's Sermon:

Seven Steps for Developing Self-Control

(from Gary Petty's sermon on Self-Control:

<https://www.ucg.org/sermons/fruits-of-the-spirit-part-1-self-control>)

1. Be honest with yourself and admit your lack of self-control.
2. Confess to God in prayer and fasting. Be specific in asking God for help. Ask Him to give you the power to overcome.
3. Study what the Bible says about self-control and your specific problems.
4. Analyze what character and personality traits and past experiences have led you to have this lack of self-control.
5. Analyze what you must do to change both your thinking and behavior.
6. Make a plan and measure your progress.
7. Get support from others.

Additional Resources that you can use in your family studies:

- [Fruit of the Spirit - Part One: Self-Control](#); Gary Petty, December 3, 2016
- *Beyond Today* Blog—"Preparing for Battle: Three Threats to Self-Control (and Ways to Fight Them)" <https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/blogs/preparing-for-battle-three-threats-to-self-control>
- Article—"The Fruit of the Spirit—Self-Control; Governing Your Life by the Power of God" by Don Hooser <https://www.ucg.org/the-good-news/the-fruit-of-the-spirit-self-control-governing-your-life-by-the-power-of-god>
- Teen Bible Study Guide—Speech <https://www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study/teen-bible-study-volume-6-practical-christian-living/speech> Teen Bible Study Guide—Money Management <https://www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study/teen-bible-study-volume-6-practical-christian-living/money-management>

Possible Classroom Activities:

- ✓ Discuss other Bible examples: Who exercised self-control? Who lacked self-control? What were the results (i.e. Samson and Delilah; Daniel)?
- ✓ **Self-Control Brings Freedom???** Activity for older students [See below]
- ✓ Have students create and decorate a “self-control” plaque to take home. It can read: “Self-control is the ability to say no to yourself”, or it can contain the memory verse (**1 Corinthians 9:25**). (See activity directions below.)
- ✓ In groups, let the students create a skit of a real-life circumstance where they would have to exhibit self-control (doing chores instead of watching TV, playing with a younger sibling or saying no to too much dessert).
- ✓ Talk about the meaning of this Proverb and how it relates to students’ lives: “*A person without self-control is like a city with broken down walls*” (**Proverbs 25:28 NIV**). Then have students explore these other Proverbs about self-control and discuss how it relates to their lives.
 - Proverbs 12:16
 - Proverbs 16:32
 - Proverbs 21:17
 - Proverbs 25:16
 - Proverbs 29:11
- ✓ **Build a Card House Activity.** Divide students into groups, give each group a deck of cards and have them create a card house. With the right technique and enough patience, they can build a three, four or even a five-story card tower with just one deck of cards. Discuss how controlling, thoughts, actions and words, enables them to work together and achieve success at building a card house.
- ✓ **Twenty Questions Activity.** The objective of Twenty Questions is quite simple: guess the person, place or thing in 20 questions or less! Twenty Questions is a spoken game that encourages deductive reasoning and creativity. In the traditional game
 - Choose someone to answer questions....
 - Identify what you want to know....
 - Write a list of questions....
 - Consider the setting....
 - Show respect....
 - All other players are questioners. Take turns, so that everyone has a chance to ask a question.

Self-Control Brings Freedom??? Why Self-Control Is Good for Us

Give students or small groups of students a category from below. Then have them brainstorm and provide Biblical or real-life examples of how self-control results in freedom from some of the things in our lives that may control us! How might these things control or imprison us if we do not grow in self-control? Some descriptions are provided below from Gary Petty's sermon on self-control to help you.

- 1. Emotional freedom**
 - 2. Freedom from broken relationships**
 - 3. Freedom from consequences of physical impulses**
 - 4. Freedom from our need to control others**
 - 5. Freedom from wrong use of time (laziness, procrastination)**
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1. Freedom from selfishness and being controlled by our emotions of anger, hatred, jealousy and feelings of worthlessness because we have God's help as partakers of His nature to control our habits and desires. Freedom from worry/despair because we know that our present suffering is necessary for the great rewards Christ will bring with Him when He returns.
 2. Freedom from broken relationships. A major reason for unhappy marriages is a lack of self-control of anger and selfishness. When we replace the lack of self-control with the love of God, with outgoing concern, we begin to heal marriages, parent/child relationships and friendships.
 3. Freedom from the bondage of being controlled by our bodies like immoral sexual practices and over-eating. Freedom from compulsive entertainment where we enjoy vicarious sin. Freedom from the bondage of chemicals like alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Freedom from over-spending our money.
 4. Freedom from needing to control others. When we exercise self-control we are no longer under the bondage of having to manipulate others or trying to make them conform to our control because we see each person as responsible to God.
 5. Freedom from the bondage of time the wrong use of time. Self-control helps us overcome chronic procrastination or being controlled by fear of the future or living in the past. It replaces laziness with a proper work ethic.

ACTIVITY: Make a self-control definition plaque

Supplies:

- Alphabet pasta or letter stickers
- Dark-colored cardboard or foam board (enough to cut a 5 by 7 inch plaque for each student)
- Dark construction paper (to paste over surface if board is not already dark-colored)
- Tacky glue or other quick-drying glue
- One can of spray high luster lacquer or quick-drying varnish
- Peel-and-stick magnets for back of plaque
- One or two hand-held hair dryers to help speed the glue drying process

Prepare:

1. Due to limited class time, teacher must do plaque preparation work. Cut cardboard or foam board, etc. to size, one 5 by 7 inch piece per student. (If necessary, paste dark construction paper over light-colored board since pasta doesn't show up well against a light surface.)
2. Make a copy of plaque example sheet for each child.
3. Sort pasta letters. Each plaque will need letters to write the following:

SELF-CONTROL IS THE ABILITY TO SAY "NO" TO YOURSELF

4. Multiply each letter group by the number of children in your class. It's a good idea to have several extras in case letters get lost or broken.

2 A's	4 L's
1 B's	2 N's
1 C's	6 O's
3 E's	2 R's
2 F's	4 S's
1 H's	5 T's
3 I's	1 U's
3 Y's	

5. Make a plaque at home to get a feel for the activity and to have a finished sample to show the students.

Directions:

1. Hand each child a blank plaque, presorted letters in small plastic bag or paper cup, a copy of the plaque wording and glue bottle to share.
2. Have children look at plaque example so they know where to place their letters. Have children squeeze out a spaghetti-thin strip of glue and position the letters of the first two words (self-control) over the thin strip of glue. Stress that they only need a thin line of glue, since you want it to dry quickly. Do each successive line one stripe at a time.
3. When done, use hair dryer to dry glue.
4. When glue seems dry, take plaque outdoors and spray with lacquer spray sealer. Teacher must do this step for students.
5. The last step is to apply the self-stick magnet to back of plaque.
6. Suggest that kids add a ribbon, button, flower or a decorative border to the plaque for decoration.

Who are they?

Unscramble the letters in each of the following names below. Then write each name in the blank next to the scrambled one.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. NAD _____ | 7. HUJDA _____ |
| 2. DAG _____ | 8. LUUBNEZ _____ |
| 3. REASH _____ | 9. SAASCHIR _____ |
| 4. VEIL _____ | 10. PAANTHLI _____ |
| 5. BEERNU _____ | 11. HEPSJO _____ |
| 6. NEOMIS _____ | 12. INNEBJMA _____ |

Draw these pictures

Draw the following pictures on separate pieces of paper. Be sure to keep them with this lesson.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Joseph in his coat of many colors. | 5. Joseph second in command of Egypt. |
| 2. Joseph being dropped into a pit. | 6. Joseph storing grain in one of the many granaries. |
| 3. Joseph being sold to the Midianite traders. | 7. Joseph meeting his brothers and telling them who he is. |
| 4. Joseph in prison. | |

Word Hunt

Find the following words in the lesson and circle them. Then write their meaning on a separate piece of paper. Use a dictionary if you do not know what they mean.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. sheaves | 7. jealous |
| 2. multitudes | 8. harsh |
| 3. descendants | 9. plentiful |
| 4. stern | 10. innocence |