



Self-control is choosing to do what's best even when you don't want to.



DAY 1

Read 2 Peter 1:3a

Self-control is choosing to do what's best even when you don't want to. It's hard to do something you don't want to do, isn't it? Doing what you want is way easier. But if we don't have self-control, we could end up hurting ourselves and the people around us.

Today's verse reminds us that we don't have to try to do the right thing on our own. God's power will give us EVERYTHING we need to live a godly life, to have the self-control to do what is best. No one is more powerful than God!

Get Ready for Self-control

What if you started your day by praying for self-control? Grab an index card or scrap of paper and write, "BE READY TO DO THE RIGHT THING" in capital letters and place it next to your shoes. As you put them on tomorrow morning, stop and ask God to help you have self-control all day long!

DAY 2

Read 1 Corinthians 9:25

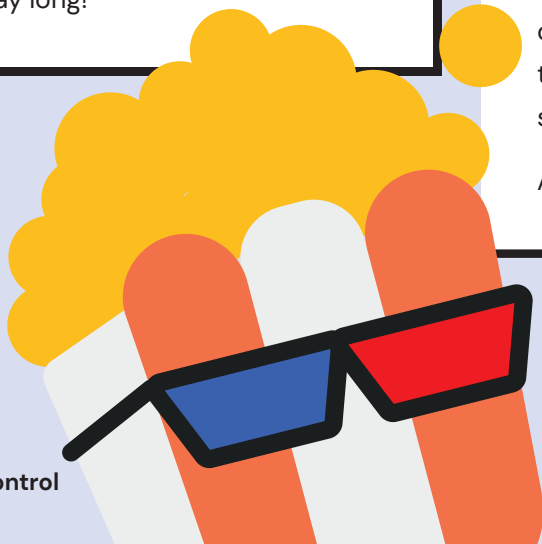
What's your favorite sport? Who's your favorite athlete? To become a great athlete, you have to spend years practicing in the gym and on the field. Great athletes might make it look easy, but that big win you see on TV is the result of years of training.

Self-control takes practice, and just like those athletes, you won't always get it right. Every athlete misses a shot or loses a game, but champions keep trying. You won't show self-control in every single situation. But the more you try, the more you practice, the easier it will become.

Practice Makes Progress

Practice your free throws. If you can't go outside, practice with a small basketball hoop hung over the door or with paper and a trashcan. Spend ten minutes shooting the ball into the basket. Give yourself a point for every shot you sink. Repeat the same process for three days in a row. No basketball hoop? Pick some activity that is challenging, like doing sit-ups for a minute. Keep track of how many you can do in a minute and see how that number grows over the three days.

Are you getting better with practice?



Read 1 Corinthians 10:13

Temptation is a desire to do something wrong or unwise. Everybody faces temptation, even Jesus! Every day you'll be tempted to lash out in anger, or say something unkind, or lose your cool when you should show self-control. But there is a way out. You have God on your side. When you're tempted, God will help you!

How can you avoid losing self-control?

You could...

- ➔ Look away.
- ➔ Realize that it's just a temptation and that you DON'T have to give in!
- ➔ Distract yourself with something else.
- ➔ Picture yourself resisting the temptation.
- ➔ Pray and ask God to help you keep your cool.

Read the scenarios below. For each one, write down how you could avoid losing self-control by choosing one of the methods listed above.

1. Your mom tells you no video games before dinner. This makes you angry. . .
2. Your brother breaks the new Star Wars **LEGO**® ship you spent hours putting together. . .
3. A kid in your class tells a joke about you and everyone laughs. . .

Read Proverbs 4:23

Have you ever seen a guard in front of something important— like a monument or museum? A guard's job is to protect something valuable. When it comes to self-control, do you know what you need to guard? Your heart. Everything you do— every word, every thought, every action— comes from your heart.

In order to guard your heart, you need to make sure that there's nothing hidden that you need to get rid of. Do a heart check:

- Are you angry?
- Are you bitter?
- Are you jealous?
- Are you frustrated?

The best way to get in the habit of guarding your heart is to begin asking yourself the following question every night before you go to bed: *God, what is in my heart today?* Remember, when you guard your heart, self-control will follow. Your actions will reflect what's in your heart.

Be ready to do
the right thing.