

Self-Control Bible Lesson (Fruit of the Spirit)

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This is the eight Bible lesson in our series based on the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. Each particular lesson plan explains a specific character quality that God creates in us through his Spirit. These lessons are designed to accompany the printable [Fruit of the Spirit coloring book](#) from our website. [Click here](#) to see all the lessons in this series.

Suggested Age Group: 1st-3rd Grades

Scripture: Galatians 5:22-23, Matthew 4:1-11, Proverbs 25:28

Exegetical Idea: Self-control is a Fruit of the Spirit, available to all believers as they abide in Christ.

Pedagogical Idea: As believers, we are able to display the fruit of self-control as we abide and trust in Christ.

Cognitive Aim: Children will know self-control is modeled perfectly in Christ, is made possible through Him, and is a Fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Affective Aim: Children will feel confident in Christ's perfect, sinless life, which made it possible for them to experience His forgiveness and redemption.

Behavioral Aim: Children will memorize Proverbs 25:28.

Memory Verse: Proverbs 25:28, "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls." (ESV)

Lesson Overview

1. **Kindle Curiosity** (5 minutes) Description: Discover what Fruit of the Spirit today's lesson is about. Supplies: Chalk/marker board with Galatians 5:22-23 written out, jumbo marshmallows or other fun, desirable snack (allergy alert).
2. **God Revealed** (15 minutes) Description: Look to God's Word to discover truth about self-control. Supplies: Bible
3. **Personal Pursuit** (10-15 minutes) Description: Learning activity, apply the Scripture truth. Supplies: Blocks, army men (optional), self-control coloring sheets found here: [Fruit of the Spirit](#).
4. **Daily Knowing** (7-10 minutes) Description: Memorize Proverbs 25:28, pray together. Supplies: Notecards with memory verse written out for parents.

**For the Fruit of the Spirit lessons, you could make a tree for the wall labeled "believer" or "Christian." Each week you can add the particular attribute you are teaching about. This week, you would add "self-control," allowing a child to place it on the branch of the tree. I would encourage you to only use one type of fruit (if you are writing each virtue on a fruit),



for though there are several virtues produced by the Spirit, they are all one type of fruit: the Fruit of the Spirit. There are also several object lessons and activities on the website that would complement this lesson if you have more time with your children. Many activities over the fruit of the Spirit would work well as the children are arriving.

1. Kindle Curiosity (5 minutes)

- **DO:** Set out a tray of marshmallows or another yummy snack after all your children have arrived. When they ask about it, **SAY:** Each of you can have a marshmallow right now if you want it...but...if you wait until the end of class, you can have two marshmallows! I am going to put the tray down over here. If you decide to eat the one marshmallow now, please grab one soon. At the end of class, I will pass out two marshmallows to everyone who decides to wait. (Allow them to think for a few moments and then put the marshmallows out of reach, but not out of sight.)
- **SAY:** Today we will be discovering God's truth about the very last Fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5. Can you tell me what that Fruit of the Spirit is? (Point them to the verse on the board. *Self-control!*)

2. God Revealed (15 minutes)

- **DO:** Begin by reading together Galatians 5:22-23.
- **SAY:** The Bible tells us in this passage that self-control is a Fruit of the Spirit. If we are saved, the Holy Spirit is living inside of us, and we can be people who are self-controlled in every area of life! This does not mean that we will have self-control all the time. But as we come to know God more and more, we change! Through Jesus and Him alone, we have the power to be self-controlled!
- **SAY:** Before we get too far into our lesson though we need to talk about what self-control is exactly. Can anyone tell me what self-control is? (Allow time for response.) Self-control is being in charge of your feelings, actions, and thoughts. So, basically, having self-control is making yourself do something that is not easy or doing something you really do not want to do. It is showing kindness to someone who has just hurt your feelings. It is obeying your mom right away when she asks you to clean your room instead of arguing. It is waiting for something patiently even when you want it really bad because you know something greater will happen (here tie in with the marshmallows). Some of you decided to eat a marshmallow right away. The temptation of a yummy marshmallows was too great to wait until the end of the class! We have to realize that self-control is almost always very hard!
- **ASK:** Who do you think would be our perfect example of self-control? (God, Jesus!) As a person who never sinned, Jesus practiced self-control perfectly! Just like with every other Fruit of the Spirit, He is our model. A lot of times self-control goes beyond just making ourselves do what is right and good. It also involves fighting against a desire or temptation to sin. We can find an example of this in the Bible, our source of truth! Let's read together Matthew 4:1-11.
- **SAY:** In this passage, Satan himself comes to Jesus and tempts Him three different times. Each time, Jesus practices self-control and does not sin.
- **ASK:** What is Jesus tempted with in verse 2? (Food) Matthew tells us that Jesus had been fasting (not eating) for 40 days and 40 nights and was hungry. Can you imagine how hungry Jesus would be after not eating for 40 days and nights?! I get

hungry if I just skip breakfast! Satan knew this and so He tempts Jesus to use His power as God to make some food. However, even though Jesus must have been extremely hungry, through Scripture He used self-control to resist the temptation to do what was easy.

- **SAY:** With the third temptation, Satan tells Jesus, “All you have to do is worship me and all the kingdoms of the world will be yours.” Well, Jesus *is* the king of all the kingdoms of the world, and one day all kingdoms will worship Him. But as a human, he was not recognized as King. He came to earth to die for our sins and gain victory over Satan once and for all. So Satan was offering Him a short cut if Jesus would only worship him. But this would be extreme disobedience to our God! **ASK:** What did Jesus do? (Jesus was obedient and had self-control rather than disobeying God the Father.) Jesus never sinned, and not only during this time, but during His entire life. He is our perfect example! Because He lived a perfect life, we do not have to. Through His sacrifice, His death on the cross, we are forgiven and set free from our sin. As we come to know Him more and more, we can begin to be like Him! We can begin to show self-control through His power!

3. Personal Pursuit (15-20 minutes)

- **DO:** Instruct your children to build two small cities out of blocks. Each city needs a wall around it to protect them from enemies. As they start, read Proverbs 25:28, “A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.”
- **ASK:** What would happen if enemies came to this city and knocked the walls down? (They could get in-the people would be unprotected from another attack.)
- **SAY:** Let’s pretend an army came and attacked this city. (Have them knock down all the walls using the army men.) They defeated them and left. Now the city has no walls. What will happen to them if they never rebuild their walls? (Their enemies can always get in. They will constantly be attacked. They will always be unprotected.) What about this other city, whose walls are still standing? (They are protected. Their enemies cannot come in.) If enemies continue to come in and out of this city whenever they want, what will it eventually look like? Can you show me using the army men? (Have them take the army men into the city and destroy all of it.) The city will never know peace and will be destroyed completely!
- **SAY:** The verse I read to you says that when we have no self-control, we are like this city with no walls. This means we have no protection against temptation. When it comes to us, like an enemy, it overpowers us, and we give in to all types of sin, like anger, disobedience, meanness, selfishness, unkindness, and many, many more! We are not able to say “No!” to temptation like Jesus, but always say “Yes.” Our lives become a mess of sin and chaos. We have no peace, just like this city that is a pile of rubble after enemies have constantly invaded and destroyed it.
- **DO:** Pass out the coloring sheets. As they are coloring, **SAY:** What we see in this picture has probably happened to you at least one time. We have all given into our feelings and sinned in situations when we really, really want something we are told we cannot have. Self-control is a Fruit of the Spirit. Remember-this means it does not come to us right when we begin to follow after God. We will lose the battle many times! But as we come to know God more and more, as we abide in Him, the Fruit of the Spirit begins to grow in our hearts.

- **ASK:** How can we come to know God more and more so that the fruit of self-control is produced in our hearts? (Through reading His Word, worshipping Him, talking to our moms and dads, going to church, praying to Him).

4. Daily Knowing (7-10 minutes)

- **SAY:** I want us to memorize together Proverbs 25:28, "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls." (Use hand motions to help them memorize or write it on the board, erasing one word at a time until everyone is able to say it together without seeing it.)
- Spend time in prayer together. Remember the specific situations your children are going through. Invite them to share their needs and praises. Praise God for the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, the self-control we are able to have because He lives within us. It is only through Christ, who lived a perfect life, that we are able to have self-control and the other Fruit of the Spirit. He has redeemed us, and though we will never be perfect, we can become more and more like Him as we follow Him during our lives on earth.
- Encourage the parents to work on this verse with their children. Send a notecard home with each parent with the verse written on it. Encourage them to daily remind their children about the Fruit of the Spirit and to demonstrate the Fruit in their own daily lives.

