

# Choosing to Use Self-Control

Quarter 3 • Lesson 8

Focus on Character Development

1. *Connecting:* Play a game to demonstrate that self-control takes effort.
2. *Teaching:* Learn what God's Word says about self-control (Proverbs 25:28; 1 Corinthians 9:24–27).
3. *Responding:* Review the tips and think of a way to use self-control this week.

## SUPPLIES

- Bible
- 2 round stones (1 large and 1 small)
- Optional Supplies:*
- Memory Verse poster
- 2 balls (1 large and 1 small or 2 different colours)
- Student Pages
- Pencils

## Teacher Devotion

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*Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.*  
Proverbs 25:28

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Think of a time when you or someone you know lost all self-control. Perhaps it was indulging in something that ended up making you sick. Perhaps it was letting your bitterness pour out of you, crushing someone's heart. Perhaps it was exploding in anger and destroying something valuable. How sick at heart did you feel after experiencing or seeing this?

Living without self-control brings only pain and hurt—to you and to others. When you let emotions and desires rule your life, it is like a wall that is broken down. But you can rebuild that wall, with God's help. Spend some time confessing your areas of weakness to Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you strength to live with self-control. And Praise God for His love and forgiveness, which bring healing in all of your areas of brokenness.

**Family Connection:** Let family members know that this is the last lesson on self-control. Ask them to share with their children times when they used self-control and times when they did not. What were the results of each? As a family, perhaps they can remind each other about self-control.

## LESSON TIME

### 1. Connecting: Play a game to demonstrate that self-control takes effort.

As the children arrive, ask them how they showed self-control in difficult situations. If you have a story about how you showed self-control during the past week, share it with the children.

- **We have been learning about self-control the last few weeks. Who can tell us what self-control is?**

Allow 1–2 children to share. If needed, remind children that self-control is choosing to do the right thing even when we do not feel like it.

#### Let's play a game to show how self-control takes effort.

Have everyone sit in a circle on the floor. Give the 2 stones or balls to 2 different children. Point to the small stone or ball and tell the children that this one must always be tossed. Point to the large stone or ball and tell the children that this one must always be rolled. They will begin tossing or rolling the stones or balls slowly across the circle. They must try not to mix up which one gets rolled and which one gets tossed. If anyone makes a mistake with either of the stones or balls, that person is out.

The circle will get a little smaller and the children will play again. Each time you begin a new round, encourage the children to go faster and faster. When things are sped up, more and more children will mix up what to do with each stone or ball. After you have a winner or you have played for about 5–6 minutes, discuss the game with the children.

- **How easy or hard was it to make sure you used each stone or ball correctly at first?**
- **How difficult was it to keep doing the right thing when we went faster?**
- **What would have happened in our game if someone had decided to keep 1 or both of the stones or balls?**

Children may answer that the game would have been over, they may have felt angry about the selfish actions of that person, or other things.

**Today we will talk about some ways to practice self-control when we are in hard situations. Remember that self-control means making the choice to say or do the right thing even when it is difficult.**

### 2. Teaching: Learn what God's Word says about self-control (Proverbs 25:28; 1 Corinthians 9:24–27).

**Let's read a passage from the Bible that tells us about what happens when someone does not have self-control.**

If possible, read Proverbs 25:28 from your Bible. Show the Memory Verse poster if possible.

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*Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.*

Proverbs 25:28

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- **How would you say this verse in your own words?**

When someone lacks self-control, it means he has no boundaries to protect himself, just like a city that has no walls. A person without self-control may hurt her body by abusing drugs and alcohol. A person without self-control may be greedy and selfish. A person without self-control may destroy relationships in his anger. This person has no “walls” to help her. When God teaches us to have self-control, it is because He knows that it will help us stay safe and healthy.

Listen to these words that the apostle Paul wrote:

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*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run,  
but only one receives the prize?*

*So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things.*

*They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.*

*So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air.*

*But I discipline my body and keep it under control,*

*lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

1 Corinthians 9:24–27, ESV

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- What does Paul compare life to in the first part of this passage?

A race.

Paul is saying that life is like a race. You use self-control in all areas of your life so that you can win.

- Paul says that he disciplines his body. What are some ways you can use self-control in your physical body?

Answers might include not smoking or using drugs or alcohol, trying to stay healthy, exercising to stay strong, eating what is good for you, and other things.

Many people can have self-control when their life is easy, but when they face a hard situation, it can be difficult. Hard situations may make us want to respond in physically or verbally violent ways. We may say or do things that are not good. This is when you will need help. Here are some tips that may help you to have self-control when you are in a hard situation.

**Count to 10!** When you have strong emotions, it can be easy to say or do things that are not good. Instead, slowly count to 10. Then you can respond with self-control.

**Take a deep breath!** By taking a deep breath and very slowly letting it out, your emotions and your physical response will calm down. For example, if your heart is racing from being bullied, doing this can help you slow down and respond in the right way.

**Step away!** If possible, step away from the situation until you can think clearly about what would be the right thing to say or do.

**Run!** Removing yourself from a temptation can help you practice self-control. For example, if you are tempted to steal when you are with certain friends, choosing to play football with other friends can help you practice self-control.

**Think!** Try to think of possible good ways to have self-control in the situation. When you think about it ahead of time, you are more likely to respond with self-control when you are in a difficult situation.

**Remind yourself!** If you are trying to use self-control in some habit you have, giving yourself reminders can help you. For example, if you chew your nails, wear a rubber band on your wrist. Each time you begin to chew your nails, snap the rubber band on your wrist. Or you might tie a string around your wrist or finger.

The biggest help you have if you are a Christian is the Holy Spirit. He will not only give you strength to have self-control, but He can remind you too. When we use self-control we can put others first. We can say things that are encouraging and bring life. We can do things that will help others instead of harming them.

### 3. Responding: Review the tips and think of a way to use self-control this week.

- **Think quietly for a moment:** Do you know someone who has a lack of self-control in some area? It might be you or someone you know.
- **Without saying that person's name, tell us where you see a lack of control in that person's life:** her words, his actions, her relationships, his physical health, or something else.

Allow a couple of children to share. Be sure they do not mention any names. Share an example that you know of as well.

**Now think of someone you know who shows self-control in some area of his life. Try to think of someone who uses self-control even in a very hard situation. Perhaps that person put your needs above her own by giving you food and going without any. Perhaps that person uses self-control to not respond in anger when other people would. Turn to your neighbour and share how you see self-control in that person's life and what the result of that self-control is.**

Give the children 1–2 minutes to share with their neighbours, and then gather the class together.

- **Can you think of a time when you used self-control? Maybe you put another person first. Or maybe you did not react in anger when your uncle yelled at you. What happened as a result of using self-control?**

Give the children a few minutes to share their stories.

- **How did others respond when you used self-control? How did using self-control affect you?**

Give the children a chance to share their thoughts.

**We are going to quickly review the tips to help us have self-control. Watch and do the motions I do for each phrase.**

#### **Count to 10!**

Show the number 10 with your hands.

#### **Take a deep breath!**

Inhale deeply and slowly exhale.

#### **Step away!**

Take a step backward.

#### **Run!**

Run in place.

**Think!**

Tap your head.

**Remind yourself!**

Tap your wrist.

**Remember that the biggest help you have if you are a Christian is the Holy Spirit. He can remind you to have self-control and give you the strength to put it into practice.**

*Optional:* If you are using the Student Pages, allow the children a few minutes to respond there.

Encourage the children to get with a partner and share 1 way they want to practice self-control this week. It might be putting someone else first. It might be starting a good habit or stopping a bad habit. It might be responding in ways that bring life to someone. Give them about 5 minutes to share and pray for each other.

Close class by praying this blessing over the children based on Proverbs 25:28 and 1 Corinthians 9:24–27.

**Blessing: May you know that God is for you. He can help you have self-control. He does not want you to be like a city whose walls are broken down. May you know that with self-control you can run your race well!**

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song if possible.

"Waymaker" by Sinach: <https://youtu.be/DFGDU3XZmms>