

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

DAY 1

Read Titus 2:11-12

Let's say a kid at school pushes you on accident causing you to fall and drop your binder. It springs open and all your stuff goes flying. The kid, who didn't really mean to push you, starts laughing because your fall was pretty hilarious. But you don't think it's funny.

You want to push that kid back. You want to yell some insult.

We've all been tempted to hurt someone when something makes us angry. But self-control requires us to stop and think before we act. As our verse reminds us, God can help you say "NO!" to responding in a way that makes things worse. When you stop and think, you have the chance to **ask yourself, "What is the best response?"**

DAY 2

Read Proverbs 10:17

Imagine you're on a path in the woods. The path is marked by white slash marks on the trees. Those white marks are the only way to know whether you should turn right or left.

If you ignore them to try your own way, you'd get lost. You could get into some real trouble if you weren't careful to follow the marked path.

In a similar way, we need to listen to people around us who follow God. People who have been following God a little longer than you. They've made mistakes they want to help you avoid. When it comes to self-control, doing what you should do—listening to those who are wiser than you—can keep you safe.

Lava Floor

With an adult's permission, create a path on the floor with pillows. Pretend the floor is lava and see if you can make it all the way across the room from the doorway to your bed stepping only on the pillows.

As you jump, remember that listening to correction from people who are wiser than you puts you on the right path. Ignoring their instruction can get you lost or worse—covered in lava!

Read Philippians 4:8

Wouldn't it be cool if you could capture all the things you think about in a day and put them in a jar? That jar would probably be full of some pretty random stuff.

Like . . .

"Is lunch time yet?"

"Does my breath stink?"

Okay, those thoughts are kind of silly. But what about negative thoughts?

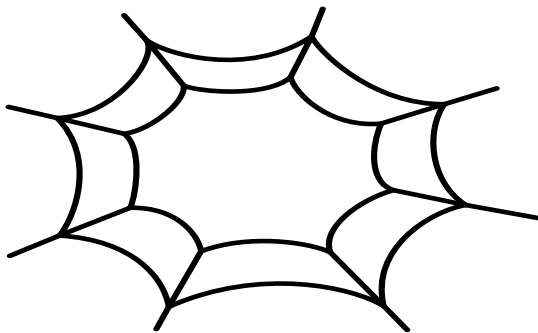
Like . . .

"I'll never understand this math homework."

"No one likes me."

Part of having self-control is controlling our thoughts. The key to stopping those negative thoughts, is to trap them. When those negative thoughts creep in, we need to remember what Jesus has done for us. That will help us focus our thoughts on what is true, noble, right and pure, lovely and worthy of respect.

Write down a negative thought you've had about yourself in the space below. Read today's verse again and ask God to help you trap those negative thoughts as you focus on Jesus.



Read 1 Corinthians 15:33

This week, we've been learning that doing what you should do can keep you safe. One thing you might not think about when it comes to having self-control are your friendships. The people you choose to hang out with really can affect the choices you make.

If you hang out with someone who is constantly breaking the rules, it's much easier to break the rules. If you hang out with someone who is always saying negative things, it's much easier to see everything in a negative way.

Bad companions—friends who consistently make unwise choices—can make a good person bad. Good friends can help you make wise choices. Bad friends, friends who are unkind, who lie, who push to the front, who only look out for themselves, they can influence you to make unwise choices. Choices that can hurt you and others.

So what about your friends? Are they helping you make wise choices that lead to self-control? **Ask God to help you find the kind of friends who are kind and helpful.**



Doing what you should
can keep you safe.