

Cultivating Self-Control in our Children

A. The importance of self-control

1. Biblical wisdom on self-control

a. Control time and be a diligent worker (**Proverbs 15:19** The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain. **Proverbs 18:9** He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.)

b. Control your mouth (**Proverbs 18:7** A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. **29:11** A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.)

c. Control your desires so as not to develop bad habits (**Proverbs 23:21** For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. **6:23-26** For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: **24** To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. **25** Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. **26** For by means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.)

2. What is self-control?

a. To carry out God's commands (**Proverbs 6:20-23** My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: **21** Bind them continually upon thine heart and tie them about thy neck. **22** When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. **23** For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.)

b. "Self-control is how people can be responsible to God, others and even themselves." (Pg 69) (**Galatians 5:23** Meekness, temperance: against such, there is no law.) "The notion of self-control assumes that others are more important than oneself. They learn how to put off fulfilling their interests so that they can serve others. A free and orderly society can only be built with this quality. Without it, man cannot follow his conscience or the rules of society. There is no freedom without self-control, for an uncontrolled man is convinced his desires are more important than the needs of others and, as a result, oppresses others to fulfill those desires. Do you know where all quarrels and conflicts come from in personal relationships? The Bible tells us they derive from our selfish desires. Again, we see that desires rule the person." (Pg 69-70) (**James 4:2** Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.)

The Attitude	Demanding Child	The contented Child
The Child's Attitude Toward Self	"The demanding child learns that it is easy to get whatever he wants. If he wants to be picked up, he gets picked up. If he wants to watch a program, he gets to watch it. The child only needs to cry or fuss, and those around him cave into his desires. He is trained to think that his opinion and needs are more important than the needs of those around him." <i>Principles & Practices of Biblical Parenting</i> (p. 70)	The child with self-control learns that he is just one of many people around. At times he needs to wait. This is okay. He will keep busy doing something else. He learns that those around him have not forgotten him. They love him, and they will come and satisfy his needs in time. (p. 71)
The Child's Attitude Toward Authority	He has no respect for authority. This demanding child is consumed with his own way. The child will think his own opinion is as important as his own parents' opinion and judgment. He disdains his parents' authority and is convinced that they are there to meet his every whim. (p. 71)	<i>He respects authority.</i> The child with self-control learns that there are many times when he will not get his way. He is content with this, even though he might not know why. He respects his parents' authority. 2. He stays under their protection and is better able to learn from others. (p. 71)
The Child's Attitude Toward the World	The world revolves around him. The demanding child becomes so intent on getting his way that the world becomes a place to serve his desires. The child becomes a manipulator of the things around him to get what he wants. He is willing to harm and pollute to obtain his desires. The child is not content unless he gets what he wants and is still not content even after he has gotten it. (p. 72)	The world is a place of exploration. The child with self-control is content to be by himself and will naturally and curiously learn from his environment. He can concentrate. The child learns to be happy even when his wishes are not met.

Summary: "Self-control, then, is the ability to constrain what one does so that he might accomplish some higher goal. Have you ever seen what is called modern art? Modern art is very undisciplined. One artist swung a paint bucket with holes over a canvas and called that art! Real control, however, comes from training. Training calls for self-discipline and concentration, sacrifice, determination, and perseverance. This results in wise and principled children filled with joy and love. God wants us to obey Him so that we can serve Him and others." (p. 72)

B. The development of self-control

1. The enemies of self-control

- a. Sinful tendency
- b. The lack of training

2. The motivation

a. Outward motivation

b. Inward motivation (**Proverbs 3:1-4** My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: **2** For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. **3** Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: **4** So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding.)

C. Developing self-control in our children (**Titus 2:4-6** That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, **5** To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. **6** Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.)

- 1. Honor parents (**Proverbs 22:6** Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.)
- 2. Chastisement: Associate pain with things you do not want.
- 3. Proactive: Instruct what you do want.
- 4. No choice: Don't give them a choice.