

# The Fruit of the Spirit is SELF-CONTROL

Today we'll be talking about the last fruit of the Spirit that is a characteristic of God. It is God's characteristic of self-control.

To help us understand the fruit of self-control, let's compare it to cars. Raise your hand if you have a remote controlled car. How does it work? *(Pause for student responses for the next several questions.)* Is it easy to drive? What happened when you first learned how to drive it? When you drive a remote controlled car are you sitting in the car? No, you are controlling it with a handheld device from far away.

How many of you would like to drive a real car? Do you think it would be easy? How does it work? Can you reach the pedals? Can you see over the dashboard? Who controls a real car? When adults drive, they have to be in control of the car; there isn't someone somewhere far away with a handheld device controlling the car.

Now let's think about our lives. Do you have someone far away telling you when to stand up, when to run, when to be kind, when to be patient, when to do your homework? Sometimes parents and teachers are like our remote controls because it seems they always tell us what to do! But can parents and teachers be with us all the time? There are times when we have to control ourselves, without the help of parents and teachers.

God is the creator of all things and all people in the world. He is the powerful one who makes stormy seas as well as calm breezes, ferocious tigers as well as gentle lambs. God has the ability and power to create and destroy, to punish and to show mercy. There are stories in the Bible when God chose to use his power to destroy something because of sin and evil. There are also stories in the Bible when God chose to control his power and show mercy to his people, giving them a chance to change their ways and return to him.

God is pleased with goodness in the world, and saddened by the evil that he sees. He knows that it can be challenging for us to always choose to do the right thing. Through the words of the Bible writers, God encourages us to show self-control when we speak, when we are angry, when we are making a decision, and in the way we live our lives. Check out these verses:

- *Ephesians 5:15-16* – “Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”
- *James 1:19-20* – “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”
- *Proverbs 21:23* – “Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity.”
- *2 Timothy 1:7* – “God gave us a spirit, not of fear but of power, love, and self-control.”

God gives us the Holy Spirit to help us grow in self-control. As you go about your activities today and throughout this week, keep in mind that you can look to the Holy Spirit all the time to guide you to use self-control when you are in tough situations.

Prayer:

Dear God, controlling our words, our anger, and our actions can sometimes be a very difficult thing to do. We know you desire that we choose to act the right way. Thank you for giving us verses in the Bible to teach us these things. And thank you for giving us the Holy Spirit who helps us grow in being self-controlled. May the words we say and the things we do today please you. Amen.