



LESSON 24 | Self-Control

Bible Basis: Judges 13–16; Luke 15:11–32

Key Verse: Titus 2:12: “We must control ourselves. We must do what is right.”

Key Question: How does God free me from sin and bad habits?

Key Idea: I have the power through Jesus to control myself.

Resource: *Believe Storybook Bible*, Chapter 24, “Self-Control”

Master Supplies List

- Believe Storybook Bible* (optional)
- PowerPoint slides or printable posters of illustrations
- Stickers (about two per child)
- Hula hoop
- Family Page (one per child)

Optional Supplies

You will need the following supplies based on which option(s) you choose in **STEP 3 | Explore More:**

- OPTION 1:** White Styrofoam cups (one per child), garden soil, grass seeds, large spoon, glue sticks, googly eyes, markers
- OPTION 2:** Prodigal Son templates
- OPTION 4:** Crayons or markers, Let’s Color! sheet (one per child)
- OPTION 6:** Two puppets

STEP 1 | Come Together (5 min)

Supplies: Stickers

- GATHER the children.
- SHOW the children the stickers.
- SAY, I have all these stickers here, and I'm going to share them with you. You have two choices: I can give you one sticker to have right now, or you can wait until after the story and I'll give you two stickers.
- ASK, Who would like one sticker right now? Okay, do you understand that when the story is over, you won't get any more stickers? (Give one sticker to those children who still want one.)
- ASK, And the rest of you want to wait until after the story? Do you understand that you won't get any stickers now, but I'll give you two later? (Take responses)

SELF-CONTROL EXAMPLES

- ASK, Who has ever gotten really mad at their brother or sister or friend and done something that wasn't really nice, like hit them or said something mean? (Take responses)
- EXPLAIN, Sometimes we get really mad, and before we stop and think, we do something we shouldn't do, like hitting someone or saying something mean. When we do this, we lose our self-control. We don't always control our bodies or our mouths like we should.
- TRANSITION, Today we're going to learn about how God's Spirit gives us the power to practice self-control. Isn't that great? With God's help, we can practice self-control! Can you say that word with me? (Repeat *self-control*.)

KEY VERSE

- REVIEW this week's Key Verse. You may want to repeat the verse slowly a few times until the children are able to say it from memory.
- **NOTE:** You may also choose to review last week's Key Verse together.

Titus 2:12

We must control ourselves (*hold two fists against chest*)

We must do what is right. (*point one finger toward heaven*)

STEP 2 | Hear the Story (15 min)

Supplies: *Believe Storybook Bible* (optional), PowerPoint slides or printable posters of illustrations, hula hoop, a volunteer

INTRODUCTION

- **TELL** the children that they will be hearing about how God wants us to use self-control.
- **SHOW** the children the hula hoop on the floor. Have a volunteer stand in the hula hoop.
- **SAY**, Standing in the hula hoop will represent using self-control. Stepping out of the hula hoop (have the volunteer step out) will be like being out of control.
- **SAY**, Even though we are responsible for our thoughts and actions, we don't have to make every decision by ourselves. God will help us! And if we have trouble, God will forgive us. (Step into the hula hoop and lead the volunteer back in.)
- **SAY**, As we read today, listen for parts of the story when someone uses self-control or someone acts out of control. Our friend here will step in and out of the hula hoop when we tell him (or her) to.

READ CHAPTER 24

- **READ** aloud the story script below or chapter 24, "Self-Control," from the *Believe Storybook Bible*.
- **SHOW** the illustrations included with this curriculum on PowerPoint slides or printable posters.
- **GUIDE** your volunteer to step into and out of the hula hoop when appropriate.

THE STORY OF SAMSON

- Every day you make choices about what to do, what to say, and how to behave. Some choices are easy. If you love delicious, crunchy apples, it is easy to choose a healthy snack. But sometimes it is hard to make the right choice. If you don't like taking a bath, it is hard to obey your parents at bath time. It is easy to make the right choice when you feel like it. But lots of times you won't feel like making the right choice. That's when you have to use self-control. God can help give you self-control.

- God told Samson to use self-control. He had given Samson the gift of amazing strength. God said, “Do not cut your hair or you will lose your strength. This is a secret between us.”
- Samson grew to be stronger than a lion. He was even stronger than a thousand men. He became a judge, or leader, for the Israelites. Samson loved God. He also loved a woman named Delilah, but Delilah did not love God.
- Samson’s enemies wanted to know his secret. They gave Delilah money and told her, “Find out the secret to Samson’s strength.” When Delilah asked Samson about his strength, he lied to her. Samson wanted to keep his secret with God.
- “You tricked me!” Delilah cried. Two times she asked about Samson’s strength and two times he lied to her. Delilah complained, “You must not love me. You won’t tell me your secret.” Finally, Samson couldn’t control himself any longer. He broke his promise to God. He told Delilah he was strong because of his long hair.
- When Samson fell asleep, Delilah told his enemies the secret. They snuck in and cut his hair. Samson lost his strength and could not fight his enemies. They tied him up and put him in jail.
- In jail, Samson’s hair grew and grew. One day, the enemies took Samson into the temple. They wanted to make fun of him and his God. Samson prayed, “God, help me beat this enemy. Give me strength one more time.”
- God heard Samson. He gave Samson his strength once again. Samson pushed against the columns of the temple until the whole building fell down. With God’s help, Samson defeated his enemies.

THE STORY OF THE LOST SON

- God wants us to use self-control. He will even help us control ourselves through his Spirit. But sometimes, we might lose control. When that happens, it’s time to ask God for forgiveness. He will always be happy to forgive us and help us again, just like a loving father forgives his son. Jesus told the people this story about a forgiving father:
- A father had two sons. One day, the younger son came to him. “Father,” he said, “I want to leave our farm. Please give me money.” The father gave his son a lot of money and let him go.

The son went to a far-away country. He spent all of his money. He made bad choices and broke God's laws.

- The son became poor and hungry. He got a job feeding pigs. He was sad because even the pigs had food, but he didn't. He started to think about his father. Maybe if he went home, his father would let him work on the farm again. Then he would have some food.
- When the father saw his son coming down the road, he ran out to meet him. He was so happy! He hugged and kissed his son.
- "Father, I have done wrong. Please let me work for you on the farm."
- The father did not answer. He ordered his servants to make a big dinner. He gave his son fine clothes and jewelry. He wanted to celebrate!
- The older son did not want to celebrate. He was angry. "I work hard but you never give me a party. Why are you giving my brother a party?"
- The father said, "Your brother was lost and now he is found. He did wrong but he has come back." This is how God feels about us when we turn away from sin. He is always happy to welcome us back. So do your best to obey God. Use self-control, be kind, love others, and make good choices. And if you lose control, ask your loving, forgiving heavenly Father for forgiveness.

REVIEW SAMSON

- ASK, What was the gift God gave to Samson? (He gave him great strength)
- ASK, How did God tell Samson to use self-control? (He told him not to lose control, not to cut his hair, and not to tell anyone the secret)
- ASK, What happened when Samson lost control? (He told his secret; his enemies cut his hair; he lost his strength)

REVIEW THE LOST SON

- ASK, How was the farmer's son irresponsible? How did he fail to use self-control? (He spent all his money and made bad choices)
- ASK, What happened to the son when he was irresponsible? (He spent all his money; he was too poor to buy food to eat; he worked feeding pigs; he was poor and hungry)

- ASK, What did the father do when his son returned? (He hugged and kissed him; he had a big dinner; he gave him clothes, food, and jewels)
- PRAY, Gracious God, please help us to use self-control so that we can be more like Jesus. Amen.

SELF-CONTROL STICKERS

- SAY, Great job listening to our story today, everyone. Remember, I made a promise at the beginning of today's lesson. What was that promise? (Take responses)
- SAY, That's right! I promised that I would give two stickers to every child who was willing to wait until after the stories were over to get their stickers. (Pass out stickers)
- EXPLAIN, Today we are going to explore more about self-control. Self-control is the ability to stop and think about something before you do it. God's Spirit gives us power to practice self-control. Say that with me: "God's Spirit gives me power to practice self-control." (Repeat two times)

STEP 3 | Explore More

Choose from these activity options, depending on your available time frame, to help the children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Samson's Hair (20 min)

Supplies: White Styrofoam cups (one per child), garden soil, grass seeds, large spoon, glue sticks, googly eyes, markers

- GIVE the children one cup each and instruct them to decorate it like Samson's face. Use two googly eyes (it will be easier to apply glue to the cup and then press on the eyes) and markers to decorate the face.
- ALLOW each child to scoop dirt into the cup until it is about 2" from the top.
- GIVE each child grass seeds to sprinkle on top of the dirt.
- ALLOW each child to scoop one more spoonful of dirt on the grass seeds.
- TELL the children that when Samson was put in prison, his hair had all been cut off. As time went by, it started to grow back, and he regained his strength. If they water their cup and wait, they will see the grass grow just as Samson's hair grew back!

Option 2: Father, Son, or Brother (15 min)

Supplies: Prodigal Son templates

Teacher Prep: Print the three Prodigal Son templates.

- **SHOW** the three Prodigal Son templates to the children. Make sure they understand who each character is from the parable of the lost (prodigal) son.
- **HANG** the three templates in three different areas of the room. Make sure the pathway is clear to all the areas.
- **READ** the following statements aloud, instructing the children to decide who made the statement and quickly move to the area of the room that matches the speaker. If children choose more than one area, discuss the correct answer and move everyone to the correct area.

Oh, here he comes! I'm so happy! (Father)

Why haven't you ever had a party for me? (Brother)

That's not fair! He wasted all your money! (Brother)

Please, I just need a job. I'll even feed the pigs. (Son)

I forgive you. I'm just glad you're home. (Father)

I'm so sorry. I was foolish. (Son)

Option 3: The Power of God (10 min)

- **GATHER** the children in a circle.
- **SKIP** around in a circle as you sing the following song. At the last line of the song, stop skipping and face the center of the circle.
- (Sung to the tune of "Do You Know the Muffin Man?")

Do you have the power of God?

The power of God? The power of God?

Do you have the power of God?

He gives us self-control.

- **REPEAT** and have the children make up actions to go along with the song.

Option 4: Let's Color! (10 min)

Supplies: Crayons or markers, Let's Color! sheet (one per child)

Teacher Prep: Print and photocopy the Let's Color! sheet (one per child).

- GIVE each child a Let's Color! sheet.
- PROVIDE a selection of crayons and/or markers for the children to share.
- DISCUSS this week's Key Idea as the children color.

Option 5: Praise and Worship (15 min)

"O Be Careful Little Eyes" by Colin Buchanan

© 1998 by Wanaaring Road Music

CCLI #2600084

"I Can Do All Things" by Bob Singleton and Martha Bolton

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CCLI #5536399

Option 6: Act It Out (10 min)

Self-Control

Act out this short skit, using two puppets.

Characters

Alan

Mallory

Props: Two puppets

Alan: (*grunting and shaking a little without moving*)

Mallory: Hey, what are you doing?

Alan: (*grunting again*) I'm exercising!

Mallory: That doesn't look like exercising to me. You're hardly even moving.

Alan: (*panting*) I'm exercising my self-control. My dad says I have to learn to exercise self-control, so that's what I'm doing. I'm tired of being put in time-out for losing control.

Mallory: But that's not how you exercise self-control.

Alan: It's not?

Mallory: No. You exercise self-control by using it every day in real life.

Alan: Huh?

Mallory: You know, like when you don't feel like listening to your mom when she asks you to do something, but you stop, count to five, and think: I should pick up my toys because my mom asked me to. *That's* exercising self-control.

Alan: When we are supposed to walk in line quietly at school with our hands to ourselves, my teacher always says to me: “Alan, keep your hands to yourself.”

Mallory: Okay, so to practice self-control at school, you just press your lips together and hold your arms to your sides. Counting to five helps too. The more you exercise like that, the easier it will become!

Alan: That doesn’t sound too hard. But what about at the grocery store? I always get into trouble there because I want to walk around and pick out treats.

Mallory: Well, practicing self-control there would mean staying close to your mom and not asking for treats. I know it’s hard to do. You can always ask God to help you. The Bible says that God’s Spirit gives us the power to practice self-control.

Alan: That’s like exercising with a friend instead of on my own!

Mallory: Yeah, and soon your self-control muscles will be so strong you won’t have to work so hard at it. It will become easier as you practice it more often, like learning to play the piano.

Alan: Thanks! You sure know a lot about self-control!

Mallory: That’s because I practice it every day!

STEP 4 | Going Home (5 min)

Supplies: Family Page (one per child)

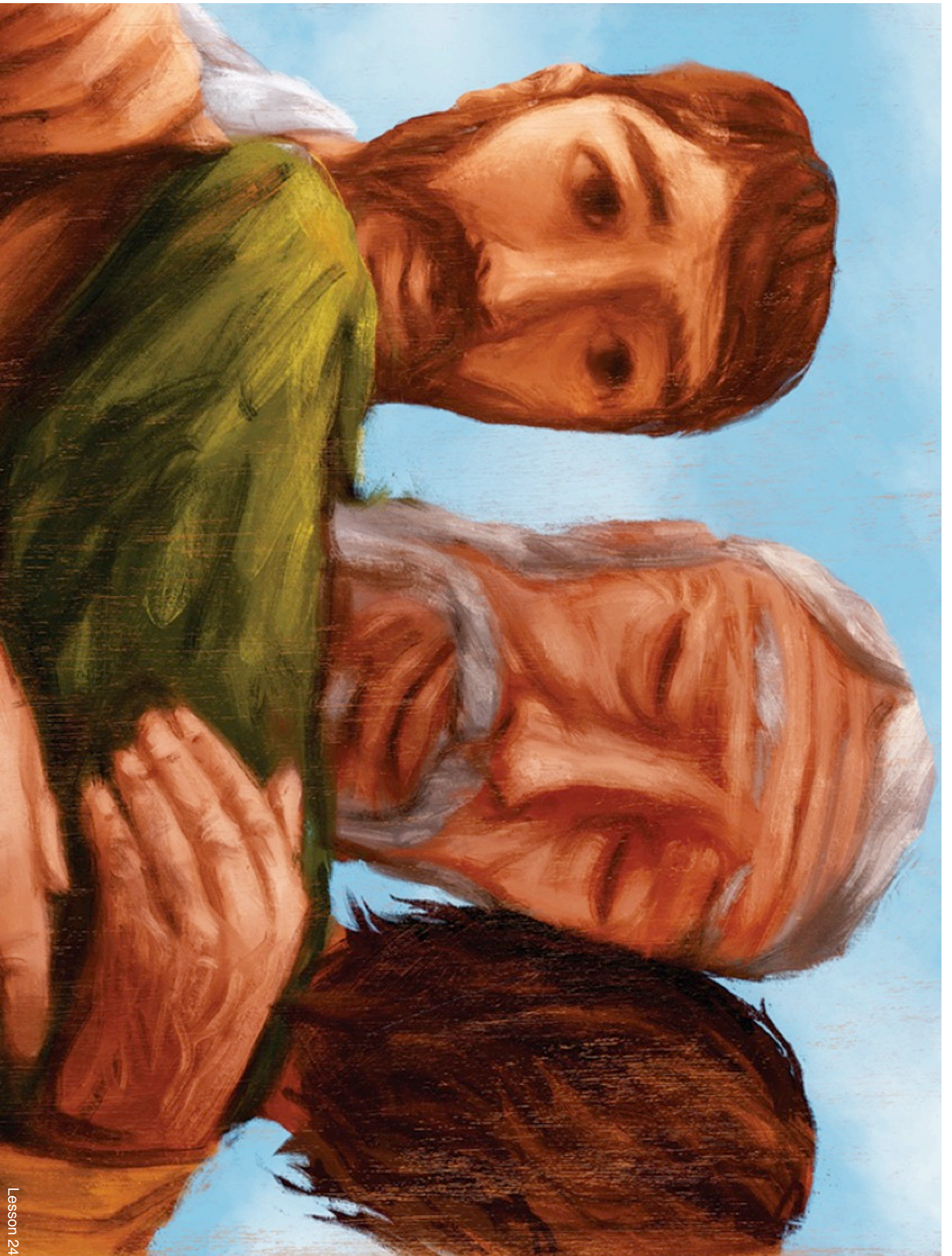
Teacher Prep: Print and photocopy the Family Page (one per child).

- GIVE each child a copy of this week’s Family Page.
- SAY, Give this page to your family when they pick you up. It will remind you to tell your family what you learned today about how God wants us to use self-control.
- HAVE the children practice telling you about what self-control looks like.
- REVIEW this week’s Key Verse as well as today’s story and Key Idea from the *Believe Storybook Bible* as you wait for the children to get picked up.
- MAKE sure each child remembers to take home any activity sheets or craft projects and the Family Page.



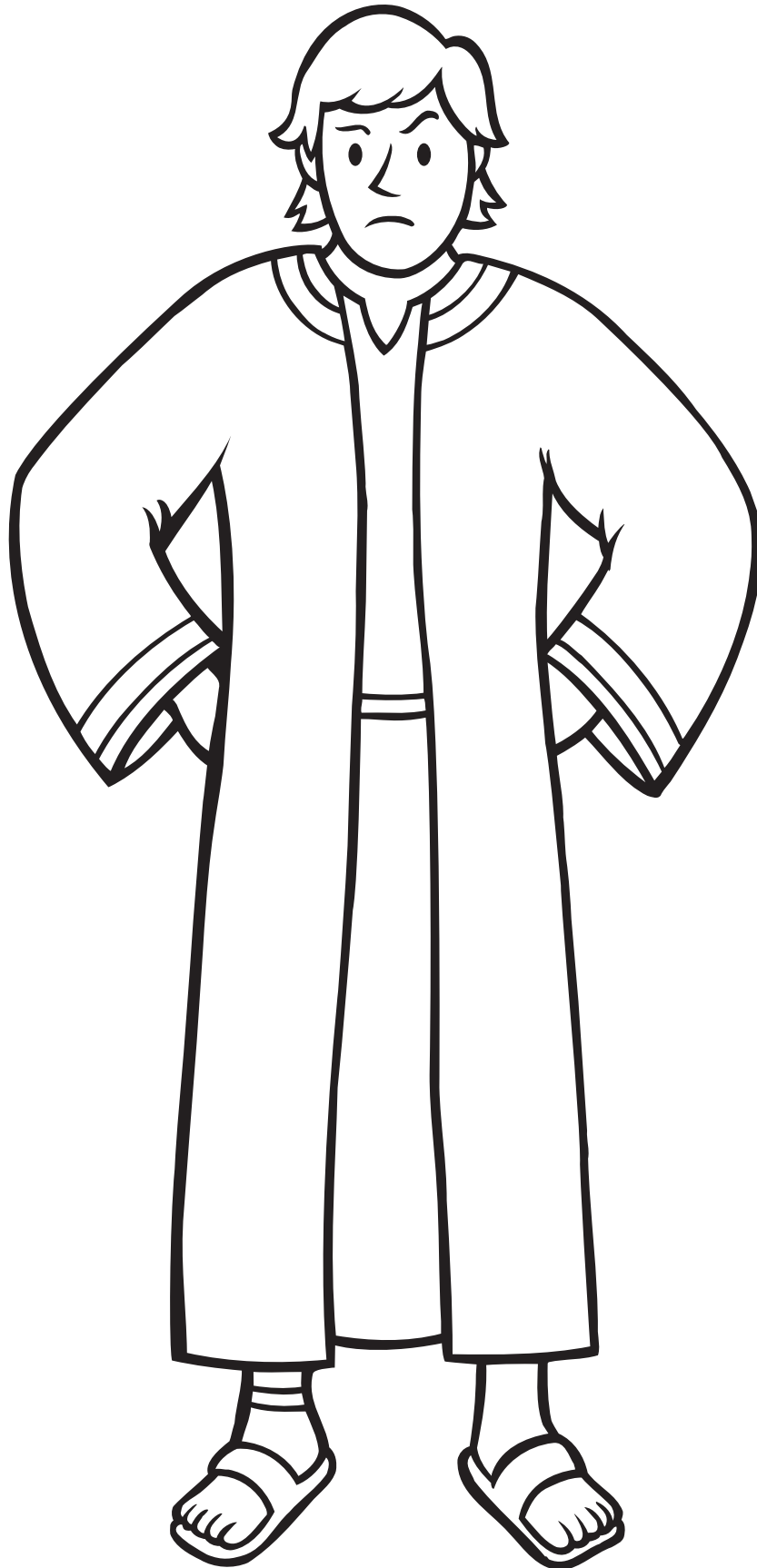












Let's Color! Name: _____



FAMILY PAGE | Lesson 24: Self-Control

Bible Basis: Judges 13–16; Luke 15:11–32

Key Verse: Titus 2:12: “We must control ourselves. We must do what is right.”

Key Question: How does God free me from sin and bad habits?

Key Idea: I have the power through Jesus to control myself.

Resource: *Believe Storybook Bible*, Chapter 24, “Self-Control”

How to Use This Page

This week, your family can either read the story from the *Believe Storybook Bible* or read the Bible Basis passages from your Bible to help your child remember the lesson. Use the Table Talk questions below to start a discussion around the dinner table, while driving in the car, or just about anywhere. The Living Faith activity is designed to remind your child of the Bible lesson through a drama or other engaging activity. The Extra Mile idea provides interactive ways for your child to connect with the story.

Table Talk

1. When was the last time you showed good self-control?
2. Have you ever had trouble practicing self-control? Maybe by doing something Mom or Dad told you over and over again not to do?
3. Why can't we just do whatever we feel like doing? (Sometimes what we do hurts people and God)
4. Can we ask God to forgive us when we don't show self-control? (Yes, we can always ask God to forgive us; we can also ask him for the power to practice self-control to keep us from doing something that is mean or selfish)

Living Faith

Option 1

If weather permits, take your child outside to reenact the story of the lost son using a little water and mud! Collect some plastic farm toys (especially pigs!)

and figurines. You'll need a father and two sons. Create a pigpen out of a shallow container, like a pie pan, by mixing dirt with a little water. When you get to that part of the story, let your child get the lost son dirty. When he returns to the father, use a hose or watering can to wash away the mud. After you finish acting out the story together, talk with your child about how when God forgives us, he washes us clean.

Option 2

Act out the story of Samson. Use dolls. To fake a "haircut" (and avoid using scissors), wrap a nylon stocking (knee-high) over the doll's hair. When it's time for Samson's hair to grow back, remove the stocking and restore his strength!

Extra Mile

- Practice this simple song together:
- (Sung to the tune of "Do You Know the Muffin Man?")

Do you have the power of God?
The power of God? The power of God?
Do you have the power of God?
He gives us self-control.

- Help your child develop their self-control through everyday experiences. For example, on your next trip to the grocery store, say, "We're going to practice self-control today. The game is to get through the whole store without asking for anything. When we get to the checkout, if you've used self-control, we can talk about one thing you'd like to have." Use this tactic whenever you foresee a situation that will test your child's self-control. You can practice along with your child by telling your child all the things you'd like to buy, then at the end picking one thing to buy together.
- Play "Simon Says" or "Follow the Leader" with your child. These games reinforce the self-control necessary to obey commands or follow an example.
- Praise your child for using self-control whenever you observe it happening. Point out the difference between what your child probably wanted to do and how they chose to use self-control. If your child is struggling to use self-control in daily situations, come up with a signal, such as a fist bump, that will alert your child when he or she is acting impulsively.