

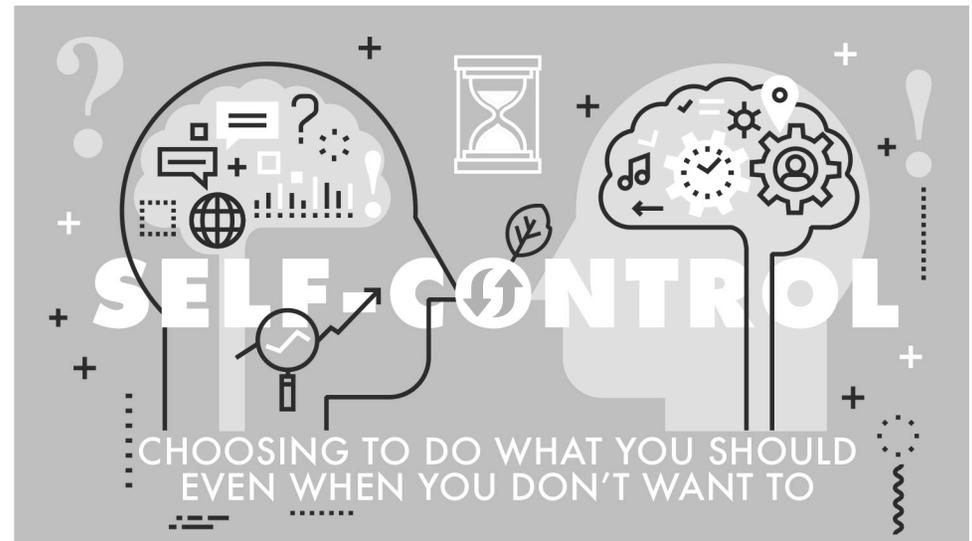
The question isn't 'Do you lose control?' It's 'when.' We all have times when it's hard to do what we know we *should* do because it isn't necessarily what we want to do.

Hopefully you got some ideas when you talked about it with your parents or your leader. Maybe you already expected some of what they said. But did some of their answers surprise you?

Life isn't a smooth path, it can sometimes be a rocky road. If everything went the way it should, it would be a lot easier to control our temper. But instead, life is full of pits and potholes and unexpected bumps. Those are the things that get in the way and cause us to overreact. They make us forget to live the way God *wants* us to live.

So what are you supposed to do? Can you smooth out the rocks? Not exactly. Those bumps in the road will still be there. But if you *update the way you react*—if you choose to trust God and ask Him to help you—He can help you choose the self-control you need. Even in those times when it seems the hardest.

All this talk about rocky road can make a person hungry. Why don't you ask your mom or dad if you can get a bowl of ice cream? (Or you can wait until tonight.) You deserve it after digging deep into what makes you lose your cool. But, you know, keep it to two scoops. #SELFCONTROL



## READ PROVERBS 25:28

## DAY 1

Have you ever built a sandcastle on the beach? If so, then you know you need wet sand to keep the walls strong and secure. If not, they won't last long against the wind and waves.

Well, guess what? You need strong walls, too. Not walls made of snow or sand or wood or bricks. You need a wall of *self-control* to help you stay safe and secure.

Self-control is **choosing to do what you should even if you don't want to**. If that sounds tough, that's because it is! None of us will just end up having self-control on our own. You've got to choose it. You've got to update your operating system. You need to *update the way you react* so you can stay in control instead of letting yourself lose control.

Why? King Solomon had an idea about that:

*A person without self-control is like a city whose walls are broken through. (Proverbs 25:28, NIV)*

If you don't have self-control, you might do something you regret like lose your temper, or hurt someone with the words you say. You might even overdo it with the things you love. You'd be like a sandcastle that's been leveled by a rogue wave.

You know how God wants you to live. He wants you to learn to be more like Him: showing compassion, honesty, forgiveness, respect, wisdom, and love. If you decide to live His way—instead of how you might *feel* like acting—that's self-control. That's what can protect you from the tides of life!



Have you memorized this month's verse yet? Check it out—it's 2 Peter 1:3.

## GOD'S POWER HAS GIVEN US EVERYTHING WE NEED TO LEAD A GODLY LIFE. (2 PETER 1:3A, NIRV)

It's important to remember the reason we can have self-control in the first place: God's power, living inside us.

Like we said before, controlling yourself isn't easy.

When things go wrong, it's a lot easier to yell and scream and get mad.

Or when you open a carton of your favorite ice cream, be honest—you want to chow down until you just about make yourself sick!

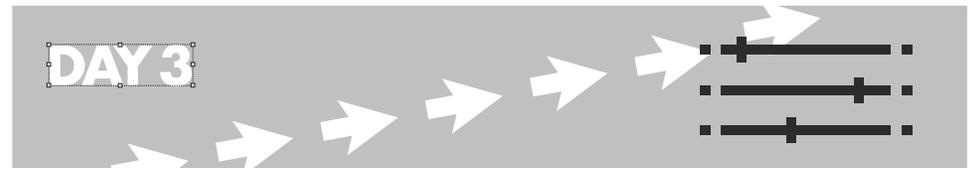
So how do you get the self-control you need to handle those kinds of situations? This verse says that God's power gives you *everything you need*. You CAN have self-control, with His help.

When you trust God, it's like you've got an instant app that you can access anytime. You can update your operating system with HIS operating system. In any situation, you can take time to stop and think about what you *should* do. You can rely on God to help you make the wise choice—to choose self-control.

## GOD'S WISDOM IS SO EASY TO ACCESS, ANYTIME.

### IT'S CLOSER THAN YOUR FINGERTIPS!

Take some time to talk to God today. Think about some areas in your life where you need self-control, and ask Him to help you. Tell Him that you know He's the one who can help you, because everything you need comes from Him.



It's easy to see when someone *else* needs some self-control.

## YOUR FRIEND IN CLASS WHO NEVER STOPS TALKING.

## THE KID IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD WHO GETS SO MAD AT THE SMALLEST THING.

## YOUR BROTHER WHO'S OBSESSED WITH PURPLE SKITTLES. (EVERYONE KNOWS GREEN ARE THE BEST.)

Adults need self-control, too. They love to watch things like home decorating shows—sometimes *too* much! They talk a lot about needing to eat better, or get in better shape. They can be tempted to spend money on things they don't really need.

You know where it's hard to see who needs self-control? Yep. In the mirror.

That's where your mom or dad can really help you. Your teacher or your Small Group Leader, too. If you ask them, they can tell you about some parts of your life where you need to learn some self-control. If you really, honestly, want to know, they can tell you.

Does that sound scary? Are you kind of afraid of what you'll find out? Think of it as a way to get better. After all, once you **KNOW** where you need to improve, you know exactly how to ask God to help you. With His Spirit, you can learn to stay in control.

