

## # 066 01/29/01 Is lack of self-control a problem?

This is the last in a series of nine columns about developing the character of our children. The right path is not always the easy path. Choosing to teach the traits Paul lists in Galatians 5:22 as “fruit of the spirit” means we will be doing battle with the world. The character trait that I am writing about this week is self-control.

I often work with young people who have broken the rules of home, school and society. Probably the one common factor among these students is a lack of self-control. If they think something, they say it. If they want to do something, they do it. If someone angers them, they react in anger. If they want something, they take it. The result is that they find themselves in trouble. Most of them are remorseful after the fact. They will say to me, “I knew I shouldn’t do it. I couldn’t help it.”

The key to teaching our children self-control is acknowledging the importance of the “self” in self-control. We will not teach children to exercise self-control if we surround them with such a rigid structure that they have no room to make right choices on their own.

One thing we can do to help our children learn self-control is teach them Bible verses to recall when they need to be strengthened. Psalms 119:105 says “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.” Our children need God’s Word to help them find their way.

We also help our children with self-control when we teach them the lesson of Romans 8:8-9: “Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.” We must encourage our children to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking to them when they are about to make choices between good and evil.

In Proverbs 25:28 we read “Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.” Begin today to give your children the protection of self-control.