

TEACHING SELF-CONTROL: SAYING "YES" TO WHAT MATTERS

February 28, 2026

Self-control is the last listed fruit of the Spirit, but it holds everything together. This week's *Kids Corner* devotion reminds us that self-control isn't just about saying "no" to things. It's about saying "yes" to God's will for our lives. When we help our children understand self-control in this way, they realize they can make positive choices that show love for God and others.

Encourage your children to say "yes" to choices that bring kindness, joy, and empathy into their daily lives.

Say "yes" to manners. Teaching children to use good manners helps them express gratitude and respect. Simple words like "please" and "thank you" go a long way in showing kindness. Model this by thanking your children when they help around the house or do something thoughtful. Encourage them to appreciate those who serve and work with them, like waiters, grocery clerks, and teachers, by offering a sincere compliment: "Thank you for your hard work," or "This meal is delicious! I love the chicken parm!"

Say "yes" to a positive attitude. A positive attitude can brighten someone's day. Teach your child to be a good friend by entering a room with a smile and looking for ways to encourage others. Ask them, "What can you do to make others feel welcome?" or "How can you use social media to build people up?" Whether supporting a friend through tough times or showing kindness to a sibling, small choices make a big impact.

Say "yes" to empathy. Empathy helps children connect with others in meaningful ways. One of the best ways to build empathy is through listening. Encourage your kids to notice when a friend seems down and ask, "How can I help?" They can also practice empathy by taking turns, letting a classmate go first, or simply saying "thank you" when someone does something kind for them. These little actions show they value others. Teaching children to pray strengthens their faith and encourages their love for others. Through prayer, they develop a lifelong connection with God and a heart for others that reflects Christ's love.

Say "yes" to service. Who is someone you know who loves to serve others? Serving isn't just about big gestures—it's about the small, everyday ways we care for those around us. Instead of viewing chores as a burden, encourage your children to see them as ways to bless their family. Show them how to clear the table, load the dishwasher, or take out the trash as a way of helping. Choose to do some family jobs together. Even small acts, like bringing a cold drink to a hardworking family member, can inspire a lifelong habit of service.

Self-control is more than just holding back. It's about making choices that reflect God's love. When we guide our children to say "yes" to kindness, positivity, empathy, and service, we help them build strong character and meaningful relationships. By practicing self-control in these ways, our kids learn to honor God and make a difference in the lives of others.

written by Ron VandenBurg

