



March Family Discipleship Practice

DISCIPLINE: SELF-CONTROL

DEVOTION: JESUS & DANIEL

FAMILY CHALLENGE: TAKE A PAUSE

Define It

SELF-CONTROL

- is the ability to pause and choose God's way instead of reacting impulsively to emotions, temptations, or pressures. It is a spiritual discipline because it requires daily reliance on the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) to align our thoughts, words, and actions with God's will, strengthening our faith and witness.

Study It 1

JESUS RESISTS TEMPTATION:

BIBLE READING: Matthew 4:1-11

KEY VERSE: "For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" (Matthew 4:10b)

HOW JESUS PAUSED & PRAYED:

- Before facing temptation, Jesus fasted and spent time in prayer. When tempted, He didn't react emotionally—He paused and responded with Scripture each time.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. What kinds of temptations do you face that require self-control?
2. How can using Scripture help you in those moments just like they helped Jesus?

BIG POINT:

When we are tempted, we can pause and pray—just like Jesus did. Using God's Word gives us the strength to make the right choice!

ACTION STEP: What scripture can I start to memorize to help me when I am tempted to make the wrong choice? Can I write down some scripture and put it in a place where I'll see it every day?

Study It 2

DANIEL CHOOSES SELF-CONTROL:

BIBLE READING: Daniel 1:8-17 & Daniel 6:10

KEY VERSE: "But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine." (Daniel 1:8)

HOW DANIEL PAUSED & PRAYED:

- Daniel faced pressure to compromise and go along with everyone else, but instead of reacting out of fear, he paused, prayed, and stayed faithful to God. Later, in Daniel 6, even when the king made prayer illegal, Daniel kept praying three times a day!

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever felt pressured to do something wrong because everyone else was doing it? How did you respond?
2. What are ways we can build a habit of praying when we need self-control?

BIG POINT:

When we face pressure, we can pause and pray like Daniel. Prayer helps us stay strong and make choices that honor God!

ACTION STEP: How often do I pray? How can I remember to pray more often & ask God to help me throughout my day?

notes:

Preschool-Friendly Adaptation:
Preschoolers love routines! Help them build good habits with a 'Jesus First' chart. Use pictures of praying, sharing, and helping. Celebrate when they make a Jesus-first choice!

Preschool Friendly Discussion Questions:

Study It 1 – Jesus Resists Temptation

1. What did Jesus do when He was tempted? (Answer: He stopped, prayed, and used God's words from the Bible!)
2. When you really want to do something but know it's not the best choice, what can you do? (Answer: Take a deep breath, pray, and ask for help to make a good choice!)

Study It 2 – Daniel Chooses Self-Control

1. Daniel made a choice to do what was right. Can you think of a time you made a good choice? (Example: Sharing a toy, using kind words, listening to a parent.)
2. Who helps us be strong and do the right thing, just like Daniel? (Answer: God! We can pray and ask Him to help us make good choices.)

Take A Pause

Week 1: Words

WATCHING OUR WORDS

WHAT ABOUT OUR WORDS?

As believers, our words are important. Are we encouraging someone or talking bad about them? Are we using kind words or mean words? Are we complaining or showing gratitude?

KEY VERSE:

"Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (Ephesians 4:29)

CHALLENGE FOR WEEK 1:

- Our verse reminds us that our words should be kind, helpful, and uplifting—not hurtful or negative.
- **Pause & Pray Challenge** – When someone in our family struggles with our words, we're going to take a 5-second pause and say a short prayer like: "God, help me have self-control with my words right now."
- **Reflect Moments** – When you use unkind words and fail, take a second to think or talk with an adult about why you think you made that choice. How can you ask for forgiveness from God (and from the person!) and apologize?

Week 2: Emotions

WATCHING OUR EMOTIONS

WHAT ABOUT OUR EMOTIONS?

We all have emotions, and God created us that way! But what happens when our emotions take over? Good emotions or harder emotions, they can lead us to doing things our way instead of God's way.

KEY VERSE:

"A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise person holds it in check. (Proverbs 29:11)

CHALLENGE FOR WEEK 2:

- Our verse reminds us that a wise, or smart, person stays calm and doesn't let emotions take control. When we let our emotions explode, we often find that we didn't make the best decisions afterwards.
- **Pause & Pray Challenge** – When someone in our family struggles with their emotions, we're going to take a 5-second pause and say a short prayer like: "God, help me have control over my emotions right now." If it's a good feeling, thank God for it. If it's a bad feeling, ask God to help you process it.
- **Reflect Moments** – Once you've calmed down from the emotion, take a second to process it. Why did I feel this way? How can God help me in the future with my emotions? Grown-ups can help! Talk with a parent or leader about how God can help with big feelings.

Notes:

Preschool-Friendly Adaptation (Words):

Little ones are still learning how to use kind words! Try a 'Kind Words Catch' game—when someone hears a kind word, they clap or give a high-five! Practice simple phrases like 'thank you,' 'I'm sorry,' and 'I love you' to build a habit of loving words.

Take A Pause

Week 3: Habits

WATCHING OUR HABITS

WHAT ABOUT OUR HABITS?

Habits are things that we do repeatedly. Cleaning our rooms, doing homework, and sports are just a few examples. Are our habits in the right place? If we aren't careful, we can find our habits, or things we like to do, in God's place as number 1 in our lives. Talk with a parent and look at your habits. What good habits do you have? Are there any bad habits you need to think about getting rid of?

KEY VERSE:

"Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown." (1 Corinthians 9:25)

CHALLENGE FOR WEEK 3:

- Our verse reminds us that just like athletes train, we must discipline ourselves in habits like prayer, kindness, and prioritizing the Lord first to grow spiritually.
- Pause & Pray Challenge: When someone in our family struggles with their habits, we're going to take a 5 second pause and say a short prayer like: "God, help me to choose what you want, instead of what I want."
- Reflect Moments - This practice involves the spiritual discipline of "Examen," where you pause and look back at a moment, a day, or a week, and ask "Where did I follow Jesus well today, and where can I do better? This practice helps us examine our days and see where we can grow closer to the Lord.

Week 4: Serving

CHOOSING TO SERVE

WHY SERVING?

When we have self-control, we are better able to help others when they need help. This can be difficult, because sometimes we don't feel like serving others. As Believers, we are called to serve others in love.

KEY VERSE:

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others." (Philippians 2:3-4)

CHALLENGE FOR WEEK 4:

- Our verse reminds us that self-control isn't just about what we don't do, but also about choosing to serve and love others before ourselves.
- Challenge: Serve others around your home, your friends, and your school this week (like picking up toys, making a card for someone, or helping at church).
- Pause & Pray Challenge: When someone in our family struggles with serving others, we're going to take a 5 second pause and say a short prayer like: "God, help me to serve others the way you serve us!"
- Reflect Moment - How did it feel to serve others? Were there times when it was hard to serve others? How can we serve others as a regular practice?

Notes:

Preschool-Friendly Adaptation (Habits):

Preschoolers learn through routine! Help them build good habits by making a 'Jesus First' chart with pictures of simple daily actions—praying, sharing, helping. Celebrate when they choose a Jesus-first habit!

Additional Activity:

ACCOUNTABILITY JAR: When someone (kids or parents!) catches a family member practicing self-control, add a bead or coin to a jar. At the end of the month, celebrate how God helped you grow in self-control.