

WITNESS – Reaching out to others
(Aim for 20 – 30 minutes)

Giving Thanks to God

Thank God that He is a God of self-control. What does this mean to you? As you thank God be as specific as you can.

Praying for one another

Think again about that area where you desire greater self control. Ask God's Spirit to cultivate this fruit within you. Pray for one another.

Praying for our community

What would Hungerford look like if we were all self-controlled like God? Pray that our community might better reflect God's heart of self-control.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

9

1 Samuel 26

9 Self control

Purpose: To see how David's example can encourage us in our struggle for self-control.

Self-control is the last of the nine virtues and is set in contrast to the sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery mentioned in Galatians 5:19. However, the Greek word has the wider meaning of "power over oneself" and applies to all categories of life.

WELCOME – Breaking the ice

(Aim for 10 minutes)

At a meal, your friends start belittling a common friend. What do you do?

WORSHIP – Meeting the Lord

(Aim for 10 – 15 minutes)

Pause:-

- * Make yourself comfortable,
- * seek to relax any parts of your body that are carrying stress,
- * breathe in and out slowly, breathing in God's love and breathing out anything that is not of God,
- * repeat a prayer phrase like, "Thank you, Jesus" or "My God, my all" or "Jesus, Son of God have mercy on me a sinner".

Rejoice:- Listen to a song or read a psalm

Ask:- Ask God to speak to you as you study his word

Yield:- Surrender to God acknowledging that He is God and you are not and pray that you will put into practice what you believe He is saying to you as you study His word.

WORD – Applying the truth

(Aim for 40 – 45 minutes)

You're on a diet. As you pick up a magazine, you turn innocently to the food section. "After all," you say to yourself, "pictures aren't fattening." As you pore over every page, each dessert looks better than the last one. You decide to read in the kitchen because "the light is better." After a few minutes, you begin thinking about the ice cream in the freezer. A model of restraint, you decide to get only one spoonful—well, two at the most. Pretty soon you've eaten the whole quart!

Sound familiar? We all struggle with self-control. And temptations often blind our better judgment. In 1 Samuel 26 David faces the powerful temptation of choosing between self-gratification and self-control. His response can encourage us in our struggles.

1. Read 1 Samuel 26. Put yourself in David's position (vv. 1–4). How might you feel toward someone who was trying in every way possible to kill you?
2. Describe the tension and dangers involved in David's plan (vv. 5–7)
3. Abishai tells David to seize this golden opportunity to kill Saul (v. 8). Why would this be a tempting suggestion?
4. Why does David resist the temptation to take matters into his own hands (vv. 9–11)?

5. When we are tempted to sin, how can our attitude toward God's will affect the outcome?

6. David and Abishai both attribute their actions to God. In the moment of temptation, how can we insure that we clearly discern God's will?

7. How does God participate in the drama at this point (v. 12)?

8. If we know God is present to help us in our struggle, how can it be easier to exercise self-control?

9. From a safe distance David calls out to Abner (vv. 13–16). How would his words to Abner make Saul more receptive to him?

10. In what ways can our commitment to doing God's will affect Christians and non-Christians as they observe us?

From Fruit of the Spirit by Hazel Offner. Copyright 1987 by Hazel Offner. Published by InterVarsity Press.