

SELF-CONTROL

OBJECTIVES

1

You will learn what the Bible says about self-control.

2

You will see that athletes need self-control both on and off the field.

3

You will take a quiz to discover how self-controlled you are.

WORD SKETCH

Restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires • Origin unknown • First recorded use: 1711



//////// **WILLPOWER**—the ability to control yourself; strong determination that allows you to do something difficult

//////// **COMPOSURE**—a calmness or repose, especially of mind, bearing, or appearance; self-possession

//////// **RESTRAINT**—control over your emotions or behavior

ANCIENT TEXT

Put this verse in a simple code, such as each letter moved one ahead in the alphabet. (An “a” becomes a “b.” A “b” becomes a “c,” and so on. For example, person = qfstpo.) Text the coded verse to a friend and ask him/her to crack the code. Be sure to give a clue if your friend is stumped.

A person without self-control is like a house with its doors and windows knocked out. —**PROVERBS 25:28**

God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. —**2 TIMOTHY 1:7, ESV**

TRANSLATE

(Write it in your own words.)

DEFINE



(What does it mean?)

RENDERING

When faced with challenging situations, your ability to control your response and reaction is critical to long-term success. Self-control also involves recognizing and getting ahead of any problems or temptations through intentional action.

Q2P

1. What is wrong with having too much of a good thing?
2. What is one thing in your life that you have too much of?
3. Why is it important to have self-control in the following environments: at home, at school, and in peer social settings?

J4F

By Jonathan Evans

Olympic gymnasts are some of the greatest athletes in the world. These men and women have an incredible ability to jump, run, tumble, and—most of all—display the ultimate physical control in the world of athletics. During the Olympic Games, gymnasts are judged not only on every facet of their athleticism but also on their form and self-control. The female gymnast's ability to do a back handspring on the balance beam is discounted if she doesn't display the control to stay on the beam when she lands. A male gymnast's athleticism on the rings is irrelevant if he doesn't display the strength and self-control to maintain balance. Gymnasts must display their talents while simultaneously maintaining total self-control. Athletic talent for a gymnast is vitally important; however, athletic talent without self-control will not produce a medal-winning Olympian.

The apostle Paul understood this concept. He wrote, "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable" (1 Corinthians 9:25, ESV). God has given everyone gifts and talents to accomplish great things in life. But also keep in mind that not everyone possesses the same level of talent or the moral compass and self-control to maximize those gifts and talents. If everyone had the same measure of talent, then the question would be this: What separates those who experience success in an area and those who do not? Self-control is part of the answer. While everyone has the talent to get on the beam of success, not everyone has the self-control to stay on it. While everyone has the talent to grab the rings of opportunity, not everyone has the strength and self-control to stay balanced. Having an opportunity for success will come with your natural talent, but to have the ability to sustain success in God's economy, a person's life must be under the control of the Holy Spirit.



H2H

In 1947, Jackie Robinson forever changed the landscape of not just baseball but also our country by becoming the first African American “to compete in Major League Baseball in the modern era.”* To give you some historical context, US racial desegregation was in its infancy. It would be seven years before the Supreme Court mandated that black and white students attend the same public schools. And it would be eight years before Rosa Parks made her now-famous bus ride that sparked Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycotts and gave a boost to the civil rights movement.

Jackie's indisputable talent and unselfish style helped him win the hearts of his teammates and colleagues. However, one of the most important values Jackie displayed during his time with the Dodgers was his self-control. Racism, not the opposing teams, was his greatest opponent. More than his unparalleled athletic skill and more than his team spirit, his self-control was his greatest asset.

While today it's well known that Jackie faced strong racism on and off the field, including death threats aimed at him and his family, he never took the bait to retaliate. To understand the magnitude of his self-control, you have to know more about the man Jackie was. Jackie was naturally inclined to stand up and push back against injustice. In fact, while serving in the army during World War II, he faced a general court-martial charge for refusing to move to the back of a military bus. Fortunately, he was exonerated by the court.** His record shows that Jackie was not afraid to take action against injustice.

Because of his great courage, Jackie found it even more difficult to meet unjust hatred with silence. Holding back public retorts didn't come easily for Jackie. But the space formed by his silence was filled by undeniable talent and dignity that ultimately did more to muffle his detractors than his words could.

Life will challenge you. It will be tempting to react hastily or give in to your knee-jerk reactions. Sometimes, as in Jackie's case, those reactions may even be justified. But God uses challenges to help shape us into our best form. Exercising self-control can mean the difference between your being stuck where you are or leveling up to a stronger, better you.

*Evan Andrews, “11 Things You May Not Know About Jackie Robinson,” *History in the Headlines*, January 31, 2014, <http://www.history.com/news/11-things-you-may-not-know-about-jackie-robinson>.

**Henry Louis Gates Jr., “Was Jackie Robinson Court-Martialed?,” *The Root*, April 8, 2013, http://www.theroot.com/articles/history/2013/04/was_jackie_robinson_courtmartialed.html.

1020

For each question, circle the letter next to the answer that best reflects the way you think and feel.

- My typical behavior pattern is . . .
A. FEEL-ACT B. ACT-THINK-FEEL C. FEEL-THINK-ACT D. STOP-THINK-ACT
- I am often tempted by desires that are at odds with my values or beliefs.
A. YES, REGULARLY B. SOMETIMES C. SELDOM D. ALMOST NEVER
- People have told me that I am impulsive.
A. YES, I FREQUENTLY HEAR THIS.
B. SOMETIMES
C. SELDOM
D. NEVER—THEY TELL ME I SHOULD BE MORE SPONTANEOUS.
- I have set boundaries for myself that I simply do not cross.
A. YES, THAT IS TRUE.
B. I SET THEM BUT I DO CROSS THEM SOMETIMES.
C. MY BOUNDARIES ARE SET BY OTHERS.
D. I DON'T BELIEVE IN BOUNDARIES.
- When those in authority set boundaries for me . . .
A. I DON'T LIKE IT, BUT I GO ALONG WITH IT.
B. MOST OF THE TIME I RESIST THEIR BOUNDARIES.
C. SOMETIMES I RESIST THEIR BOUNDARIES.
D. I APPRECIATE THEIR BOUNDARIES.

6. I find it easy to resist temptation.

- A. ALWAYS B. MOST OF THE TIME C. SELDOM D. NEVER**

7. When I need self-control, I pray to God for help.

- A. YES, AND IT HELPS.
B. YES, IF I REMEMBER TO.
C. ONLY WHEN I THINK I MAY GET IN TROUBLE.
D. NO**

8. I think or act in ways that block my progress toward my goals.

- A. YES, ALMOST ALWAYS
B. YES, SOMETIMES
C. YES, BUT I USUALLY CATCH MYSELF.
D. NOT REALLY; I AM ABLE TO KEEP ON TRACK.**

9. Other people can easily talk me into or out of doing things that I know are wrong.

- A. YES, THIS HAPPENS A LOT.
B. SOMETIMES, BUT I TRY TO LISTEN TO SMART PEOPLE.
C. OFTEN, BUT IT DEPENDS ON WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME OR MY FRIENDS.
D. NO, I THINK ABOUT HOW MY ACTIONS WILL AFFECT AND INFLUENCE OTHERS.**

10. When I have money in my pocket or purse, I spend it.

- A. YES! THERE'S SO MUCH STUFF I NEED.
B. YES. I TRY TO SAVE, BUT IT'S HARD.
C. NO, I SAVE UP FOR WHAT I REALLY WANT.
D. NO, I NEVER SPEND MONEY.**

SELF-CONTROL SCORECARD

1. Answer:	A-2	B-2	C-4	D-5	POINTS:
2. Answer:	A-2	B-3	C-4	D-5	POINTS:
3. Answer:	A-2	B-3	C-4	D-4	POINTS:
4. Answer:	A-5	B-4	C-3	D-2	POINTS:
5. Answer:	A-4	B-2	C-3	D-5	POINTS:
6. Answer:	A-5	B-5	C-3	D-2	POINTS:
7. Answer:	A-5	B-4	C-3	D-3	POINTS:
8. Answer:	A-2	B-3	C-4	D-5	POINTS:
9. Answer:	A-2	B-4	C-3	D-5	POINTS:
10. Answer:	A-2	B-4	C-5	D-2	POINTS:



TOTAL POINTS:

SELF-CONTROL PROFILE

If your total points score was . . .

43–50: You are walking in a high degree of self-control. Keep up the prayer and Bible study, and keep thinking things through before you speak or act. Your rewards will come in due time.

35–42: You have self-control, but you are wavering and letting your willpower weaken at times. Remember that your will is a part of your soul, and it should be kept in line with your mind through prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

27–34: You may find that you make impulsive decisions and lack self-control or that you frequently are led by your emotions. Emotions are not bad, but you should examine them to find out their root cause. Be sure you are considering your values and beliefs. Ask yourself what is important to you, and what you believe to be true. Self-control will enable you to channel your emotions constructively.

21–26: Whoa! Your emotions and lack of self-control may be getting you in hot water at school, at home, or in your relationships. Remember the STAR principle—Stop, Think, Act, and Respond as a way to exercise self-control. (See page 12 of the *Kingdom Quest* strategy guide.) A response is different from a reaction. Self-control requires training. Keep practicing! It's worth it. Self-control is also a fruit (evidence) of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life. So keep spending time with God so this fruit will be more evident in your life.