Kids Corner

Spirit Of Self-Control

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What does it mean to have self-control? According to Oxford Languages Dictionary, self-control is the ability to control oneself, in particular one's emotions and desires or the expression of them in one's behavior, especially in difficult situations.

Self-control is easier for some people but it is extremely hard for others. Whether it's keeping yourself from sneaking a piece of chocolate before supper or retaliating when someone makes you mad, we all must have self-control over our actions and thoughts. Our mind is a battlefield. When we entertain or dwell on our bad thoughts it can cause us to act them out.

Self-control is needed in all aspects of our life. Some examples of good self-control are refusing to lie or cheat on tests, not overeating, or forgiving your brother or sister when they make you mad and you want to hit them. It also includes staying away from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. Another example is refusing to watch a movie or read a book that encourages bad thoughts. Refusing to say bad words, gossiping, or talking negatively about someone else are other ways of demonstrating self-control. Some of these things are very difficult at different times in our lives, so how can we be disciplined enough to control our emotions, and desires when our feelings are desperately telling us the opposite?

The only way for us to do the right thing is by memorizing scripture, keeping it in our hearts, and praying for God's help and guidance in difficult times. God will help us overcome our sinful nature, all we have to do is rely on Him and believe He can and will do it. Guidance, and wisdom from positive Christian adults and friends can also help a person through difficulties.

From personal experience, I advise that if you know something can become addictive, you stay away from it completely. Alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs are all examples of things that can become addictive by just trying them one time. Why would you even try them, knowing there could be dangerous consequences?

Addictions are bad because it takes away from our relationship with God. Instead of focusing on God in our time of need, we look to these things to temporarily ease our stress, pain, or struggles. However, only God can truly fix our problems. Discipline and self-control are tools God uses to steer us in His plans.

Did you know that there are animals that God has given the gift of self-control? One is the octopus. They have complete self-control over themselves. An octopus has perfected the art of camouflage. They can change their color, texture, and patterns on their skin in one-fifth of a second. How fast is one-fifth of a second? It is as fast as you can blink your eye! So, one moment an octopus might be blue and after you blink, it might be purple! Isn't that amazing?

The fact that an octopus can recognize and change colors amaze scientists because compared to our eyes, they should be color blind. They have only one-color receptor and humans have three. These three distinguish between red, blue, and green. Without the other two, they should not be able to see colors. However, scientists have found that an octopus can change the shape of their eyes. This changes the wavelength of light in their eye so they can see different colors. By being able to perceive colors and textures they can change their skin to match their surroundings with incredible detail. This helps them hide from predators or attract a mate.

An octopus has six arms and two legs with more than 2,000 individually moving suction cups on each one. Each limb can move on its own because it has its own mini-brain. The octopus has 9 brains total, one large main brain, and eight mini-brains. The octopus's legs help him walk on the ocean floor and push off when it is swimming. If the octopus gets in trouble and feels there is no way to escape a predator, the large brain can tell a mini-brain to detach an arm and have it run off as a diversion so the octopus can escape. The octopus will then grow a new one in its place. The suction cups contain two-thirds of the octopus's nerve cells. Each cup is equipped with chemical sensors that can taste, feel and smell. Imagine if you could taste what you touched. Eww gross!

Another example of an octopus's self-control is after the female octopus lays as many as 400,000 eggs she will protect them, refusing to leave the nest even to eat. The eggs hatch around five months. That is a long time to go without food!

An octopus has three hearts. One pumps blood to circulate through the organs while the other two pump blood through its gills. The circulating heart stops pumping when the octopus swims. Swimming tires the octopus out quickly, so they prefer to crawl on the sea floor over swimming.

An octopus needs a lot of oxygen, so their blood is copper-based which is more efficient for carrying oxygen. Copper-based blood is blue. Ours is red because it is iron-based.

They are very intelligent animals. An octopus can use tools, take apart things, navigate obstacle courses, solve problems, escape tanks, open jars, and pick locks. Aren't you glad your pets can't pick a lock?

In 2009 and 2017, scientists found two different underwater octopus cities. Solitary octopuses were now living together, communicating, and even evicting each other from homes. Their homes are made mostly of rock and some have rock doors that close when the octopus is home.

An octopus is completely boneless. They are very fast backstroke swimmers and can reach 40mph in bursts. They love to eat crabs, snails, small fish, and other octopuses. Some will even crawl up on the land for short periods of time for easy hunting in tidal pools. After the tide goes out fish, and crabs get stuck in shallow pools of water, making it easy for the octopus to eat them.

Do you consider yourself a master at self-control like an octopus? Or is it something you struggle with? If it's a struggle, don't fret, ask God to help you with it and He will. All of us have struggled with different things. Each person has weaknesses when it comes to using self-control. The important thing is recognizing when we are struggling and asking God to help us with it. We are all sinners and struggle with something. The good news is we don't have to face it alone. We have God by our side to help us through it.

Dear Lord, I come humbly to ask You to help each one of us with our different struggles and temptations. I ask that you help us have strong self-control against temptations. Help us trust Your plan for us during these times and remember the lessons we learned from them. I thank you for the spirit of self-control because this world would lawless without it. In Jesus' precious name, I pray, Amen.

"For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age." Titus 2:11-12

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Christy Lowman is a Christian author and illustrator that lives in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with her husband and two children. She enjoys writing and illustrating books for all ages. Some of her short stories are published with Guideposts and HCI.. Christy gives all the glory to God in everything she does. A portion of every book sold from the Small Bible Character Series will be donated to battle human trafficking. You can buy her books at https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Christy+Lowman&search-alias=books&text=Christy+Lowman&sort=relevancerank. You can reach her at https://www.facebook.com/authorChristyLowman/ or christyssoaps@yahoo.com.

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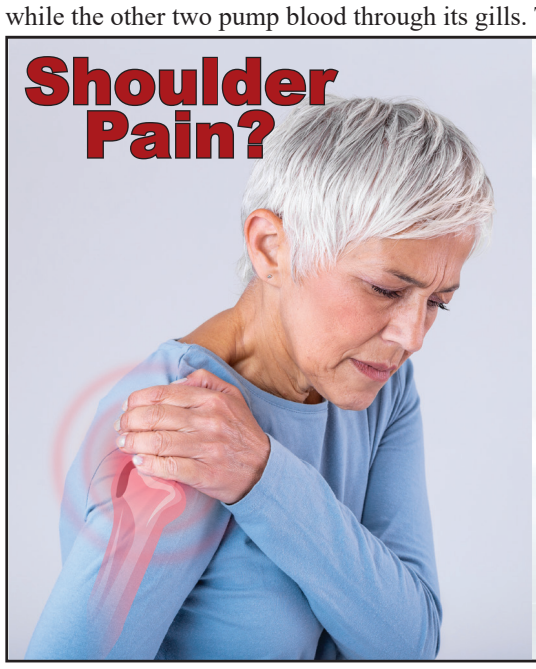

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