

Self-control is choosing to do what's best even when you don't want to.

DAY 1

Read Proverbs 13:3, NIV

Ever get a “talks too much” or “needs to work on controlling their words” on your report card? For some of us, talking just comes naturally. When we think of something we want to say, it's hard to keep our mouths closed. But talking out of turn can get you in trouble—and not just in the classroom.

It's not a bad thing to be a talkative person, but it isn't a good thing if you're the only one who ever talks. If you want to control your tongue and create friendships that are strong, you have to be a good listener too. It takes self-control!

Take a listening challenge. Look at the two questions below. When you see a friend tomorrow, before you start talking about yourself, ask your friend one of these questions first, and then LISTEN.

What is the best thing that's happened so far today?

What's the worst thing that's happened so far today?

DAY 2

Read Proverbs 21:23, NIV

Do you love trouble? Do you LIKE getting grounded or having a note sent home from your teacher about poor choices at school? NO WAY! No one likes to get in trouble. In fact, we like to stay AWAY from trouble, right?

The things you say can get you in trouble. Once you've said something hurtful, even if you didn't really mean it and even if you say you're sorry, it can't be unsaid. So it's better to think before you speak and select your words carefully. When you're careful about what you say, you'll stay out of trouble—and maybe keep yourself from getting grounded too.

On Repeat

Proverbs 21:23 is a GREAT verse to have in the back of your mind when you need it. Say this verse at least 10 times using different voices (soft, loud, fast, slow, opera style, rap etc.) until you have it memorized.

DAY 3

Read James 1:19, NIV

Did you have to hurry anywhere today? Maybe you hurried to...

- ... catch the bus to school.
- ... finish your homework to play.
- ... grab your cleats and water bottle so you wouldn't be late for soccer practice.

When it comes to controlling our tongues, there is one thing we should always be in a hurry to do— LISTEN. When you listen, you always learn something. When we're quick to listen, it helps us to hear what the other person is feeling. When we're SLOW to speak, we give ourselves time to calm down before we lose our tempers!

Hop To It

Grab some index cards or small pieces of paper and write the verse in phrases on the cards. Place them on the ground so that you can jump or hop from one card to the next. Walk over the phrases quickly or slowly as you repeat the verse.

DAY 4

Read Ephesians 4:29, NIV

Is there a "list" of words you're not allowed to say? If you say a word from the "list" in front of your mom or dad or your teacher, you'd probably get in BIG trouble! There are other words that you also should avoid. Do you know what they are? To help you figure it out, read through the questions below.

- ➔ Is it helpful?
- ➔ Is it something that's okay for my three-year-old brother to repeat?
- ➔ Would I say it to the principal at school or the president of the United States?
- ➔ Would I say it to Jesus if He were standing right in front of me?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, then whatever it is that you want to say is better left unsaid. Careless or thoughtless words can ruin your relationships with others. Instead, use words that will build others up. Think before you speak so that others can trust that you are a good friend.

Think before you speak.