

# Character Trait for April 8-12 is Self-Control

## Ephesians 5:1, "Therefore, be imitators of God"

**CHARACTER:** qualities built into our lives that determine our responses, regardless of circumstances.

**Self-Control:** Rejecting wrong desires and doing what is right. The opposite of self-control is self-indulgence.

**Weekly Verse:** Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

**Bible Story:** In 1 Samuel 24 and 26, David spares Saul's life in spite of the fact that Saul has tried repeatedly to kill David.

**Quote:** "Anyone can criticize, condemn and complain, but it takes character and self-control to be understanding and forgiving."

### **Application: (The first three are review from last week)**

- 1. Look Beyond Today** -- Consider the long-term effects of every decision. It is not worth losing your job, your family, or your reputation for temporary satisfaction. Focus on something greater than your immediate wants, and do what is best in the long-run.
- 2. Guard Your Steps** -- Everyone has weaknesses, although many are slow to admit them. It is better to admit a weakness and take precautions than to deny reality and fail. Identify the people, places, and circumstances that might cause you to stumble, and establish boundaries to protect yourself. Identify your weaknesses.
- 3. Restrain Yourself** -- Those who give in to every whim or desire can damage themselves and many others in the process. Thus, they must have outward restraints in order to protect those around them. Restrain yourself so that others do not have to restrain you. Exercise your freedom by determining beforehand how you will respond to temptation. Use past experiences to help you recognize when you approach an area of weakness, and determine beforehand to do the right thing. Do not give in to sudden impulses to do what you have already decided not to do.
- 4. Turn Away** -- In order to overcome temptation, a person must turn away from what is wrong and turn toward what is good. This is particularly true when breaking bad habits. Find positive habits to replace negative habits. Replace bad habits with good habits.
- 5. Seek Accountability** -- Accountability is one aspect of healthy relationships. Each person needs other trustworthy individuals who have the courage to point out weaknesses and help him or her learn and grow. Carefully examine your relationships and avoid forming close associations with those who will encourage negative habits. Surround yourself with friends and colleagues who will reinforce your commitment to excellence and integrity through constructive criticism or kind encouragement.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Do you see it as a sign of strength or weakness to acknowledge that some temptations are too powerful to endure? Why?
2. Do your best friends help you with your self-control, or make it more difficult to do the right thing?