

## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT SERIES

### 1 SAMUEL 26

## SELF-CONTROL

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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. In what area of your life would you like to have greater self-control?
2. 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?
3. Describe the tension and dangers involved in David's plan (vv. 5–7).
4. Abishai tells David to seize this golden opportunity to kill Saul (v. 8). Why would this be a tempting suggestion?
5. Why does David resist the temptation to take matters into his own hands (vv. 9–11)?
6. When we are tempted to sin, how can our attitude toward God's will affect the outcome?
7. 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?

8. How does God participate in the drama at this point (v. 12)?
  
9. If we know God is present to help us in our struggle, how can it be easier to exercise self-control?
  
10. From a safe distanced David calls out to Abner (vv. 13–16). How would his words to Abner make Saul more receptive to him?
  
11. In what ways can our commitment to doing God's will affect Christians and non-Christians as they observe us?
  
12. Think again about that area where you desire greater self-control. Ask God's Spirit to cultivate this fruit within you.