Dear Parents,

Maybe your child still tends to pitch a full on fit when they’re upset, or maybe you’ve watched your child stomp away pouting. Either way we’ve all seen our children exhibit a lack of self-control. We all know self-control is an important spiritual characteristic in life. Self-control is actually more important than intelligence when it comes to academic success! Okay, so we know self-control is important, and we’re probably all on the same page: we want our children to show better self-control. The question is: how do we teach them that? Check out the video below on how to tame your child’s emotional meltdowns.

<https://vimeo.com/parentministry/review/104864726/96efe6fbd0>

Maybe you’ve heard of the experiment where a child was put in a room with a marshmallow. A teacher tells the child, “I have to leave the room for a moment. If you don’t eat the marshmallow while I’m gone, I’ll give you a whole handful when I get back.” The video footage that’s been captured watching children agonize over that small marshmallow is hilarious, but it shows us something about human nature; self-control is a struggle for most.

We’re going to get all science-y here for a moment. The prefrontal cortex is the area of the brain that regulates self-control. It isn’t fully developed until *25 years of age*. The only way to help it develop well is through practice. Here are some great ways for you to model for your child the practice of self-control:

1) Make sure not to overreact in situations as it will teach your child that everything is an emergency.

2) Anytime your child gives up something for something he/she wants more, they’re developing self-control. If they really want something it’s actually good for them to wait for it.

3) Remind your child that she gets to CHOOSE her response to situations. Our response is our choice. Example: No one can “make you mad”; that is a chosen reaction. You can choose how you want to react to things. No one else can choose it for you.

4) Encourage your child to take on activities that require self-control like caring for a neighbor’s pet/flowers or a repeated chore.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9 about self-discipline. He tells us that when we enter a race, we’re to go into strict training so we can run in order to win the prize. “*Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever*.” 1 Corinthians 9:25. Training requires great self-control. What are you helping your child train for?

Building Young Disciples,

Pastor Sarah