

The Kid in the Grocery Cart

One day a young father was shopping in a crowded supermarket. His 3-year-old son was with him.

The little boy was riding in the grocery cart, and he was misbehaving terribly and causing all kinds of problems.

Every time the father would put something into the cart, the little boy would grab it and throw it back out. If the cart went close to the shelves, the 3-year-old would just rake stuff onto the floor. At one point, the little boy crawled out of the cart and ran down the aisle – knocking over every display he could get his hands on – with his father in hot pursuit.



People who were in the store at the time could hear the father saying out loud over and over, “Just be patient, Tommy. It won’t be much longer, Tommy. It’ll be OK, Tommy. Be calm, Tommy. Hang in there, Tommy.”

Finally, a distinguished-looking woman came up to the father and said, “I just want to compliment you. I’ve been watching you, and I want you to know that I admire you and the remarkable patience you have with little Tommy.”

“Oh, but lady,” the man said. “You don’t understand. His name is Michael. I’m Tommy!”

Well, that’s a smart man. He was right to start with himself. Think about it: If we are going to attempt to set a problem or situation right, we have to set ourselves right first and refuse to react in anger.

Self-discipline is essentially the same as self-control, one of the nine fruits of the Spirit listed by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5:22-23. Self-discipline generally refers to our ability to control or restrain ourselves from all kinds of feelings, impulses and desires.

Self-control is clearly an indispensable attribute of the Christian life, especially as our unredeemed flesh sometimes causes us to succumb to the persistent tug of our sinful desires.

Paul had these instructions to the believers in Corinth:

Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God (2 Corinthians 7:1 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter