



Character First! News

Your link to *Character First!* around the world



Self-Control vs. Self-Indulgence
Rejecting wrong desires and doing what is right

Key Concepts:

- Look Beyond Today
- Guard Your Steps
- Restrain Yourself
- Turn Away
- Seek Accountability

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Keeping the Christmas Spirit

By Robert Greenlaw



"I like Christmas, but it's so much work." That thought usually crosses my mind when I'm pulling decorations from the attic or cleaning up after another party.

So here are my goals this year:

Relax

It's easy for the *activity* of Christmas to drown out the *meaning* of Christmas. I want to relax this year and savor the season. I want to sit at the mall and listen to the carols. I want to enjoy each minute with my family and friends, even if the house is untidy or the meal is late. We're together—which is something to enjoy while it lasts.

Simplify

One year right after my dad lost his job, our family decided to *make* gifts for one another. My brother carved wood, my sister baked goodies, and I stitched together a unique line of purses, wallets, and pot holders. We had a blast, and I learned that “simple” is okay. Children won’t die if they don’t get everything they want.



Another Christmas morning, we took cupcakes and cards to a local nursing home. I thought Christmas morning was about me opening presents by the tree. But seeing each resident light up with gratitude showed me how much better it is to give than to receive.

Think

I remember [Dr. Ed Young](#) describing the “perfect gift” as one that “meets the need of the recipient and reflects the personality of the giver.” Giving is more meaningful when I ask myself, “What does this person need, and what can I do, say, or give that reflects my personality and values?”

I hope you each have a wonderful Christmas and a new year filled with peace, gratitude, fulfillment, and joy.

[Robert Greenlaw](#) is Character First! publications director. Check out some generosity [tips and activities](#) when you visit the Members’ Library (bulletin subscribers only).



***Character First!* in China**

Kent Fahrenbruck and Peter Hsu conducted training last week for twelve CEOs in Shanghai. [Peter and his team](#) provide *Character First!* consulting and materials for business leaders and educators throughout China.

"The need for character is universal," says Kent. "No matter where I go—no matter what the culture—people always say, 'We need this!'"

See more of Kent's travels on our [Facebook page](#), including his pictures of a life-size replica of Noah's Ark!



Self-Control Thoughts:

"He is a governor that governs his passions, and he a servant that serves them." —*Benjamin Franklin*

"Speak when you are angry—and you'll make the best speech you'll ever regret." —*Laurence J. Peter*

"Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation; for 'tis better to be alone than in bad company." —*George Washington*

"He who conquers others is strong; he who conquers himself is mighty." —*Lao-Tzu*

Learn about each month's character quality when you subscribe to the [monthly bulletin](#)—includes unlimited access to the Members' Library!



Great Savings!

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Prices do not include shipping. Promotion ends 12/23/09.