

The Fruit of Self-Control

To be a Christian in the true sense of the word is to be challenged to the highest—"Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect!" (Matt. 5:48). As we study each of these fruits of the Spirit, it should be strongly dawning on each of us—"what a challenge we have as children of God!" "Self-control" is at the rock bed of all of these fruits that we are looking at! Without such, James says, that are religion is vain or useless (1:26). But, in reality, even to become a Christians requires a certain amount of self-control. To illustrate:

A sinner is challenged to desire truth.

- 2 Thess. 2:10-12
- John 8:32
- Prov 23:23
- 2 Tim 2:15
- 1Pet 1:22

How many people do you know who desire truth like the above Scriptures indicate?

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How many really want to bring themselves into the control of God's truth? _____ How many are really willing to do what the Scripture below requires? _____

- Rom 6:12-13

God is calling upon His people to bring our bodies and spirits into the control of the Spirit of God. We are not to allow sin to reign in our bodies. Rom 8:13

We are called upon to be in such control of our lives that we would willingly give ourselves up to serve only God. Matt 16:24

THE STRUGGLE WITHIN

In Romans 8:1-14, is a long discourse on the struggle that Christians have between following after the flesh or after the Spirit. The same struggle is pictured in Gal. 5:16-26, where we are called upon to make a choice as to which we will follow. And both simply point out that to follow after the flesh brings death, but to follow after the Spirit brings life.

The appeal of the flesh is to satisfy the natural desires of the flesh that have been placed there by God. However, these desires must be satisfied in good, right, or righteous ways; not selfishly, greedily, or with lack of concern for others. The Apostle John stated that the appeal of sin is made to satisfy the "lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life." (1 John 2:16). There is no question that sin can be desirable—that is the reason why we need to be in control (Heb. 11:25). And, all who

would live godly lives, must be in control—make the right decision about which we will follow—the flesh or the Spirit.

Unless we avail ourselves of the help that God offers, we will yield to the sinful desires of the flesh and suffer the consequences of such. God offers us insight as to how to bring ourselves into proper control.

1. Recognize that the battle is before us. Jesus was able to see what was ahead for Himself in the near future concerning His death (Matt. 16:21-28). Peter did not want to believe what Jesus was saying. Jesus made it clear that the temptation of the Devil was to take the easy way out, rather than to travel the hard road. Jesus earnestly prayed for the cup to pass but ending with the statement—"not my will be done, but your will be done."(Matt. 26:39).

2. Recognize the need of Patience! The admonition is there (Rom. 12:12)—we must be patient as we face the temptations of life. Without patience, we will give in to the temptation. The reason why patience is needed is because we don't like a struggle—especially when I can't see a good reason for having to suffer or struggle. James tells us that the testing of our faith produces patience (Jas. 1:3). But then he also adds that patience will help us to be complete in our character (Jas. 1:4). No progress, in the building of our character, can take place without trials, temptations, or struggles. The easy way makes us lazy. The hard way challenges us to get up and fight the good fight of faith.

3. Recognize the need of Persistence! When we fail, we do not quit, but get up and try again. We keep on trying until we have won the battle. We learn from our failures as well as from our victories (Heb. 5:12-14). We learn what not to do as well as what to do. But in particular we are learning how to discipline ourselves as the Apostle Paul said that he had to do (1 Cor. 9:26-27), and thereby have hope of obtaining that imperishable crown of life. We learn gradually how to live a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27) by learning to approve those things which are excellent (Phil. 1:9-10).

The wise man had a unique way of showing the need for self-control by saying that the person who controls his spirit is greater than the person who takes a city (Prov. 16:32). A person's character will not be mature (complete) until he learns how to control his desires, his tongue, his temper, his emotions, and his actions. What a great fruit to have in one's life.

http://camphillchurch.org/study_books/FRUIT%20OF%20THE%20SPIRIT,%20Bearing%20the.pdf

My Notes and Thoughts

In your own words, describe the strength of self-control _____

How do you see self-control connected with the other fruit?

Write out your own definition of self-control _____

Think of a Bible story (besides one with Jesus in) that is a picture of self-control?

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What current attitudes may keep people from self-control?

What do you like or not like about self control?

How do you see all these 9 fruit working together for your good?

What is an issue in your life that could improve with more self-control?

Think about the area of your personal finances. How has self-control helped you? _____
