

Self Control: The Fruit Nobody Wants to Eat

SELF CONTROL: A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

The **King James Version** uses the word **temperance** rather than **self-control**. **Temperance is defined as** moderation in action, thought, or feeling : restraint.

The same dictionary defines **self-control** as **restraint over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires**

To put it another way, you lead a life of temperance when you use self-control in challenging situations.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Proverbs 25:28

*Like a city that is broken into and without walls
Is a man who has no control over his spirit.*

Proverbs 16: 32

*He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.*

Psalms 39:1

*I said, "I will guard my ways
That I may not sin with my tongue;
I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle
While the wicked are in my presence."*

Psalms 141:3

*Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth;
Keep watch over the door of my lips.*

BENEFITS OF SELF CONTROL

2 Peter 1:5-7

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

In other words, being mindful to exercise self control will ultimately lead you to operate in godliness, kindness, and love.

Here the meaning of self-control sheds some light: the **Greek root word** for self control in both the Galatians and 2 Peter passages means having mastery or possession of.

Self control flows out of our strategy of Taking Responsibility

. It could be the difference between responding vs. reacting.

PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

A person operating in self control is prepared to delay gratification for the greater good.

Think of self control as staying on a clearly delineated path to soaring with God. We often use the phrase staying in your lane.

Self control tells you when to say yes to an opportunity that fits the vision the Lord has given you. More importantly it says no to something that would distract you from what the Lord is asking you to do.

EVIDENCE OF A LACK OF SELF CONTROL

-Thinking that a deadline is really a guideline

-Making a commitment to one person, but then ignoring it when a better offer comes along

-Procrastination shows a lack of self control.

-Going after the next bright shiny thing, when you have a to-do list that is undone.

-Reacting to a comment, email, etc without thinking it through and responding out of emotion.

Self control keeps us on the path that the Lord has put us on. It is what keeps you in your lane, in your field of harvest, in your sweet spot of identity and purpose.

Implementing the self control to wait until the Lord says now is the time, this is the place, can bring untold benefits and blessings.

EVIDENCE OF SELF CONTROL

It might include physical things like diet and exercise, setting doctor's appointments for annual physicals, etc.

Practically in the **Created For So Much More** Lifestyle of identity and purpose **self control might look like this:**

-Setting up a time to **hone the skill** you know you lack in order to accomplish what God is asking you to do.

-**Following through** on a conversation with an email when you have more exciting things to do. ESPECIALLY IF YOU SAID YOU WOULD

-**Saying no** o coffee or lunch with a friend or coworker when you have a **deadline** that is looming and the work will take that time.

-If you are working with a client, it could mean **guarding your tongue and maintaining confidentiality.**

-It means **"don't press send"** when you want to correct someone, stand up for yourself, make passive aggressive comments, etc.

-Self control **submits your plans** to the Lord and **allows Him** to say *"This, not that", "Go here not there"*.

-It is **speaking truth in love but also guards your tongue** if a person has not given you permission to speak into their lives.

-It **respects other people's boundaries.**

1 Corinthians 10:23

All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.

Self control operates profitably with things that edify.

HOW DO WE GROW THE FRUIT OF SELF CONTROL

Self control is a **by product of a life lived in the Spirit.**

Self control grows when we walk in the freedom that Christ procured for us through his death and Resurrection.

Galatians 5

Verse 1

It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Verse 5

For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

Verse 13

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Verse 16

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

Verses 24-25 *Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.*

WALK BY THE SPIRIT TO GROW SPIRITUAL FRUIT

As we walk by the Spirit, we fertilize our spiritual tree to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

Practically this means:

-Regular time in the **Presence of God**

-Regular time in the **Word of God**

-Regular time listening to the Spirit so that you recognize His voice when He says this not that, or here not there

-**Fasting** if God directs: fasting is putting a guard over your mouth to not eat something. How about a fast that shuts your mouth of certain words?

-**Taking thoughts captive** to the obedience of Christ

-**Keeping a clean heart** so as not to get triggered and want to press send.

-Taking time to **pause, ponder with the Lord and pray** before responding to an invitation, an email, or an opportunity.

Exercise: Self Control: The Fruit Nobody Wants to Eat

Let's first acknowledge and repent if need be of times and situations where you have not operated in the fruit of self-control.

1. When have you reacted rather than responded?
2. When have you allowed distractions to take you off your path?
3. When have you steered into someone else's lane?
4. When have you taken on a responsibility that was not yours to take on?
5. What other instances has Holy Spirit brought to mind that could have used more self control?

Repent, knowing that you are forgiven and that Christ has set you free!

Now let's look at times when you have exercised self control. What were the results?

Take the time to celebrate with thanksgiving for operating in the fruit of self control!

In the practical sense, what spiritual habits can you put into place in order to bear the fruit of self control in your life?

Do you need to schedule:

1. Regular time in the **Presence of God**
2. Regular time in the **Word of God**
3. Regular time **listening to** the Spirit so that you recognize His voice when He says this not that, or here not there
4. **Fasting** if God directs: fasting is putting a guard over your mouth to not eat something. How about a fast that shuts your mouth of certain words?
5. **Taking thoughts captive** to the obedience of Christ
6. **Keeping a clean heart** so as not to get triggered and want to press send.
7. Taking time to **pause, ponder with the Lord and pray** before responding to an invitation, an email, or an opportunity.
8. **Make a commitment**, write down a plan. Ask the Lord for His help to follow through on your plan. 7