

Self-Control

Lesson 10

Introduction.

- I. The 9th quality Paul lists as “the fruit [harvest] of the Spirit” is “self-control.” (Gal. 5:23).
 - A. The word “self-control” comes from the Greek noun “egkrateia” [en **krah** tay ah] and verb “egkrateomai.” [en krah **teh** ah mi].
 - B. Some older versions, like the KJV, render the word “temperance,” but the word is better rendered “self-control.” The ASV, RSV, NASB, NIV have “self-control.”
 1. It is not limited to the form of self-control that “temperance” suggests.
 2. It is a word that encompasses every aspect of the Christian life.
- II. Being last on the list does not mean it is less important or that it is easier than the others.
 - A. Self-control is an issue with every Christian.
 - B. Many maintain self-control in one or more areas of life, but struggle with other aspects of their lives.
- III. Though self-control is hard, it is essential that Christians exercise it.
 - I. **Self-Control** (Prov. 29:11; Acts 24:25; 2 Pet. 1:5, 6; Lk. 9:23; Gal. 5:23).
 - It demonstrates wisdom:
“A fool always loses his temper, But a wise man holds it back.” (Prov. 29:11).
 - Paul preached “self-control”.
 - ACT 24:25** And as he was discussing righteousness, self-control [egkrateia] and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you."
 - It is listed as one of the seven graces.
 - 2PE 1:5** Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge;
2PE 1:6 and in your knowledge, self-control [egkrateia] , and in your self-control [egkrateia] , perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness;
 - Jesus stressed self-denial for His sake.

LUK 9:23 And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

- Paul lists it as a “fruit of the Spirit.”

GAL 5:23 gentleness, self-control [egkrateia] ; against such things there is no law [of God].

A. The man of the world often puts no limitations on himself.

1. He does what he pleases.
2. He does what feels good.
3. He does what gains the applause or attention of others.
4. He does what is to his financial advantage or advantage in other areas of life he/she feels important.

B. The Christian cannot follow this philosophy.

1. He must exercise self-control.
2. He imposes the restraints of God on himself.

GAL 5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

GAL 5:20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

GAL 5:21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

1CO 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,

1CO 6:10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

3. The laws of the land impose many restraints on us. (Rom. 13:1-4).

ROM 13:1 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

ROM 13:2 Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

ROM 13:3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same;

ROM 13:4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.

II. Exercising Self-Control

Freedom in Christ does not mean we are free to do as we please.

- It means we are now children of God, and not slaves of Satan.
- It means we are not under a legalistic system like the law of Moses.
- It also means we must do what pleases Jesus and not ourselves.

A. **Eating and drinking.** (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

1. Gluttony is harmful to self and a very selfish action.

2. Prov. 23:31, 32; 20:1; 21:17.

PRO 23:31 Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly; PRO 23:32 At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper.	PRO 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.	PRO 21:17 He who loves pleasure will become a poor man; He who loves wine and oil will not become rich.
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3. EPH 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

B. **Lust** (Matt. 5:27, 28; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20). See Exod. 20:14,17.

1. We cannot not always prevent temporary evil thoughts.

2. We must not dwell on them, or pursue them.

3. We are “the temple of the Holy Spirit.”

C. **Tongue** (Jas. 3:1-8; Matt. 12:36, 37).

D. **Envy** - Envy is having evil intent against others because of what they have or are.

1. It is the rottenness of the bones.

2. It is very dangerous

a. It caused Cain to murder his brother. (Gen. 4).

b. It caused the brothers of Joseph to sell him into slavery.

c. It led to the crucifixion of Christ. (Matt. 27:18).

MAT 27:18 For he knew that because of envy they had delivered Him up.

E. **Temper** - “I can’t control my temper”

1. Most can control temper under a variety of circumstances.

2. We could if someone hit us with a club every time we lost it.

3. People who get their way through “losing their temper” are inclined to frequently display temper.

F. **Thoughts** (Eccles. 12:14).

1. We can hide our thoughts from others.

2. It is impossible to hide our thoughts from God. (Prov. 15:3).

PRO 15:3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, Watching the evil and the good. See also Heb. 4:13; Rom. 2:16.

3. We cannot avoid evil thoughts passing through our minds, but we must not let them take up residence.

G. Retaliation (Rom. 12:19, 20).

ROM 12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

ROM 12:20 "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head."

1. It is hard to exercise self-control when someone wrongs us.
2. Our carnal nature wants to lash out and return evil for evil.

H. Depression

1. This can often be avoided by counting our blessings.
2. It is often be avoided if we seek to have positive, uplifting thoughts in our minds.

III. Paul (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

1CO 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

1CO 9:25 And everyone who competes in the games **exercises self-control** [egkrateomai] **in all things**. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

1CO 9:26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

1CO 9:27 but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

- A. Paul knew the necessity of exercising self-control.
- B. We must exercise self-control to please God.
- C. Failure to exercise self-control reveals we are not governed by the Holy Spirit.
- D. Other examples of self-control ♦ **Jacob**: Gen 34:5 ♦ **Joseph**: Gen 39:7–12 ♦ **David**: 1 Sam 24:7, 10, 18–19; 2 Sam 16:5–13 ♦ **Job**: Job 1:20–22 ♦ **Jesus**: Jn 2:13–17 (cf. Eph 4:26); 1 Pet 2:21–23.

IV. How Self-Control Is Developed

- A. Prayer - We need God's help and guidance.
- B. Good Company (1 Cor. 15:33).
- C. Reflecting on the **blessings of self-control** and the **dangers of lack of restraint**.
- D. Wholesome thinking (Prov. 23:7).

- E. Habits - We are creatures of habit.
- F. Exercising self-control one day at a time
- G. Recognizes consequences of not exercising self-control.
- H. Fear

Conclusion.

- I. This concludes the study of “The Fruit of the Spirit.”
- II. Each of these nine qualities are essential to salvation.
- III. Paul says, “against such things there is no law [of God].”
 - 1. The laws of man might limit the exercise of these qualities, but not the law of God.
 - 2. God’s law gives us the freedom to fully exercise the qualities, and states we must practice them to have eternal life.
 - 3. We should memorize this list of qualities and set our goal to grow in these qualities daily.
 - 4. We should not “quench” the influence of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19), but should let our lives be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

EPH 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation [debauchery], but be filled with the Spirit,

COL 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

- a. The words “be filled with the Spirit” in Ephesians is largely explained in Colossians by the words “let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.”
- b. We show the Spirit lives in us when we obey the words of Christ.
- c. There is no evidence the Holy Spirit leads us apart from the indwelling word.
- d. Each Christian should follow the mandate of Colossians 3:16, that is, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.”

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