

# Self-Control

## Introduction.

- I. A popular philosophy in our country is a person should not exercise any self-control. Many psychologists state that restraint is harmful to a person. This philosophy sounds good on the surface, but when analyzed it is far from it. If everyone did what they felt like, this country and the world would soon become chaos. Restraints are necessary for the existence of mankind.
- II. The Bible teaches just the opposite of this modern philosophy. It instructs men to exercise restraint on themselves.
  - A. Paul preached to governor Felix on “righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come:” (Acts 24:25).
  - B. In Galatians 5 Paul talks about the Christian life and the power to live it. We must walk by the Spirit. (Gal. 5:16). Paul also listed “self-control” as a fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-23).
  - C. When Peter listed the Christian virtues he said Christians are to add to their knowledge “self-control”.(2 Pet. 1:6).
- III.. This self-control on the part of the Christian is to be exercised in many ways.
  - I. **Alcoholic Beverages** - Christians must exercise self-control by refraining from alcoholic beverages. The Christian must completely refrain from the use of alcohol for several reasons.
    - A. In the first place, the Christian must refrain from alcohol because **it is habit-forming**.
      1. Alcohol produces a mental and physical craving for more alcohol so that the more a person drinks the more he wants. This is why there are about 8 million problem drinkers and about 6 million alcoholics in America. Most of these people started drinking with the idea that they were strong and could control their drinking. They soon found they were controlled by the drink. Statistics show that one out of every 6 drinkers becomes a problem drinker or an alcoholic.
      2. Many people say, “**That’s not too bad**”, but isn’t it? Suppose in boarding a plane the stewardess said, “I hope you are not one of the six.” The question would be asked, “What do you mean by that statement?” The stewardess replies by saying, “Oh, we dump every sixth person when we reach 30,000 feet.” I don’t know about you, but you would have to hog tie me to get me in that airplane. The risk would be too great. A person takes the same chance when he plays with alcohol
    - B. In the second place, the Christian must refrain from alcohol because it will **destroy one’s health and happiness**
      1. Some years ago **I was called out to the hospital late one afternoon** to comfort a woman whose husband was suffering with cirrhosis of the liver. This condition was brought about by his heavy drinking. When I reached the hospital he was in great pain and completely out of his head. It was necessary for him to be tied to the bed. In my conversation with his wife she said, trembling and with tears in her eyes, that she wished everyone could see what alcohol had done to him and the family. A few weeks later he passed into eternity at the age of 34 leaving his 4 children without a father.
      2. This tragic story has been repeated thousands of times across the country.
    - C. In the third place, the Christian must refrain from alcohol because **it makes a person worse mate and parent**.
      1. **One time a drunk**, who was getting prematurely old, said to his wife, “You’re a clever woman. You should have married a better man than I am, dear.” She looked at him, and thinking of what he had been like before he started drinking, answered in a quiet voice, “I did”.

2. **Judge Sam Tatum** of Nashville told of a telephone call he received one day from a lady reporting that some children were in the alley back of her house eating out of the garbage can. Probation officers were sent to the area and soon found 7 little children trying to find enough food to satisfy their gnawing hunger. The children were a pathetic sight. Their clothes were rags and their bodies were caked with dirt because they had gone for months without a bath. The odor from their bodies was so strong one could hardly talk to them to learn of their plight. As the children talked they spoke of a little baby that was at home. The probation officers went to the home and found filth almost beyond imagination. The house and bedding looked as though it had never been cleaned. They found a baby 8 months old, but who looked to be about 4. Malnutrition was already doing its work. One of the probation officers, seeing the baby had not been changed,, went back to the automobile to get a diaper to put on the baby. When she tried to remove the diaper, it would not move. The baby had lain so long in its own filth that the diaper had stuck to his tender flesh. The baby had to be carried to the hospital and there lay in warm oil for hours before the diaper could be removed. When the parents were found they were in even a worse condition than the children. **How did the family get into this terrible condition?** A study of the parents' history showed that neither had been raised that way. Their history also showed that the father was an electrician and had the ability to make a good salary. The parents had, however, begun to run with a crowd that drank and after several years they had become alcoholics. They had become so enslaved to the drink that they had completely neglected themselves and the children. They had become so enslaved to the drink that the mother, the day the children were found, had sold the cook stove to get another drink. Alcohol caused them to lose their souls, their self-respect, their possessions and their precious children. This could happen to you:

- D. In the fourth place, a Christian must not drink because it serves **as a stumbling -block to others**. A drinking Christian is not the light of the world, but drives men away from God. (Mt. 18:6; I Cor. 10:32).
- E. In the fifth place, the Christian should not drink because **alcohol will keep a man out of heaven**. (Gal. 5:21).

**Evangeline Booth** said about alcohol, "Drink has shed more blood, hung more crepe, sold more homes, plunged more people into bankruptcy, armed more villains, slain more children, snapped more wedding rings, defiled more innocence, blinded more eyes, dethroned more reason, wrecked more mankind, dishonored more womanhood, broken more hearts, blasted more lives, driven more to suicide and dug more graves than any other scourge that has cursed the world."

## II. **Eating** - Christians are to exercise self-control when it comes to eating.

A. Excessive eating or gluttony is condemned in the scriptures.

- 1. Excessive eating is wrong because it is **harmful to the body**, the temple of the Holy Spirit. (I Cor. 6:19-20).
- 2. Gluttony is also wrong because it is an **act of selfishness**.
  - a. It is said that most Americans are eating themselves to death while more than half of the world's population is starving.
  - b. There are millions of little boys and girls in the world who go to bed every night who have had nothing to eat.

B. Instead of gorging ourselves we should share what we have with the less fortunate in the world as the scriptures command. (Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:27; 1 Jn. 3:17).

## III. **Retaliation** - The Christian is to exercise self-control by not retaliating evil for evil.

- A. When someone does evil to us the natural impulse is to return evil to them. (Lk. 9:52-55).
- B. Jesus teaches that we must not return evil for evil, but good for evil. (Mt. 5:43-48; Rom. 12:20-21).

**IV. Temper** - The Christian must work to control his temper.

- A. Many Christians possess violent tempers which are difficult to control.
  - 1. Some of these Christians work very hard to control their tempers and do a very good job of it. Sometimes through the weakness of the flesh they flare, but this the exception and not the rule.
  - 2. Other Christians do not make even an effort to control their tempers because they think they are exempt from this teaching because they have a high temper. They frequently at the slightest annoyance unleash their tempers on loved ones and others.
- B. These outbursts of anger are very un-Christlike.
  - 1. Someone has written:

<p>When I have lost my temper I have lost my reason too. I'm never proud of anything which angrily I do.</p> <p>When I have talked in anger And my cheeks were flaming red I have always uttered something Which I wish I had not said.</p> <p>In anger I have never Done a kindly deed or wise, But many things for which I felt I should apologize</p>	<p>In looking back across my life, And all I've lost or made, I can't recall a single time When fury ever paid.</p> <p>So I struggle to be patient, For I've reached a wiser age; I do not want to do a thing Or speak a word in rage.</p> <p>I have learned by sad experience That when my temper flies I never do a worthy deed, A decent deed or wise.</p>
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- 2. Someone else has written this prayer:

<p>“Bridle my tongue, Oh, God, I pray; Help me control the things I say. Ere a word from my foolish lips Will cause my brother to make a slip:</p> <p>Cleanse my heart of sinful thought; Help me to say the things I ought.</p>	<p>Ere my tongue should make a sound That would cause another to frown.</p> <p>Bridle my tongue, and choose the speech That will help me others to teach:”</p>
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**Let us remember the words of the Holy Scriptures.** (Prov. 16:32a; Jas. 1:18; Matt. 12:36,37).

**Conclusion.**

- I. Man is also taught to exercise self-control in reference to the things of the world. He must deny himself of

worldly things and take up his cross and follow Christ. (Matt. 16:24). We invite you to deny self, take up your cross, and follow Jesus.

II. Will you confess your faith in Him and be buried with Him in baptism? Mark 16:16. We invite you to come as we stand and sing.