

Self-Control in All Things

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Introduction: The Spiritual Requirement of Self-Control.

- A. Are you in control of yourself?
 - 1. Self-control is about controlling oneself, making ourselves do what is right in the sight of God.
 - 2. Self-control is also about self-restraint, abstaining from doing those things that are sinful or destructive to you and to others.
 - 3. Most people claim to have self-control when in fact they have little, living life enslaved to their bodily desires.
- B. Do we recognize the connection between self-control and godly living?
 - 1. Self-control is a requirement of the gospel of Christ (**Acts 24:24-25**).
 - 2. To partake of the “Divine nature” demands that we grow in self-control (**2 Pet. 1:4-6; cf. Tit. 2:2; Gal. 5:22-23**).
- C. Self-control is so important that our salvation depends on it (**1 Cor. 9:24-27**).

I. Self-Control in All Areas of Life.

- A. Self-control “in all things” (**1 Cor. 9:24-25**).
 - 1. Winning the race of faith requires that we exercise self-control in *all* areas of life and not just in those things we consider most important.
 - 2. Any compromise will hinder your overall spiritual success.
- B. Strict discipline is a *must* (**1 Cor. 9:26-27**).
 - 1. Self-control demands that you subdue or conquer your body, make it your slave and make it submit to the will of God.
 - 2. Training will be necessary (e.g., prayer, study, practicing godliness) to bring your body in subjection and gain the victory over bodily desires.

II. Self-Control is absolutely essential to Life.

- A. Control your thoughts, control your life.
 - 1. Many people suppose that they are at the mercy of their thought processes and just can’t help themselves (lusts, cravings, worries, fears).
 - 2. The heart is where self-control must begin! (**Mark 7:20-23**).
 - 3. We can control our thoughts (**1 Cor. 10:13**) and choose to think on that which is good, pure, helpful, and constructive (**Phil. 4:8; Ps. 119:11**).
 - 4. Our thoughts determine who we are - our character, conduct, and ability to control our lives: “*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.*” (**Pv. 23:7a**).
- B. God has given us many blessings and abilities for life that require self-control, lest we misuse or abuse them.
 - 1. Self-control is about using what God has given us in the *right* way according to His word; His will controls our actions (**Eph. 5:15-17**).
 - 2. Things meant to be good can become sinful without self-control.
- C. To live a life of purity (holiness) self-control is critical.
 - 1. God has called each one of us to be holy as He is holy (**1 Pet. 1:14-16**).
 - 2. To live a pure life, we must say no to sin and “*deny ungodliness and worldly lust*” (**Tit. 2:12**) and this requires self-control.

III. Self-Control in Every Blessing of God.

- A. Emotions

1. Our emotional nature comes from God who created us (**Ps. 139:14**).
2. Emotions are very powerful, so we must learn to control them.
3. We often claim: “I can’t help the way I feel!” yet we can!
4. If emotions (e.g., anger, fear and joy) were not for the most part a matter of choice, then God’s word is untrue (**Eccl. 7:9; Isa. 41:10; Phil. 4:4**).
5. Emotions uncontrolled will lead to sin and destruction (**Eph. 4:26-27**).

B. Speech

1. The tongue, like emotion, is very powerful (**James 3:1-12**).
2. Control your speech to avoid sin (**Eph. 4:29; Col. 3:8-9; Prov. 20:19**).

C. Sexual desire

1. Many abuse this gift because of a disregard for God (**1 Thes. 4:3-4**).
2. Sexual fulfillment is a blessing given by God to be practiced only within the confines of marriage (**Heb. 13:4**).
3. If abstinence is chosen in marriage “for a time”, prayer and fasting is helpful for self-control or resistance against temptation (**1 Cor. 7:5**).

D. Food

1. The enjoyment of food is another blessing of God (**Eccl. 5:18-19**).
2. To eat in excess is gluttony, which is contrary to the faith (**Tit. 1:12-13**).
3. We have “the right” to eat meat, yet if by doing so we cause our brother to stumble, we must abstain from eating accordingly (**1 Cor. 8, 10:23-33**).

E. Sleep

1. The enjoyment of rest is a blessing recommended by God (**Mark 6:31**).
2. Yet, self-control must be practiced, lest we become slothful or lazy and neglect our duties to God (**Prov. 6:9-11; 19:15; 20:13**).

IV. Self-Control is Vital to Abstaining from Sin.

A. We must exercise self-control against worldly desires (**1 John 2:15-16**).

1. If we do not exercise self-control against “*all that is in the world*”, we will become as the world and an enemy of God (**James 4:4**).
2. Holiness demands that we separate ourselves from the world and its evil practices (**2 Cor 6:14-7:1**) and this requires self-control.

B. Three major vices of society to abstain from.

1. *Materialism* (i.e., the intemperate desire for wealth and material possessions) must not dominate our lives (**Mat. 6:19-21; 1 Tim. 6:9-10**).
2. *Alcoholic Beverages*
 - a. Most of society drinks and will try to entice you (**1 Pet. 4:3-4**).
 - b. Drinking often leads to disobedience (**Eph. 5:18; Prov 31:4-7**).
3. “*Lawful*” activities (**1 Cor. 6:12; cf. Mat. 6:24**).

 - a. Just because something is “lawful” does not mean that it can be practiced to the extreme (e.g. entertainment, recreation, hobbies).

Conclusion: Let Us Recognize the Eternal Importance of Self-Control.

- A. Self-control is so important that without it, it can cause us to become disqualified, disapproved, and even rejected to enter Heaven! (**1 Cor. 9:27**).
- B. If we will only allow the love of Christ to control us in life, we will have self-control in all things, living not for ourselves, but for the Lord (**2 Cor. 5:14-15**).