

speaking to God's people

freegiftfromgod

bible studies

Subject: **Walking with Jesus – Pt 4 – Self Control**

Scripture

Introduction

Commentary

The apostle Peter defined a process to help people to progress as Christians, and so I will be using the pattern he defined in 2 Peter 1:5-7, which says:

5 For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,

6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,

7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

The next aspect of growing in maturity and walking with Jesus is the development of self-control.

God does not want us to be at the mercy of the world or the passions of our own flesh. He does not want us to be subject to sin, and to defeat those things we need to learn and exercise self-control. Fortunately we don't have to do it all ourself. So let's look at this important topic a little further.

<p>Proverbs 25:28</p>	<p>There is a proverb that is brief but worth remembering in relation to self-control. It says:</p> <p><i>“A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.”</i></p> <p>Think about this for a minute. If a city has been invaded and it’s walls are destroyed it has no defences. It is open to attacks from anyone that comes along. There is no strength in it, there is no chance of repulsing an invading force and there is no hope for the future of the city.</p> <p>Is it any different for a person lacking self-control? No. Without self-control a person will fall prey to any passions or lusts as their fleshly desires, the leading of sinful men and the power of Satan lead them.</p> <p>Self-control is the ability to say “No” when it is the right thing to do. Self-control does not allow you to indulge in all manner of wickedness and wrongdoing. And these things will only do you harm if you do not or cannot exercise self-control to overcome them.</p>
<p>Ephesians 4:14</p>	<p>And the challenge is shown here in this scripture.</p> <p><i>“...so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles.”</i></p> <p>Until we learn the truth of the covenant and can stand in it we are in a challenging place. Self-control is part of that learning otherwise there is the very real possibility that we may be tossed about as people come to us with false doctrine.</p> <p>You know it’s really tough sometimes to distinguish between the truth and some things that are served up as truth, but are not. Self-control teaches us to wait and not jump in feet first until we have tested whether what is being served up is of God or not.</p> <p>Lets face it; the devil is not called the great deceiver for no reason. His purpose is to bring each of us into condemnation and he is so subtle and downright shifty that he will use anything he can to tear us down.</p>

<p>1 Corinthians 7:5</p>	<p>The devil will use our weaknesses and passions of the flesh to try to bring us undone. And when that happens he makes it worse if we then move into a phase of self-condemnation. In this scripture, Paul is writing about sexual weaknesses, and goodness knows there are many in this world who have suffered from that issue.</p> <p><i>“...lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control”</i></p> <p>Sexual immorality is such a primal passion in man that it can overtake him and cause great harm. Look at the disasters in marriages and the lives of those who have succumbed and have NOT exercised self-control. It has even caused some well-known ministers to fall and this brings the church into disrepute.</p> <p>Self-control is such an important part of the walk of a Christian that we must learn it and do it as a matter of priority.</p>
<p>2 Peter 2:18-19</p>	<p>It's not just about the devil leading us astray either. Here we see that there are plenty of people who will do the same using all kinds of enticements and bluster to drag the unsuspecting into the net of iniquity.</p> <p><i>“18 For, uttering loud boasts of folly, they entice with licentious passions of the flesh men who have barely escaped from those who live in error. 19 They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption; for whatever overcomes a man, to that he is enslaved.”</i></p> <p>How many have fallen to the sick philosophy of, “If it feels good, do it.” How many have been led astray by peer group pressure to do wrong? How many have been caught up in a mob mentality and been led astray. And how many have fallen by the thoughts that, if there is so many doing it, it must be OK, or how can that many people be wrong?</p> <p>First we must learn right from wrong and then exercise self-control so that we are not led astray into wrongdoing. Going along with the crowd does not guarantee something is right, and often it is the opposite that is the correct path.</p>

<p>1 Peter 2:11</p>	<p>And then there is the problem of the weaknesses that we have ourselves. First Satan may tempt us, then others may bully us into doing the wrong thing, but this next issue is the worst of all because the fight is within.</p> <p><i>“Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul.”</i></p> <p>The passions, desires or weaknesses of our flesh wage war because they are opposed to the word of God. I mentioned above about sexual desires. These are normal and are a part of man. But if they control us rather than us controlling them, we may suffer and fall. There are plenty of our desires that pop-up every now and again...and you know what they are. The guilty little “pleasures”, the thoughts that pop into your mind saying, “No one will see me</p> <p>More than anywhere else, it is relation to the passions and desires of the flesh where we have to learn to exercise self-control. To do otherwise will make a mockery of your walk with Christ and cause you to fail and fall.</p>
<p>1 Corinthians 9:25</p>	<p>As an example of the kind of self-control required, Paul uses athletes to describe what he is talking about. Given that we have just seen the end of the Olympics this is a timely reminder. Paul writes:</p> <p><i>“25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.”</i></p> <p>The Olympics showcased the cream of the world’s athletes as they competed in their various events. And as Paul notes, they do it for perishable and temporary things. Sure they get a medal, but over time they will lose their prowess and die just like the rest of us.</p> <p>But at the peak of their performance they exercise self-control over what they eat, how they train, where they go and what they do, as well as the mental game that is so important in modern sports.</p>

	<p>Is it not then even more important for us to likewise exercise self-control over everything? We are not doing it for medals, acclaim or short-lived fame, but for our eternal life! We are seeking something “imperishable” that will take us into eternity with Christ. Given what is at stake, self-control becomes even more critical than what it is to the greatest of these world-class athletes.</p> <p>And we are very fortunate, for unlike them we have the best coaches that ever existed!</p>
2 Timothy 1:7	<p>To help us by teaching, guiding, leading and protecting us, the Lord gave us the Holy Spirit. It is the work of the Spirit to do the work of transformation in our lives. Just as an athlete is transformed by building muscle and endurance, we are transformed in our natures to be strong enough so that we can endure the things of the spiritual war that we fight. Paul writes,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“...for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control.”</i></p> <p>This is the Holy Spirit and His work is to train us so that we can learn self-control. Initially we may need to lean on the Holy Spirit when we are weak and under temptation, but in due course as He strengthens and teaches us we learn how to stand on our own two feet so that we do not succumb to the evil things that are thrown against us.</p> <p>Through power and love the Holy Spirit under the direction of the Lord teaches us discipline so that we can be self-controlled. And when that time arrives, life will get much, much better! When you are not at the mercy of your own weaknesses and the passions of your flesh, and when you can stand against the powers of Satan that are thrown against you without fear, knowing fully that in Christ you already have the victory, then nothing can stand against you.</p>
	<p>And we see that through the Holy Spirit it is the Lord’s good pleasure to have us bear fruit. This is the transformation that the Holy Spirit is working in our lives when we follow the truth of the New Covenant and the teachings of Jesus Christ. The fruit that we bear, just as a tree bears fruit, is the change and the evidence of the re-birth of our lives in Jesus Christ.</p>

Galatians 5:22-23	<p><i>22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.</i></p> <p>You will note amongst the fruits of the Holy Spirit that the final one of these is self-control. It is not the Lord's will that we always rely on the Holy Spirit to pull us out of trouble. We are to learn from Jesus through the Holy Spirit how to live and stand against evil.</p> <p>We are to come to the place where we are not "spirit controlled" but able to stand self-controlled, following the Lord Jesus in obedience to the word of God. That is the plan and purpose of the Lord for all his people.</p>
So what next?	<p>This is a brief discussion about self-control and how we learn it. More can be added, but I hope in this introduction you will continue the search for the knowledge of this truth in the Lord Jesus Christ. Please feel free to send me any comments or things you have learned in your own studies or as a result of this information.</p> <p>So now it's your turn. What would you like to add to this conversation? Send me an email (link below) or engage with me on Twitter (@JohnBLemmon) or send me a comment on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/FreeGiftFromGod and let's have the discussion continue.</p> <p>Feel free also to send this to others so they can join the conversation. I hope this has added value to your own walk with Christ.</p>

This Bible Study has been brought to you by www.freegiftfromgod.com. If you would like to make any comments or suggestions, please feel free to [email me](mailto:john@freegiftfromgod.com) at <mailto:john@freegiftfromgod.com> & I hope you found something of value here.