

# Self-Control is Demanding

27 October 2019 PM - 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 - Temperance - Scott Childs

**Introduction:** God tells us in James 3:7-8, "*For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*" Yes, the tongue cannot be tamed so that it can be always trusted, but it can be controlled. The same is true of our other body members (i.e., hands, feet, mind, eyes), they will never be tamed, but they can be controlled.

So far in our study of self-control we have examined the need for self-control (it must precede winning God's prize). Last week we examined the power behind self-control (it is the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit). Though the Holy Spirit will give us the power for self-control, our participation is essential.

**Transition:** As we consider our duties in self-control, I have divided them into three categories in the order in which we must do them. The first two are review, so we will spend most of our time on the third.

*Our first duty is to...*

## 1. Honestly Admit Areas we lack Self-Control

### a. We all have sinful tendencies

- 1) We are sinners.
- 2) Our sin nature does not want to be controlled.

### b. We all have specific weaknesses

- 1) Our flesh is weak just like that of Peter, James and John when Jesus told them to watch and pray.
- 2) Lack of self-control is a sin.
- 3) I have weaknesses that lack self-control and so do you.

*Our second duty is to...*

## 2. Humbly Yield to the Holy Spirit for Self-Control

### a. Yield to His authority

- 1) His standard in the Bible is always right.
- 2) Submit yourself to His authority. Say, "I will obey You."

### b. Ask for and depend upon His help

- 1) He wants to help you. Ask Him to.
- 2) He waits for your yielding to Him.

## c. It will take determination!

- 1) Make no provision, (Romans 13:14) "*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*"
- 2) Resist the devil's temptations, (James 4:7) "*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*"
- 3) Choose to say NO, (1 Peter 2:11) "*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*"
- 4) Flee lust, (2 Timothy 2:22) "*Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*" Joseph is a great example for us to follow (Gen 39).
- 5) Make yourself accountable to your spouse or a close friend, (Proverbs 27:17) "*Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*" (Galatians 6:2) "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*" (Hebrews 10:24) "*And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*" Accountability is humbling, but it can be very helpful. Regularly ask your spouse how you are doing with your self-control. Accept your spouse's comments with appreciation. Let your failures be goads to spur you on to greater dependence on the Holy Spirit for self-control.

**Conclusion:** Whether our lack of temperance or self-control is in an **obvious area of sin** like dirty thoughts, anger or rebellion or it is a **less obvious area of sin** like careless spending, overeating, or worrying, all lack of self-control is sin. I believe the number-one reason that we lack self-control is because we excuse it for one reason or another. We must treat it seriously like every other sin.

I challenge you this evening to identify the areas in which you lack self-control, yield completely to the Holy Spirit, and then do your part to change. It will take devotion, discipline and determination, but you can do it.

**Song:** Yield Not to Temptation - 364

Our third duty is to...

### 3. Heartily Oppose our Lack of Self-Control

Our lack of self-control may be in careless spending, over-eating, choice of foods, harsh words, dirty thoughts, ungodly desires, getting to bed on time, getting up on time, overcoming bad habits, poor use of time, or excessive use of tech toys. Our spirit may be bitter, cruel, angry, hateful, revengeful, rebellious, unkind, unforgiving, greedy, rash, impatient, fearful, or anxious. These sinful actions are not easy to control.

#### a. It will take devotion!

- 1) Keep your heart clean, (Mark 7:21-22) "*For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.*"
- 2) Allow the Lord to strengthen you, (Ephesians 6:10) "*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*" (Put on God's armour.)
- 3) Pray much for victory, (Matthew 26:41) "*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*" Pray specifically about the areas in which you know you lack self-control.
- 4) Stay on guard, (1 Peter 5:8) "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*"

#### b. It will take discipline!

Like ruling your appetite, there are no simple solutions for ruling your spirit. Controlling your spirit will take discipline.

- 1) Note Paul's personal discipline (1Co 9:26-27). He was harsh with his sinful desires.
  - a) Paul said "*I therefore so run, not as uncertainly*". He forced himself to run on a distinct course. He forced his actions to follow the course God had for him. He obeyed the Bible explicitly.
  - b) Paul said, "*so fight I, not as one that beateth the air*". As a boxer, he disciplined himself to make every punch hit its mark.
  - c) Paul continued, "*But I keep under my body*". Here he

is saying, "I beat my body black and blue" to control the sinful tendencies of his flesh.

- d) Paul concludes, "*and bring it into subjection*". This phrase means to treat with severity as slaves were often treated to get them to submit.
  - e) Paul was very hard on himself. Why? He answers that question at the end of the verse, "*lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*" He did not want to fail God's test. He fear being disqualified for God's prize. He did not want to be unacceptable or rejected in God sight.
- 2) How can we apply this to our struggle with self-control?
    - a) We must obey God's **RULES**. The Bible is our rulebook. It reveals the right way to live. We must discipline ourselves to stay on God's straight path. Solomon called it the "highway". (Proverbs 16:17) "*The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.*" (YA 18 May 2018) *It is above the swamp of sin, above the valley of vanity, above the marsh of materialism, above the landfill of lust, and above the bog of beauty.*
    - b) We must practice doing **RIGHT**. The old saying, "practice makes perfect" has merit. We must practice self-control in our minds and in our hearts. Ask God for calmness to respond right. Pause and take deep breaths before you respond. Plan right choices for common problems of self-control. Avoid areas of temptation. Pray specifically! Pray humbly! Pray continually!
    - c) We must quash our **REBELLION**. We must force ourselves to do right even when we do not feel like it. Paul compared it to beating himself. When we fail, we must force ourselves to seek forgiveness right away. We must takes steps change that lack of self-control. Make no excuses for it.
    - d) We must live every moment for God's **REWARD**. God's approval must be our priority. We will look at this in more detail next week.