

The 3rd reason self-control is preparatory to winning in the Christian life is that...

3. Excuses all lead to failure

a. An athlete who makes excuses for his lack of self-control is bound to fail.

- 1) Self-control must be complete. If he disciplines himself in many areas yet lacks self-control in one vital area, he is heading for failure. He must be self-controlled “*in all things*”.
- 2) Self-control must be continuous. During his ten months of training, if he goes 9.5 months and then makes excuse in one area, he is heading for failure.

b. If we make excuses, we are bound to fail.

- 1) Those who make the excuse, “*That’s just the way I am,*” will never win God’s incorruptible crown.
- 2) Young person, if you keep yourself pure until a week before your marriage, you lose your purity and God’s reward.
- 3) A father that excuses his anger by saying, “*That’s just the way I am*”, will provoke his children and harm their lives.
- 4) Making excuses for an uncontrolled tongue, a bitter heart, self-gratification, slackness, or road rage will lead to God’s rebuke.
- 5) God accepts no excuses for our lack of self-control.
- 6) Blaming others for our lack of self-control does not excuse our failure nor does it resolve the problem.
- 7) No one will ever win in God's race if he is not self-controlled.

Conclusion: We all have obstacles that hinder our Christian race. We need self-control over every one of them in order to receive God’s incorruptible crown. Excuses all lead to failure.

Self-control is preparatory to winning God’s crowns. Lord willing, in the next three weeks, we are going to examine the facts that self-control is supernatural, it is demanding, and it is rewarding. I challenge you to begin this evening by identifying obstacles in your life (areas in your character that lack self-control). Instead of excusing them, ask God to teach you in the weeks to come how to control them for His glory.

Song: I Need Thee Every Hour, **318** (#1-2)

Self-Control is Preparatory

13 October 2019 PM – 1 Corinthians 9:25 – Temperance – Scott Childs

Introduction: Read text. The word *temperance*, as used in the Bible, refers more to self-control than it does to avoiding excess. When God tells us to be temperate, he is saying that we must control ourselves. Self-control is forcing self to do right. We must control our actions, our attitudes, our mouth, our emotions, and every other area of our lives. God referred to the same discipline when He had Solomon admonish us to rule our spirits.

We may lack self-control in spending, eating, choice of foods, words, thoughts, lusts, desires, getting to bed on time, getting up on time, overcoming bad habits or cravings, time use, and tech use and much more. An uncontrolled spirit may be harsh, bitter, cruel, angry, hateful, revengeful, rebellious, unkind, unforgiving, greedy, rash, impatient, fearful, or anxious.

When a horse is spirited, he is hard to control. When a dog as a mean spirit, he is dangerous to be around. When a dad has an angry spirit, he will provoke his children. When a child has a rebellious spirit, he refuses to heed wise advice. When a person has an uncontrolled mouth, his words cause wounds. When a motorist lacks self-control, he angrily curses any driver who makes a careless move. When a wife has a contentious spirit, she irritates like a dripping roof. When we have an unforgiving spirit, we forfeit God's forgiveness. When a man looks at pornography, he grieves the heart of God who sees it all. The lack of self-control makes us unpleasant to be around, often hurtful to others and displeasing to God.

“*And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.*” (1Co 9:25) “*Striveth for the mastery*” means contending in an athletic contest. Paul desired to win God’s prize (Php 3:14), and every Christian ought to have that same desire. To win that prize, like an athlete, we must be temperate or self-controlled. Self-control is not a natural quality. Consistent self-control is supernatural. It is preparatory to winning.

Transition: In the first sermon of this short series, I want to identify three reasons that self-control is preparatory to winning in the Christian life.

The 1st reason self-control is preparatory to winning in the Christian life is that...

1. We all have obstacles

a. We must know our obstacles (things that stand in the way of victory)

- 1) Our text begins, “*and every man*” because we all have obstacles in our lives that hinder our Christian progress.
- 2) Every Greek athlete sought to identify obstacles that will hinder his chance to win. “For ten months had the candidates for a prize at these games to abstain from every kind of sensual indulgence, and to undergo the most severe training of the body.” (Cambridge) Obstacles may be friends, wrong foods, wrong drinks, late nights, laziness, lack of exercise, wrong focus, or even pleasures.
- 3) “The contest in which Christians are engaged is not less, but more, severe.” (EB)
- 4) Here are fourteen **positive** traits of a person who is ruled by self-control. These are not all original with me.
<https://joemckeever.com/wp/10-ways-to-know-you-rule-your-own-spirit/>
 - a) You can take chastening from the Lord and appreciate discipline when you have it coming (Pr 3:11-12).
 - b) You carefully guard what enters your heart (Pr 4:23).
 - c) You do not yield to sensual lust (Pr 6:25; 7:25).
 - d) You can receive criticism without feeling you have to defend yourself (Pr 9:8; 15:5; 17:10).
 - e) You can make yourself do the hard tasks, rather than give in to the urge to take the easy path (Pr 10:4; 12:24).
 - f) You are able to respond to a harsh putdown with gentleness (Pr 15:1).
 - g) You choose your words carefully (Pr 15:23; 29:20).
 - h) You are slow to anger, even in your spirit (Pr 16:32).
 - i) You do not take offense easily. You are hard to offend (Pr 19:11).
 - j) You guard your tongue (Pr 21:23).
 - k) You are in command of your appetite (Pr 23:1-2).
 - l) You stay calm during trying situations (Pr 25:28).
 - m) You resist the urge to meddle in another’s business (Pr 26:17).
 - n) You can do good deeds without mentioning it to anyone (Pr 27:2; 25:14).
- 5) Do these traits describe your spirit? If not, make a list of

the ones that need work. Honest evaluation is the only way to improvement.

b. We must be temperate in all things

- 1) Paul states that the athlete seeks self-control over every obstacle, not just a few.
- 2) The lists above identifies a few areas in which we need self-control, but as with the athlete, we must be self-controlled in every area.

The 2nd reason self-control is preparatory to winning in the Christian life is that...

2. Only self-control can overcome obstacles

a. Athletes, determined to win, have no other option.

- 1) Wishing does not help. Dreaming is of no use.
- 2) Only self-control will enable athletes to prepare to win.
 - a) They must withhold pleasures to focus.
 - b) They must restrict diet to tone their bodies.
 - c) They must willingly sacrifice to improve.
 - d) They must push their muscles until they weary.
 - e) They must do what does not come natural.

b. Christians, determined to win, must be self-controlled.

- 1) Wishing that you had victory is not the answer.
- 2) Dreaming that you are a strong Christian will not help.
- 3) Resolutions will fail you.
- 4) Praying that God will ZAP you and make you a spiritual, victorious Christian is a futile effort.
- 5) Crying over your repeated failures will not work.
- 6) Asking for forgiveness after you failed to rule your spirit is the right thing to do, but that does not change the problem.
- 7) **You need self-control!** You need to rule your spirit. You need the Holy Spirit’s help.
 - a) If you yield to Him, the Holy Spirit will enable you.
 - b) He is not going to ZAP you to give you victory. You must do the work. You must identify your obstacles and with His help, you must exercise self-control.