

## Lesson 7: Self Discipline

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Lastly, the next area that God wants us to exercise self-control is the area of our pride. Everything that we have and everything that we can do is a gift from God. Our talents, our possessions, our families, our very lives are gifts from God.

Paul was talking about this kind of self-control when he wrote Romans 12:3. Read the verse and write out below some things in your own life that you need to work on to have more self-control with your pride.

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To close out self-control, God has given us a stern warning about people with no self-control. Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5. Take some time this week to ask God to help you and give you wisdom so you can use the self-control he has provided you with.

*Memory Verse:*

1 Peter 5:8-9 "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."

Part of this is being a person of peace. Many of us will meet people in our lives that we will want to fight. Those of us with brothers or sisters probably live with someone we have wanted to hit at sometime or another. God wants us to control our anger by not being a person of violence. We are allowed to be angry. There are things in the world that SHOULD make us mad. Injustice, evil, sin, hate are all things that should get us mad. But how we are to react is what separates us from the rest of the world.

Read the following verse: Psalms 11:5 "The Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates."

That is a very strong statement. Giving into anger opens you to violence. Remember from the last chapter what the fruit of the Spirit are. Self-Control and peace are tied together. Living this is very difficult. Watch the news. People are constantly losing their cool. Furthermore, there are people that you will meet that will attempt to push you to lose your self-control. God wants to help you.

Read Proverbs 25:21-22. What is God's promise to you for keeping your self-control and living the fruit of the Spirit to even your enemies?

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## ***Self Discipline***

### **I. Introduction**

II Timothy 1:7 "For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but power and love and Self Control."

Self Control is a difficult thing to come by. Fortunately God helps us out. In the promise above, the Holy Spirit will help provide you with what you need. This as with many things, you just have to be obedient to God. In this chapter we will look at what self-control is and why it is so important.

### **II. Week 1**

*Key Concepts:* What is Self Control?

2 Peter 1:5-9 "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins."

In the dictionary, self-control is defined as the act of controlling your impulses and a trait of resolutely controlling your own behavior. As Christians this is very important to have. What kind of witness would we be to others if we gave in to every impulse we had? Yelled at people for being rude, vented our anger anytime we were mad or did things just because we felt like it? No one would believe that we really were saved. Or worse, that being a Christian does not really make a change in our lives.

Look what King Solomon had to say about self-control. Proverbs 25:28 "Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control." Take a minute and think about this verse. Write out what you think it means:

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What do you think a city with broken walls has to do with a person with no self-control?

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Well what is it that we need to have self control over? The first thing is our tongue. That little item in your mouth is there for more things than just to taste your food. Your tongue is able to bless others and it can cut deeper than any knife.

How many of you have ever had someone say something to you that hurt your feelings? I think that has happened to everyone. Is that something that you WANT to do to others? I hope not. If you don't practice self-control over what you say, then you become like the person described in Romans 3:13 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips." Is that how you want to be remembered by other people?

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Next we need to discipline our actions. We are called to serve God and be the light to the world. In the little book of Titus, it describes the requirements of a Christian leader. You as a world changer are a leader. Even if the only thing you do is help take someone to the bathroom or clean up after a service, you are a leader in God's community. Read Titus 1:8 and write out the requirements of a leader are:

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What amazes me is how simple the requirements are. You are not called on to be a college graduate. You are not asked to be a dynamic speaker. These are not requirements that normally we think of when we think of leadership but this is the type of leader that God wants.

God wants us to restrain our selves. How easy is it to just let go and give in to temptation. Self-control is resisting that urge to do what is easy and be what God asks us to be.

1 Peter 4:7 says that we need to keep our minds under control so we can pray. Is it easy to pray when our minds wander? When we pray we need to exercise self-control so that we can shut the world out and focus on God.

Is it easy to talk to your friend when they are doing something else? Lets say you have something important to tell your best friend? To you it is the most important thing that is happening to you at the time. You go to your friend and tell them that you have something to say. They tell you that they are listening but they keep playing a video game. Do you think that they are really listening to you? Probably not. Even if they can repeat everything you said, you feel like you are being ignored.

How do you think God feels when you let your mind wander when you pray? You come before God and start talking to him then suddenly your brain starts thinking on Monster trucks. Are you really talking to God?

List out a few things that you can do to help you focus when you talk to God.

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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Think about a time when you gave into temptation and said something that you regretted later. It may have been when you were angry with your parents or a teacher or a brother or sister. What ever you said probably hurt the other person. If we exercise the self-control that we already have as a gift of God, we can avoid this.

Read Psalm 39:1-9. Answer the questions on this verse below:

1) What was King David going to put on his mouth to keep himself from sinning with his tongue?

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2) In verse 3, David talks about getting very mad to the point where he has to say something. In verses 4-8 it shows what he said. What did King David say instead of something rude to those that made him mad?

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3) King David utilized the gift of self-control. What does verse 9 say he did?

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King Solomon wrote in Proverbs 10:11 that an unrestrained tongue is violent because it can hurt. But if you exercise self-control in what you say, you can heal with words. The verse says "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked." I hope that all of you seek to be a fountain of life.

Memory Verse:

Proverbs 29:11 "A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control."

### III. Week 2

*Key Concepts:* Why is self-control important?

1 Corinthians 9:25 "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."

As we continue to look on the importance of self-control, I want you to think about the athletes that you see in the Olympic Games. Paul wrote about these same athletes that were competing in the Olympics back in Bible times. A competitor in the Olympics is an athlete that has trained close to their entire lives for possibly this one moment when they can be in the Olympics. They have denied themselves many of the things that we take for granted. They have to watch what they eat, they can't stay up late, they have to exercise constantly. These athletes compete for Olympic Gold. For this quest they discipline themselves harshly and keep focused on their prize.

Just like an Olympic athlete, as Christians we need to bring ourselves under control. We are representatives of Jesus in the world. What would people say if an Olympic gymnast came up to the mat for a tumbling exercise weighing 350 pounds and could not even do a cartwheel? They would be laughed at and no one would believe that the person was really an Olympic level athlete. The training shows in the athlete's body, expressions and focus. So to should our faith be evident to others from our self-control.

We talked about what we say or our tongues needing to be under control. But what else should be controlled?