

The Addition of Self-Control

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Epic Faith

Text: 2 Peter 1:5-8, Proverbs 16:22(NKJV& AMP)

The characteristics of a Spirit filled person have everything to do with the **choices** of our character as we surrender our life to the leading of the Spirit of God. We are Spirit led not Spirit **controlled**. Those who believe that they have nothing to do with the Fruit of the Spirit in their life do not understand the nature of our relationship with God. The Spirit of God never controls, He leads.

It is our choice to live out His work in our life. This Fruit is the result of relationship not His arm twisting. Jesus is Lord of our life but it is up to us to control, **discipline** and master ourselves.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-5

The **proof** of a Spirit led life is a life of self-control. Those without the Holy Spirit do not have the power or ability to master themselves on every level of life. The Fruit of the Spirit encompasses every facet of our lives, the spiritual, the personal and the professional and He enables us through His power to be a self-controlled and self-disciplined person. The Bible tells us that those who can rule and control themselves are stronger than those who can build a business or win a war.

The Greek word for self-control means “To get a hold of” or “To get a **grip** on”. Self-control is all about getting a grip on our own life. Self-discipline means to exercise power over oneself. When Jesus told His disciples that they would receive the Holy Spirit, He said, "you shall receive power". We have all the power we need to live a self-controlled, Spirit led life. Stop **waiting** for God to do for you what He has already given you the power to do for yourself. This means we have the power to master our inner desires, thoughts, actions and words. When Jesus is the Lord of your life you have the ability to be the best version of you. Without Christ there is no fruit. When you master something you are not just proficient at it, not just capable, you have complete understanding on how to be the **best**. Some people master their job; master plumber or electrician, some golf, some mechanics, or subjects like math or history. God calls us to master our-self. Not be the master of ourselves but to master ourselves.

The opposite of self – discipline is self **-indulgence**. Any time you say “I just couldn’t help myself”, you really did. You helped yourself to what you wanted instead of controlling yourself. A lack of self control will always lead eventually to sinful things. Self- rule brings every thought, attitude, word and deed captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ. **2 Cor. 10:5**

~ D.L. Moody- When we are foolish we want to conquer the world. When we are wise we want to conquer ourselves. Of all the people I come in contact with I have the most trouble with myself.

A disciplined life means hard work, time-management, persistence, honesty, a positive thoughtful attitude, taking responsibility, holiness towards God, stewardship with money, integrity with the opposite sex, controlling our **anger**, being purposeful and tactful with our words and resisting our impulses. Self-discipline and self-control affect every area of our life; eating, the time we get up, our prayer and devotional time, how we focus, when we rest and how we entertain ourselves. One key mark of self-control is the ability to make yourself do the things you have to do, when it ought to be done whether you **like** it or not.

Self-discipline is personal training that develops self-control and character. Self-discipline and self-control are not entirely the same thing.

Self-discipline is what we do every day. It is the practice or habit of doing the right things, in the right way at the right time as a righteous person so that when the opportunity arises to demonstrate a lack of self-control the reflex instinct is to do what is right. **1 Cor. 9:24-27**

What makes an athlete become the champion is not just what they do during the race or while they are on the field or in the ring; it is everything they do before they get there. The one thing that gives a champion the edge over everyone else, over every enemy or opponent is self-discipline. You must be focused and in control during the race or the game or battle, but you must be just as disciplined before. Football players, baseball players, all athletes and warriors eat right, sleep well, exercise hard even when they do not want to. Every part of their life is designed for victory. Before you will have victory in the arena there must be victory over you. Someone said liberties are largely for the spectators, not a champion athlete. Christians who take a lot of liberties in their life are not in the fight for long. They become spectators. They sit on the spiritual sidelines critiquing everything from peoples spiritual walk to how they could run their families and business better and they themselves have become spiritual couch potatoes who are spiritually flabby, lethargic and self indulgent. They refuse to bring their body, soul and spirit into subjection.

Paul said "I beat my body daily, I discipline myself so that I am not disqualified". Disqualification can happen before you run or while you are running simply because you can't keep up. Disqualification happens when you take short cuts that might be ok for spectators but are cheating for the athlete. Victory always comes at a price. Jesus said, "take up your cross and follow Me". Self-discipline starts with a Godly life. **1 Timothy 4:8 (AMP), 1 Peter 1:15 (NLT)** If we want to see God in every area of our life then we must discipline ourselves to be like Him. Holiness and Godliness are a choice. Each day we are choosing to sanctify ourselves and our ways to be set apart for God. Without self-discipline there can be no Godliness. Holiness and Godliness do not come naturally. They happen with purposeful, intentional training and discipline. We are to discipline or train ourselves in Godliness. A Christian trained in Godliness is a person of prayer, they are a people of the Bible, they listen to preaching and teaching that feeds their soul. They are in fellowship with other Christians who are just as dedicated to victory as they are and they are helping mentor the younger ones in the ways of excellence. They also deny themselves legitimate pleasures because they know the pull they have to become their master. **1 Cor. 6:12 (NIV)**

At the heart of self-control is the idea of responsibility, you are responsible for you, no one else. Those with self-control understand this. You and I are where we are in life right now not by accident but by our choices. We are today what we decided to do yesterday. We cannot control what people do to us but we can control how we respond. You cannot control that someone is going to hit you with their car but you can control how you choose to steer. Sometimes the difference in life in death, success or failure is how you choose to turn the wheel. You and I are responsible for our potential. God has given us all certain gifts, abilities, talents, and opportunities- what we do with them is up to us. Our job is not to try to be like someone else, but to be who God created us to be at our finest.

Self-control means that we stop making excuses and take responsibility. **James 1:14** The negative choices that we make are because we like them and we want to. As long as we make excuses we cannot make progress. **John 8:34** Part of taking responsibility is admitting that you have a problem or an issue that needs to come under the authority of Christ. **Ephesians 4:27**

People who take responsibility discipline their **thoughts**. Self-discipline begins with the mastery of your thoughts. If you do not control what you think you cannot control what you **do**. The Bible says that as a person thinks so are they. Many people allow their thoughts to wander instead of wonder.

~Watch your thoughts; they become words; Watch your words; they become actions

Watch your action; they become habits Watch your habits; they become character

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

People with self-control take responsibility for their moods and **emotions**. They refuse to allow their moods to master them. Self-control is a decision to be **character** driven not emotion driven. We all have emotions, we all have feelings, we all have good days and bad days. Self-controlled people do what is righteous, not what is easy or only what they feel like doing. **Proverbs 22:1**

People with self-control take responsibility for their **words**. **James 3:2** The word perfect in this verse does not speak of perfection in the sense of always being right, the word means **mature**. You will find that those who speak well and take care to communicate and speak righteously and correctly have the other areas of their life under control as well.

People with self-control know how to stay on **schedule**. **Ephesians 5:16** Every one of us has the same 24hrs in a day. Some use it very well and others never seem to have enough time. If you see a person that is habitually late you will find 100 percent of the time that there are other areas of their life that are not under control either. If you do not decide how you are to spend your time than others will do it for you. They may even be good things but you are not in control, they are.

People with self-control take the responsibility to manage their money. **Proverbs 21:20 (NLT)** Those with self-discipline live on **less** than what they make. They understand the value of a budget. They know where their money is going instead of wondering where it went. If you want the blessings the Bible says you have then you must discipline yourself to walk in the **wisdom** to receive them. The Bible never stipulates a certain amount you must have to prosper, it allows no room for excuses, only wisdom to follow.

Self-discipline is all about having a vision. **Proverbs 29:18** Remember self-control is all about the Fruit of the Spirit. The word perish refers to **fruit** that is overripe and rotting. If you don't have a vision of God's will, purpose and plan for your life you are just rotting on the vine. Fruit was never meant to be just good to look at.

Another translation says- **Without a Vision the people cast off restraint**. No restraint is the opposite of self-control. The higher you go, the faster you go, the further you go the more necessary restraint is. Understand that to do things you can't normally do, to go places most people don't usually get to go you need **more** self-control not less. If you want to be and do all God has for you there must be the fruit of self-control.

Self-control means that you have clear **boundaries** in your life: What you will and what you will not do. You say what you mean and mean what you say. **Matthew 5:37** Self-control means that you do not allow anyone to control you or manipulate you. It also means that you honor and respect the boundaries that others have placed in their life.