

Self-Control

Fruit of the Spirit--part 9

June 7, 2015

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The need for self-control should be obvious, but self-control is something at which secular man scorns. "Why would I limit myself? If it feels good do it. I can do what I want as long as I don't hurt anybody" are common justifications for giving in to passions that feel or seem right but will come back to bite you and others.

DAY 1: Self-control in dealing with "the world"

1. One of the three enemies of the Christian is "worldliness." It means to value what the world has to offer more than what God has to offer. Worldliness begins when we set our real hope for fulfillment in what the world "promises" to "give."

Matthew 22:38 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.

2. Jesus reminded us of THE greatest commandment among them all.

3. Why do you think it is so important to love God?

4. Loving God is not the full command. HOW are we to love God?

5. Why do you think the command to love God includes these three "alls?"

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but of the world.

6. What does John say is wrong to "love?" _____

7. Why is it wrong to love the world or anything in the world? What dangers do we face?

Matthew 16:26 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

8. We need self-control when it comes to the allures and temptations the world throws at us. What are some ways you need self-control?

DAY 2: Self-control in dealing with our "passions" (the "flesh")

1. The second enemy of the Christian is our own fallen sin nature, also referred to as the "flesh."

2. "Passion" is a popular word, both in the secular and Christian cultures. Secular man sees passion as a "great" thing. "Follow your heart. Go where your heart leads you." Emotion and passion are seen as vital signs of living life.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

3. Just because something "seems" right or "feels" right does **not** mean it is right! What consequences does Solomon warn us?

4. In Prov. 14:12, do you think "death" means more than physical death?

5. Below are some verses about "passions" and "desires." **Underline** the adjective describing the different kinds of passion or desires we can have. **Jot down** the important things we should remember about these kinds of passions or desires.

Romans 1:26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ...

1 Thessalonians 4:5 ... not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God;

1 Peter 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

Romans 7:5 While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.

6. What stood out to you about the different kinds of desires?

7. What stood out to you about the effects of following wrong kinds of desires?

8. Where do you see a need for self-control as it relates to desires or passions?

DAY 3: Self-control in dealing with the devil

1. The third enemy of the Christian (and every man) is Satan.

2. When Jesus appeared to Paul on the Damascus Road, He also gave Paul this mission: describes in a thumbnail sketch his mission:

Acts 26:16 (RSV) "But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you,

¹⁷ delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles -- to whom I send you

¹⁸ to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

3. What does Jesus tell us about Satan and Satan's work in these verses?

2 Corinthians 4:3 (RSV) And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God.

4. What does Paul tells Satan ("the god of this world) is trying to do with unbelievers, the lost?

Ephesians 2:2 ... in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

5. What does Paul tells Satan ("the god of this world) is trying to do with believers?

1 Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

6. What is Satan wanting to do with everyone?

7. What is your part in combating Satan? Where do you need more self-control in this fight against Satan?

DAY 4: Self-control as protection

1. The need for self-control should be obvious! Today, we'll look at what self-control can look like. In the following verses underline the "action steps" of self-control, and jot down any thought as they pertain to you and self-control.

Matthew 26:41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Romans 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions.

¹³ *Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness.*

Colossians 3:5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Galatians 5:24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Proverbs 6:24 ... to preserve you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adventuress.

²⁵ *Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes;*

2. Go back and circle the most important "action steps" you need to take!

3. What struck you most from today's devotional?

DAY 5: Self-control: consequences without it...

1. We'll finish the week looking at what can happen to us **without** self-control.
2. In the following verses, underline the important principles to remember, and jot down the consequences of living without self-control.

Luke 21:34 "But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare;

Matthew 5:29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.

Matthew 16:24 (RSV) Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

²⁵ *For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

²⁶ *For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?*

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

⁸ *The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

Proverbs 25:28 A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.

Romans 7:18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

James 1:14... but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. ¹⁶ Don't be deceived, my dear brothers.

3. What is your biggest "to do" item in the area of self-control?