

Lesson 11
SELF-CONTROL

“The fruit of the Spirit is ... self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:23)

*And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:24-25)*

“Self-control” is often translated as “modesty” in reference to desires and passions, especially referring to sensual appetites. The meaning here literally means “inner strength” to master over one's passions.

Since the strength to turn away from evil to serve God comes from the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, it is clear that this word ultimately refers to the life of Jesus within a person's heart, providing strength to serve and please God.

1. Write Philippians 4:13.
2. Write Ephesians 3:16.

Perhaps this is why this virtue is given last in the list, as a sort of summation of the other virtues. Just as the love of God is the source of all grace, so the life of God within a person is its result—self-control.

This is why the apostle Paul was able to write, “Against such there is no law,” because the qualities manifested by the Holy Spirit within a person circumvent the greater end of the law, which is the outworking of God's love for all people.

Just as the fruit of a natural vine comes from the vine's own life, so the qualities of the spiritual vine comes from the life of God.

3. Write Jesus' words in John 15:5.

In order for the fruit of self-control to grow, we must daily crucify our sinful desires that keep us from following Christ. This is something God does, not us, by placing faith in Christ. And yet the focus of Christianity is not on dying but on living. In our daily life, we have Christ's resurrection power as we continue to fight sin.

4. Write Galatians 2:20.
5. Write John 12:24-25.

One Step to Freedom
Chapter 6: The Fruit of the Spirit

Another good definition for “spiritual self-control” is “zero tolerance.” There must be zero tolerance for sin in our lives. You cannot make a peaceful coexistent pact with sin. We can't make a covenant with our fleshly desires. God said, “Kill it.”

6. Write Romans 13:14.

7. Write Romans 6:6, 11.

Coddling or excusing fleshly desires leaves us open and vulnerable to sin, and ultimately leaving us open to its destruction. We've got to bring it to the cross, reckon it dead, so that we might live after the Spirit and inherit all that God has promised for us.

8. Write 1 Corinthians 9:27.

The apostle Paul recognized the necessity of reckoning the old man to be dead, of giving zero tolerance to the flesh, allowing the Holy Spirit to show plainly the fruit of self-control in our life.

Practice zero tolerance. Don't give the flesh an inch. Make no provision for it, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ. That means you put a block on your Internet so that you can't get access to pornography. It means you don't go to bars. It means you don't buy another pack of cigarettes. Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lust thereof. Instead we walk in purity. We walk in holiness. We walk in righteousness. We walk in truth. We want to be walking in the Spirit.

And the key to continue to walk after the things of the Spirit is reading the Bible every day and fellowshiping with other believers as much as possible.

Don't make excuses for your flesh. Don't live after your fleshly desires—it's an empty, frustrated life. It's not the life that God intended for you. He meant so much better for you. But you must be born again in order to live after the Spirit, and fulfill the very purpose of your existence, to live in communion and fellowship with God.

For every Christian, self-control over their sinful nature is mandatory. We need to receive God's love and respond to it by showing self-control as we walk according to the Spirit and not the flesh.

“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness.” (2 Peter 1:5-6)