



THE SELF CANNOT CONTROL THE SELF

Instructions for a Godly Life – Part 6

ABSTRACT

*I have some American sayings to share with
you, ...*

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Reading for Today

Ephesians 1:17 – 19

¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

Introduction

Welcome to a church in the World! Where we strive to share what God says and means from His Word without compromise. Coaching disciples on their walk of Holy Spiritness. Exhorting them through the difficulties they will encounter. While basking in the supernatural joy of the Lord, now and forevermore.

I have some American sayings to share with you, that someone might say to themselves:

- Mind over matter
- Think before you speak
- Keep a stiff upper lip
- Don't let your emotions get the best of you
- Keep your cool

When you hear those phrases, what comes to mind? What is that person trying to do?

These are typical phrases people use to try to keep control of their emotions. Or what we might say here in America: “self-control.”

What do you think of when you think of “self-control”? What do people you know think of? What does your community think of?

To a certain extent, all of those make sense — and honestly, some of them you'll find echoed in Scripture. God does call us to think before we speak, to keep our composure, to govern our emotions. But here's what I want us to think about today — do we look to what God says about self-control or do we first look to our own interpretation or the world?

Today, we are continuing our study in Part 6 of Living a Godly Life, which is on the subject of self-control.

“Let's pray”

Body

2 Peter 1:3 – 8

³His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Human Effort Will Fail

The first point I need to make clear is that we cannot depend on ourselves:

Jeremiah 17:9

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

So many times we hear people say, "follow your heart." However, we see here from Scripture that humans following their heart is ridiculous. Why would anyone trust following anything that is deceitful and desperately sick.

Romans 7:18–19

"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. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing."

Do you see what Paul is saying? He is saying that nothing good dwells in him, that is why "self-control" is a fallacy, a false notion. If nothing good dwells in us, how can "self-control" be good. It cannot.

"Self-Control" → Holy Spirit Control

When we see this term "self-control" we need to change our thinking. Let's go back to the first verse of the series:

2 Peter 1:3

³His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

Self-control in verse 6 only exists because of what God has supplied to His disciples in verse 3. It is God's power, it is God's Spirit who gives us the ability to control ourselves.

Galatians 5:16, 22–23

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

We see here that "Self-control" is the Greek word (enkrateia), which means "inner strength", but that inner strength is not produced by us, but it is by the Spirit's fruit growing in a life yielded to Jesus.

2 Timothy 1:7

"For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

Self-control here is the word *sōphronismos*, which means "soundness of mind" or "sobriety of judgment" (the ability to think clearly and realistically, without being influenced by excessive emotions or biases). We see again that this "self-control" is not something we can make happen, but only what God gives us.

Jesus is the Model and the Means

... and Jesus is our example of what God empowered control looks like:

Hebrews 4:15

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."

We need to remember that when Jesus walked the earth, He was human, just like us and just like us he experienced all of the challenges we shall experience on this side of eternity. But those who are disciples of Christ, myself included, we forget that we also have the same power the human Jesus was given:

Matthew 3:13 – 16

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him;

We forget that before going into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, the same Holy Spirit who empowers us, empowered Jesus. The same Holy Spirit that helped Jesus resist temptation in the garden of Gethsemane is the same Holy Spirit that guides us, and the same Holy Spirit that strengthened Jesus on the cross is the same Holy Spirit who will strengthen you in your trials and tribulations you will definitely encounter as you walk out your mission for the Most High.

Take Aways

He is Not Only the Model, but the Means

We need to remember that Jesus is our model of what a Spirit-Controlled life looks like, but He is also the means by which we attain this power:

John 3:5–6

"Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.'"

John 14:16–17

¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper,^[a] to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be^[b] in you.

John 14:6

⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.