

INTRODUCTION

1. Please take God's Word and turn with me to Galatians chapter 5.
2. We are looking at the last characteristic mentioned in verse 23, "self-control."
3. For the past 22 weeks we have looked at "Bad and Good Habits" or "Bad Fruit and Good Fruit."
4. And in this study, we have looked at Galatians chapter 5 as well as many other passages of Scripture that highlight the works of the flesh but now we're looking at Galatians 5:22-23 and learning that the

good habits or good fruit comes from the Holy Spirit.

5. And to have this good fruit manifested in our lives we have to yield ourselves to the Spirit of God.
6. In the words of Galatians 5:16 we have to “walk by the Spirit.”
7. When we do that we will not “fulfill the desires of the flesh.”
8. So we have already looked at 8 of the 9 characteristics of fruit that make up this one fruit called “the fruit of the Spirit.”
9. Listen as I read them in Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB) says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

10. It's fitting that the last characteristic in Paul's list in verses 22-23 is “self control” because this the one main issue we are face.
11. It is also the issue that allows us to walk by the Spirit.
12. John Piper says, “The very concept of “self-control” implies a battle between a divided self. It implies that our “self” produces desires we should not satisfy but instead “control.” We should deny ourselves and take up our cross daily, Jesus says, and follow him (Luke 9:23). Daily our “self” produces desires that

should be “denied” or “controlled.”¹

13. All of us deal with this.
14. We either control the desires of the flesh or we give in to them.
15. And as we have been saying during this series, to control the flesh means to “walk by the Spirit.”
16. There’s no other way.
17. We cannot do what Romans 8:13 says. Paul says, “for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

¹ John Piper - <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-fierce-fruit-of-self-control>

18. Let's dig deeper into this term, "self control."

LESSON

I. What Does Self Control Mean in Galatians 5:23?

- A. This is the Greek word Enkrateia and it has reference to "restraining passions and appetites."²
- B. Kittel says it "takes its sense from the stem krat- denoting power or lordship. Thus enkratēs means 'having power over all things and the self,' enkráteia means 'dominion over the self or something'³

² MacArthur, John F., Jr. *Galatians*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1983. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

³ The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.

- C. John Eadie says, “This virtue guards against all sins of personal excess.”⁴
- D. When you are filled with the Spirit, you are given the fruit of the Spirit that includes “self control.” That means you are given the supernatural ability to control yourself. That’s how Romans 8:13 works--”by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body.” This harmonizes with Colossians 3:5. In the NASB it says, “Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead.” In the KJV it says, “(KJV) Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.” “Mortify” means “to put to death.” You have to put to death or “consider the members of your earthly body as dead.” That’s a paradox. You are putting to death the deeds of your

⁴ Sherman Isbell, <http://www.westminsterconfession.org/godly-living/the-temperate-life.php>

body but it is “by the Spirit” that you’re able to do it.

- E. The commentator John Brown informs us that the word signifies self-command, and denoting "the right state of the mind, heart, and life, in reference to those objects in the world which naturally call forth our desires, whether it be pleasure, profit, power, or reputation."⁵

II. An Example of Self Control from the OT

- A. The verb enkrateuomai is first used in the LXX in Gen.43:31 to describe Joseph’s control of his affectionate impulses towards his brothers.
- B. An example of self control is seen much earlier when Joseph is alone with

⁵ Sherman Isbell, <http://www.westminsterconfession.org/godly-living/the-temperate-life.php>

Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39:7-12

(NASB) It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." 8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. 9 There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?" 10 As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her or be with her. 11 Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside. 12 She caught him by his garment,

saying, “Lie with me!” And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside.

- C. This is what it means to restrain your passions and appetites.
- D. 2 Peter 1:6 (NASB) says we are to add to knowledge “self-control.”
- E. Joseph had both knowledge and self control.
- F. Self-control is often rendered as “being able to say no to one’s own desires,” “commanding one’s own desires,” or “being able to refuse what one’s body wants to do.”⁶

⁶ Arichea, Daniel C., and Eugene Albert Nida. A Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians. New York: United Bible Societies, 1976. Print. UBS Handbook Series.

III. The Christian is to be Governed by God Not Self

A. In Sexual Relationships

Sex was created for marriage only.

1. It is used in I Corinthians 7:9 of the control of sexual desire - 1 Corinthians 7:8-9 (NASB) But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. 9 But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.
2. Ephesians 5:3 (NASB) But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among

you, as is proper among saints.

3. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 (NASB) For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.

4. Hebrews 13:4 (NASB) Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

B. In How You Handle Your Body

1. In I Corinthians 9:25, it is used of the control of the athlete over his body and its desires, during the period in which he is in training for the stadium athletic games.

1 Corinthians 9:25-27 (NASB)
Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in

such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

John Piper notes that “Paul says that Christians exercise self-control like the Greek athletes, only our goal is eternal, not temporal. “Every athlete [agonizomenos] exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable” (1 Corinthians 9:25). So he says, “I discipline my body and keep it under control” (1 Corinthians 9:27). Self-control is saying no to sinful desires, even

when it hurts.”⁷

2. Our bodies belong to Christ - 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 (NASB) Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! 16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, “The two shall become one flesh.” 17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you,

⁷ John Piper - <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-fierce-fruit-of-self-control>

whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

C. In What Kind of Language You Use

1. Ephesians 4:29 (NASB) Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.
2. Psalms 39:1 (NASB) I said, "I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle while the wicked are in my presence."

CONCLUSION

1. Our lives should be disciplined. Lust, passions, appetites, and temper should be ruled. We should practice moderation. As Samuel Chadwick points out:
In newspaper English the passage reads something like this: the fruit of the Spirit is an affectionate, lovable disposition; a radiant spirit and a cheerful temper; a tranquil mind and a quiet manner; a forbearing patience in provoking circumstances and with trying people; a sympathetic insight and tactful helpfulness; generous judgment and a big-souled charity; loyalty and reliability under all circumstances; humility that forgets self in the joy of others; in all things self-mastered and self-controlled, which is the final mark of perfection. How striking this is in relation

to 1 Cor. 13!”⁸

2. You might not struggle in the sexual area but what about your language?
3. Do you control your tongue?
4. Can you see why we must walk by the means of the Spirit.
5. If we don't we will fulfill the desire of the flesh and begin "bad habits."
6. Let's pursue "good habits" today.
7. If you're not a Christian this is where it all starts.

⁸ Samuel Chadwick, quoted by James A. Stewart, *Pastures of Tender Grass*, p. 253.
MacDonald, William. *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.

8. To restrain the flesh and have the fruit of the Spirit in your life, you must have the Holy Spirit.
9. And He takes up residence in your life when you repent and surrender to Christ.
10. Let's pray.