

It's All in the Fruit (of the Spirit) (Part 9 – Self Control) **Galatians 5:22-23**

Galatians 5:22-23 ²² 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.

I. The nature of self-control.

1 Corinthians 9:25-27. ²⁵ 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.

The Greek word in this passage means: **‘to keep one’s emotions, impulses, or desires under control, *control oneself, abstain* (BDAG.)**

In fact any area of your life where you accomplished something of value, you had to exercise self-control to accomplish it.

II. The need for self-control.

Romans 7:14-17. ¹⁴ For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. ¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good. ¹⁷ So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

A. When we don’t have self-control in some area of our life, we are vulnerable.

Proverbs 25:28. ²⁸ *Like* a city that is broken into *and* without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit.

B. Now the opposite of self-control is flesh-control in some area of your life.

James 1:14. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

Why is it that we ever consciously do something that we later regret? Because at least temporarily it felt good or was pleasurable or we felt we could get away with it If it wasn’t pleasurable at the time, we wouldn’t do it.

So we are talking about our fleshly desires in some way having control in our life, or one’s passions being out of control in some area of our life.

Paul points out in **2 Timothy 3:3** that in the last days people will be without self-control (or controlled by their passions and flesh versus them controlling them).

‘If you control self, you win, but if self controls you, you lose!’ (Merritt)

C. We all need self-control.

III. The requirement for self-control.

‘You cannot control yourself by yourself. If you try, self will win every single time.’
(Merritt)

The only way to exercise true self-control is through God control.

Also notice that more specifically self-control must be a fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:23**).

IV. The solution for self-control.

A. We need to face up to areas where we need to improve in self-control.

Steven Cole points out that there are seven major areas where all of us need to exercise self-control.

We all need to **Control our body** (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

We all need to **Control our mind** (**Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:1-4**).

We all need to **Control our emotions**.

We all need to **Control our time**.

We all need to **Control our finances**.

We all need to **Control our tongue** (**Colossians 3:8; Ephesians 4:29-32; 4:25; 5:3-4; Ephesians 4:31; James 4:11; Exodus 20:7; James 3:1-12**).

We all need to **Control what relationships we have** (**2 Corinthians 6:14-18**).

So the first step is to admit to ourselves and to the Lord that we have a problem in some area with self-control and decide that we really want to change. If you don't believe it is a problem or you aren't really serious about changing, then you won't be willing to take steps to correct it.

Pray for God to make you aware of all the areas of your life where you are not exercising proper self-control and decide that you want to change in each of those areas.

B. When we realize that we are not exercising proper self-control, we need to confess and repent of it.

It is a sin to ever not be exercising proper self-control.

C. We need to die to self and choose to yield to God's control in each area where we need to improve.

Galatians 5:24.²⁴ Now those who belong to Messiah Yeshua have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

D. We need to yield to the Lord as He works in our life to make us learn self-control.

How does the Lord work in your life to teach you self-control through Him? He might speak to you through someone else. He might convict you during a sermon or when you are reading the Scriptures. Also He allows you to see the adverse consequences of not exercising self-control.

E. We should fast to strengthen God's control in our life.

Fasting is abstaining from food (and maybe water as well) for a period of time. When you do that, it strengthens your will so that it is easier to be under the Spirit's control and choose not to do some other fleshly desire or keep it under control.

F. Before we do something, we should stop and consider the consequences.

1. We need to minimize temptations for our weaknesses.

2. Also consider the consequences ahead of time in giving into some weakness.

In fact if you know something is a weakness or great temptation for you, pray ahead of time when you know you will likely face temptation, like at a party or at work or where you drive or when you travel. Put your guard up to deal with the temptation you will face.

G. We need to make use of accountability.

When you know that you need to change in some area of your life, it is helpful to get a friend to pray with you and hold you accountable to change.

Ecclesiastes 4:12. And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three *strands* is not quickly torn apart.

Galatians 6:2. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Messiah.

Conclusion

Galatians 5:23b. ...against such things there is no law.

He is making an understatement here. He is actually saying, 'Certainly no one would make any laws against people who practice such things.' Even unbelievers in Yeshua want people to be loving, joyful, peaceful, etc.