

5: Self-Control (2 Peter 1:6)

Second Peter 1:6 says, "Knowing God leads to self-control."

Why is self-control an essential building block for developing Christian character? _____

Peter understood a lack of self-control. By nature he was impulsive and often did and said things he would later regret. In John 18:10-11, he failed to control his actions, and in Matthew 16:21-23, Peter failed to control his mouth. Think back to one of your "Peter moments." How did you feel when you failed to exercise self-control?

Self-control is defined as "restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires."¹ Biblical self-control is surrendering your self to the full control of the Holy Spirit. Moment by moment **you** have a choice—the choice to yield to the Spirit or to give in to your flesh. Read Romans 7:14-25.

Excessiveness

The opposite of self-control is self-indulgence, which means "to give free rein to; excessive compliance and weakness in gratifying one's own desires."²

The word "*temperance*" used in 2 Peter 1:6, suggests deliberate self-restraint, or moderation. Moderation implies an absence of excessiveness or staying within the bounds. How is excessiveness in the following areas harmful?

• Money, Possessions, Position, Food _____

• Thoughts, Actions, Speech _____

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12.

¹ Merriam-Webster, Inc: *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 10th ed. Springfield, Mass., U.S.A.: Merriam-Webster, 1996, c1993

² Merriam-Webster, Inc: *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 9th ed. Springfield, Mass., U.S.A.: Merriam-Webster, 1985, c1983

Broken Down Walls

Proverbs 25:28 says, *"Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down without walls"* (NKJV).

In biblical times a wall signified security, restraint, boundaries, fortification (strength, defense), and protection against the enemy. It is easy to see that without "walls" you make yourself vulnerable, providing opportunity for the adversary to seize the moment and leave you in defeat.

What broken-down wall(s) do you currently see in your life that is allowing the flesh, the world, or the devil to have control?

Read Nehemiah 4:1-23. With warfare in mind, how does the enemy try to come against you when you begin to "rebuild the wall?"

In verses 17-18 it says, *"...with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. Every one of the builders had a sword girded at his side as he built"* (NKJV). What weapons has the Lord given us by His Spirit to exercise self-control? Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

Read 1 Peter 5:8-9.

Proverbs 16:32 says, *"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city"* (KJV).

Victory

Without self-control, temptation and evil can freely assault you. In order to have victory, you must train offensively and defensively, so that you are prepared the moment you are tempted to give into your "self".

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to train spiritually. How is this accomplished?

Romans 8:37 says, *"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us"* (NKJV). To conquer is to overcome, to triumph over, to defeat, to beat, and to overpower. It is only when you let God have full-control that you will have self-control.

In closing, read Titus 2:11-14.

Add to Your Faith: Self-Control

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