

# THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

## SELF-CONTROL

Galatians 5:22-23 – *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and **self-control**”*.

Self-control or the Greek word (**enkrateia**) is made up from two words **en** which means “in” and **kratos** which means “strength” or “power.” The Bible speaks of this as temperance or exercising moderation about worldly things or instant gratification and cheerfully submitting to the will of God for long-term good. As we grow in faith, we are more able to say “no” to the desires and fleshly lusts and keep ourselves in check with God’s will for us. We must constantly be on guard because the world and internal forces will still attack us if we aren’t steadfast in our faith (2 Peter 1:6).

This is the last of the fruit of the spirit, but not the least in importance. It takes a great deal of self-control to exercise all the other virtues. We all face temptation to sin every day because the outside world and internal forces still attack us (Romans 7:21-25).

When we are saved by Christ’s sacrifice, we are free, which includes, freedom from sin (Galatians 5:1). *“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been set free from sin”* (Romans 6:6-7). As we are filled with the spirit of self-control, we can restrict indulgence of foolish desires and offer ourselves to God to live as an instrument of righteousness (Romans 6:6-23).

A shepherd keeps his flock within a sheepfold as he watches for any danger, he leads and guides them to green pastures for daily nourishment and he oversees the strengths, weaknesses, and personalities of the sheep to make sure they stay safe and healthy. We need to do the same thing in our lives as we put up our defenses against any of the old sinful desires and lusts and keep ourselves in check with God’s will. We need to avoid anything from our past that caused us to go astray so we do not go back to being slaves to sin. This might include avoiding some of our old close relationships with sinners and instead read the Word of God and meet with other believers to daily exercise our spirit of self-control. The more we practice our self-control, we can persevere to do long-term good instead of going back to instant gratification of the world (Luke 9:23); (1 Peter 2:25); (2 Peter 1:3-7); and (Philippians 2:13-15).

We are not to conform to the things of this world. Self-control guides us to make the right decisions and helps us show the other fruits of the spirit in our lives helping us to live the way God would have us live (2 Timothy 1:7). Patience requires self-control. Our old sinful nature leads us to do the things we are called to rise above and show patience. (Proverbs 14:29). The spirit of self-control helps us to **respond** rather than **react** to the situation. Our emotions take control when we react. When we respond, we develop a thoughtful response that is guided by reason more than emotions.

Jesus was our example of self-control as He lived a sinless life and carried out God’s will in dying for our sins so we would have grace.

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In **Matt 26:53-54** Jesus speaks of what He could have done to desert his responsibilities instead of being obedient to fulfill the Scriptures. He demonstrated self-control when he submitted to what was in the Father's plan. We needed Him to have that self-control to pay for our sins.

In David's early life he was considered a true person of God. There were numerous times he showed self-control especially when Saul was out to kill him. Once when Saul was hunting David to kill him, David came so close to Saul that he cut off a corner of Saul's robe (1 Samuel 24:3-7). David used self-control because he knew Saul was anointed of the Lord.

When David was older and was King, he lost his self-control. In (2 Samuel 11:2-5) it shows how losing your self-control and lusting after someone can have major repercussions. First David committed adultery and then to cover up what he had done, he committed murder. (2 Samuel 11:2-27).

There are two Proverbs that explain the difference of the absence of self-control versus self-control. "Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control" (Proverbs 25:28). "Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city" (Proverbs 16:32).