

Christian Characteristics

Self-Control

2 Peter 1:5-10

Introduction

1. Self-Control (Temperance - KJV):

A. "self-restraint in conduct, expression, indulgence of the appetites, etc." (Webster)

B. "The virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites" (Unger's Bible Dictionary)

1) **Self-Control exemplified!** (A picture is worth a thousand words)

1 Cor 6:12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

2. **This is an indispensable part of the Christian character.**

3. **All of us need to strive for self-control in our life.**

Self-control Commanded

1. **It is something that we must pursue as Peter suggests in the text.**
2. **The apostle Paul also tells Titus that it is a qualification to be an elder.**

Titus 1:8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,

A. The aged men are also told to be “temperate.”

Titus 2:2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

B. All of us are encouraged to live "soberly" (exercising self-control).

Titus 2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live **soberly**, righteously, and godly in the present age,

- _____ 1) **Soberly:** “not drunk; not extreme or extravagant; characterized by reason, sanity or self-control (*Webster’s New World Dictionary*)

Where Self-control Is Needed

1. With respect to habits or conduct.

“Habits are first cobwebs, then cables”

- A. We must show self control over habits. If we don't let a bad habit start, then it won't become a problem later.**

Paul Van Gorder

On a road not far from my home are some trees that are slowly being destroyed by huge coils of ivy. The vines wind themselves like snakes around the trunk. At this point it is impossible to untwist these runners because they are so firmly embedded into the trees. They are literally strangling the life out of those helpless giants. But there was a day when the ivy was a small plant just seeking a little support in climbing. Had the trees resisted these tiny tendrils, they would not be in the state they are today.

- B. Daniel found himself in a situation where he determined within himself to abstain from the king's meat and drink. He was practicing self-control in his conduct.**

Dan 1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

- C. Joseph was relentlessly tempted by Potiphar's wife, but he refused to give in to her.**

Genesis 39:7-12

- D. Jesus exemplified self-control in His conduct. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return, when He suffered, he did not threaten (1 Pet 2:23)**

- 1) Why could He do this? Because He “committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.”**

2. With respect to our language.

A. Some cultivate "by-words" that are worse than useless.

B. We are commanded in the book of James to bridle our tongue.

1) Bridle: "to curb with or as with a bridle".

James 3:3-10

Source Unknown

On a windswept hill in an English country churchyard stands a drab, gray slate tombstone. The quaint stone bears an epitaph not easily seen unless you stoop over and look closely. The faint etchings read: Beneath this stone, a lump of clay, / lies Arabella Young, / Who on the twenty-fourth of May, / began to hold her tongue.

James 1:26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

C. We must be careful how we talk - not just what we say.

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

A man working in the produce department was asked by a lady if she could buy half a head of lettuce. He replied, "Half a head? Are you serious? God grows these in whole heads and that's how we sell them!"

"You mean," she persisted, "that after all the years I've shopped here, you won't sell me half-a-head of lettuce?"

"Look," he said, "If you like I'll ask the manager."

She indicated that would be appreciated, so the young man marched to the front of the store. "You won't believe this, but there's some crazy brained lady back there who wants to know if she can buy half-a-head of lettuce."

He noticed the manager gesturing, and turned around to see the lady standing behind him, obviously having followed him to the front of the store. "And this nice lady was wondering if she could buy the other half" he concluded.

D. David is an example of controlling the tongue.

Psalms 39:1

3. With respect to tattling or gossip.

"Some people will believe anything if it is whispered to them."

Morris Mandel

"Gossip is the most deadly microbe. It has neither legs nor wings. It is composed entirely of tales, and most of them have stings."

A. It's always easy to talk about someone else (*bad things*).

(*Younger Widows*)

1 Tim 5:13 And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.

B. Self-control in this area is required of us.

2 Thess 3:11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

The story is told of the woman who became conscious stricken because of her gossiping ways. She went to the preacher, confessed her sin of spreading malicious rumors about her neighbors; and after the preacher prayed with her for God's forgiveness, she asked what could she do to repair the damage she'd done.

The preacher handed her a bag of feathers, took her to the roof of the building, and had her empty the feathers into the wind. Looking into her astonished face, the preacher then said, "I want you to go into the city and return to me every one of those feathers."

"Why...that's impossible," said the woman, "the wind has scattered the feathers to who knows where. I'll never be able to find them all."

"I know," nodded the preacher. "Now perhaps you can see how utterly impossible it will be for you to undo the damage performed by your wagging tongue. **Even though God has forgiven you, the harm you've done cannot ever be totally undone.**

4. With respect to covetousness.

A. Many people are dissatisfied with their own state and long to want what others have.

Bob James

Recently I laid a small circle of poison around a hill of stinging ants. Thinking the tiny granules of poison were food, the ants began to pick them up and carry them throughout the colony. I returned later to see how well the poison was working. Hundreds of the stinging ants were carrying the poison down into their hill. Then I noticed a hole in the circle of poison. Some of the poison was moving the opposite way--away from the hill. Some smaller, non-stinging ants had found this "food" and were stealing it from their ant neighbors. Thinking they were getting the other ants' treasure, they unwittingly poisoned themselves. When we see someone with more than we have, we must beware. The hunger to beg, borrow, or steal our way into what is theirs may poison us spiritually.

B. But we see in God's word where covetousness is strictly forbidden.

Rom 13:9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Eph 5:3 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;

C. When we desire for wealth it often leads to ruin.

1 Timothy 6:9-12

D. The apostle Paul was a great example of self-control in this area.

Acts 20:33 I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.

5. With respect to fleshly desires.

A. All human beings have passions of various kinds.

B. But our passions must be restrained - must be controlled.

Rom 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision** for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts **which war against the soul**,

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.

“If we do not get involved with fleshly things, then we can not be overcome by them”

C. Paul kept his body in subjection to God.

1 Cor 9:27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

6. With respect to anger.

William Penn

“It is he who is in the wrong who first gets angry.”

A. Naaman almost cost himself the opportunity of being totally cleansed of his leprosy because of anger.

2KI 5:12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

Attitude, Attitude, Attitude!

- 1) **Sometimes we would be much better off if we would learn to laugh at our mistakes and even the mistakes of others. We can become angry over just about anything if we want to be.**

A "Do it yourself" catalog firm received the following letter from one of its customers: "I built a birdhouse according to your crazy plans, and not only is it much too big, it keeps blowing out of the tree. Signed, Very Unhappy!"

The firm replied: "Dear Very Unhappy, We're sorry about the mix-up. We accidentally sent you a sailboat blueprint. But if you think you are unhappy, you should read the letter from the guy who came in last in the yacht club regatta."

B. Anger must be restrained.

Prov 16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

Eph 4:26 Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,

James 1:19-20 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

- C. Often times anger leads to revenge. Self-Control says: “I will strive for peace and do no man evil”**
Romans 12:17-19

1 Thess 5:15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is **good both for yourselves and for all.**

- 1) **As we adjust the temperature up and down so we can feel comfortable; we must strive to adjust our self-control so that our attitude is at its most proficient level.**

Conclusion

1. **Self-Control is a fruit of the spirit (Gal 5:23).**

A. Self-Control is something that must be cultivated in our life.

2. **Felix trembled over this proposition.**

Acts 24:25 Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."

3. **The FRUIT of Self-Control will mean very much to us at the judgment day.**

A. What is the secret to overcoming fleshly obstacles and being able to practice self-control?

- 1) **Our faith in God and knowing that our heavenly treasures are really what count in the end!**

