



World Christian Fellowship

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Galatians

Lesson 59 – Fruit of the Spirit

Self- Control

Galatians 5:22-23, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

To be a Christian in the true sense of the word is to be challenged to the highest!

Matthew 5:48, *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

As we study each of these fruits of the Spirit, it should be strongly dawning on each of us—"what a challenge we have as children of God!"

"Self-control" is at the rock bed of all of these fruits that we are looking at!

Without self-control, James says, that are religion is vain or useless.

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.*

But even to become a Christians requires a certain amount of self-control.

A sinner is challenged to desire truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, *and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

2 Timothy 2:15, *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

John 8:32, *And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

1 Peter 1:22, *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,*

Proverbs 23:23, *Buy the truth, and do not sell it, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.*

How many people who desire truth like the above Scriptures indicate?

How many really want to bring themselves into the control of God's truth?

How many are willing to do what the Scripture below requires?

Romans 6:12-13, *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*

God is calling upon His people to bring our bodies and spirits into the control of the Spirit of God. We are not to allow sin to reign in our bodies.

Romans 8:13, *For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

We are called upon to be in such control of our lives that we would willingly give ourselves up to serve only God.

Matthew 16:24, *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*

Struggle (Within)

In Romans 8:1-14, is a long discourse on the struggle that Christians have between following after the flesh or after the Spirit.

The same struggle is pictured in Galatians 5:16-26, where we are called upon to make a choice as to which we will follow. Both simply point out that to follow after the flesh brings death, but to follow after the Spirit brings life.

The appeal of the flesh is to satisfy the natural desires of the flesh that have been placed there by God. However, these desires must be satisfied in good, right, or righteous ways; not selfishly, greedily, or with lack of concern for others.

The Apostle John stated that the appeal of sin is made to satisfy the "lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life." (1 John 2:16).

There is no question that sin can be desirable that is the reason why we need to be in control.

Hebrews 11:25, *choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,*

All who would live godly lives, must be in control—make the right decision about which we will follow—the flesh or the Spirit.

Help in Struggle

Unless we avail ourselves of the help that God offers, we will yield to the sinful desires of the flesh and suffer the consequences of such. God offers us insight as to how to bring ourselves into proper control.

1. Recognize that the battle is before us.

Jesus was able to see what was ahead for Himself soon concerning His death (Matt. 16:21-28). Peter did not want to believe what Jesus was saying. Jesus made it clear that the temptation of the Devil was to take the easy way out, rather than to travel the hard road.

Jesus earnestly prayed for the cup to pass but ending with the statement not my will be done, but your will be done.

Matthew 26:39, *He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*

Jesus knew that the temptation was from Satan, and that He had to reject his way out and stay with God's will.

2. Recognize the need of Patience!

The admonition is there!

Romans 12:12, *rejoicing in hope, patient^[c] in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;*

We must be patient as we face the temptations of life. Without patience, we will give in to the temptation.

The reason why patience is needed is because we don't like a struggle—especially when we can't see a good reason for having to suffer or struggle.

James tells us that the testing of our faith produces patience.

James 1:2-3, *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.*

But then he also adds that patience will help us to be complete in our character.

James 1:4, *But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

No progress, in the building of our character, can take place without trials, temptations, or struggles. The easy way makes us fat and lazy. The hard way challenges us to get up and fight the good fight of faith.

3. Recognize the need of Persistence!

When we fail, we do not quit, but get up and try again. We keep on trying until we have won the battle. We learn from our failures as well as from our victories.

Hebrews 5:12-14, *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

We learn what not to do as well as what to do.

Particularly we are learning how to discipline ourselves as the Apostle Paul said that he had to do.

1 Corinthians 9:26-27, *Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

So that we have hope of obtaining that imperishable crown of life.

We learn gradually how to live a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1:27, *Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,*

Learning to approve those things which are excellent.

Philippians 1:9-10, *And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,*

Conclusion

The wise man had a unique way of showing the need for self-control by saying that the person who controls his spirit is greater than the person who takes a city.

Proverbs 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.*

A person's character will not be mature (complete) until he learns how to control

- his desires,
- his tongue,
- his temper,
- his emotions, and
- his actions.

What a great fruit to have in one's life.