

LIFE IN THE KINGDOM:

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Self-Control: 1 Corinthians 9:23-10:13

September 6, 2020

WORSHIP

Take a moment to remind yourself why you are still meeting together during quarantine: To grow as disciples of Jesus by cultivating our relationship with God and friendship with others.

Listen to a song of worship: [Wake Up](#) - Sons and Daughters or [Not What My Hands Have Done](#) - Aaron Keyes

Or read Jeremiah 23:3-6 together:

"I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the Lord.

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior."

INTRODUCTION

We've spent the past nine weeks diving deeper into the life of the Spirit. This week we focus on the fruit of self-control—mastering our emotions and desires rather than allowing them to master us. The most obvious failure of self-control is seen in the prevalence of addictions that can beset us. All of us, however, struggle with self-control in some area, whether with our words, our thoughts, or our appetites. If we do not learn self-control, then anger, fear, sadness, envy, ambition or sexual desire will eventually strip us of what we hold most dear. We risk losing our friendships, jobs, marriages, finances, health, and even our physical lives.

Ancient cultures advised the pursuit of self-control through repressing the "lower nature" of the body and following our "higher nature" of logic and reasoning. Modern society promotes self-actualization rather than self-control, suggesting that we identify our deepest desires and rearrange our lives to fulfill them. The gospel offers a different way, not parsing between our minds and bodies or between desires and discipline. Rather, the Bible shows that our thoughts, feelings and actions all flow out of our hearts' affections. Lack of self-control comes when we love some things (personal pleasure, recognition, control, power, etc.) more than other things (the common good or God himself). Self-control in the area of "X", then, does not come from repressing our love for "X" but in loving God more. It is what Saint Augustine called "the right ordering of our loves."

SCRIPTURE

20 MINUTES

Read the following Scripture together. Then respond through the questions below.

1 Corinthians 9:23-10:13 New International Version (NIV)

²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. ²⁷ No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

¹ For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ² They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³ They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁷ Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." ⁸ We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. ⁹ We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. ¹⁰ And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

¹¹ These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. ¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

- ▶ What does Paul say is the reason that athletes in training are so self-controlled? What does this tell us about how self-control works?
- ▶ How is this athletic image an analogy for Christian self-control? What is the prize or crown for Christians?
- ▶ What are some practical guidelines for self-control (from 1 Corinthians 10:11-13)? How do these influence your life beyond personal morals, such as your actions in the workplace or in relationships?
- ▶ Share one highlight from the past weeks' studies on the Fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control). Then pray that the Spirit would cultivate these attributes in each member of the group.

GOING FURTHER THIS WEEK

Use the [weekly devotion guide](#) to go deeper on the topic of gentleness.

FELLOWSHIP AND PRAYER

25 MINUTES

- ▶ Pray for each other to exhibit the fruit of self-control through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- ▶ Want to continue meditating on Scripture throughout the week? Join Virtual Noonday prayer: eastside.redeemer.com/prayer

► Pray for our actions of hope and reconciliation through Christ by using the prayer below.

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, hatreds cease, and divisions heal.

For you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you, especially...

[members of the group name particular people]

For the honor of your name. Amen.