

THE



“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

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FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT: TEMPERANCE (SELF-CONTROL: TWO KILLER POINTS TO KNOW)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Gal. 5:22-23)

The last fruit of the Spirit is temperance, or self-control. Let’s look at two killer points on this subject.

Remember, we are still in the grouping that is about how we relate to ourselves. While it might seem this is the same thing as patience, the fourth fruit of the Spirit, it cannot have the

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same meaning. Patience is about how we relate to other people; self-control, then, has to be about something else.

Defining self-control is the easy part; living it is the hard part. The word means holding one's self in, the virtue of one who masters desires and passions, and one who has discipline over his or her routines.

This word is found only three times in the New Testament. Of course one of those is in the list of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. It is also found in Acts 24:25 where it is included with righteousness and judgment. In this episode Paul is standing before Felix, and all we know of his sermon is three words: righteousness, self-control, and judgement to come. The implied meaning is that self-control is our response to righteousness. In 2 Peter 1:6, Peter says that self-control is added to knowledge, implying that what is learned is required to be put into practice.

Self-control, as it relates to the Scriptures, means that we have to be disciplined in our lives so that we bring ourselves in line with the word of God.

Of course, as we have already said, knowing the definition of self-control is the easy part. Living it is the hard part! Take note of these verses that affirm this:

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. (Pro. 16:32)

If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. (Jas. 1:26)

For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. (Jas. 3:7-10)

During our study of the fruit of the Spirit we have focused primarily on Galatians 5:22-23, which gives us our list of qualities. The very next verse says this: “*And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*” (Gal. 5:24).

Christians have undergone a fundamental change in their spiritual lives. This doesn't mean that there is no struggle going on (Gal. 5:17), but it does mean that we can approach the world differently. How? In baptism the body of sin is put to death (Rom. 6:3-6), and we are raised in newness of life (Rom. 6:7, 12-13). Temptation doesn't go away, but in a spiritual way we are freed from sin ruling over us (Rom. 6:14). We are free from the condemnation of sin (Rom. 8:1), and free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2). We have the promise of help to overcome the urges of the body (Rom. 8:11-14; Eph. 3:16) when we walk in the Spirit.

There are a lot of deep spiritual concepts in the above paragraph, and I don't want to minimize their significance. When it comes to habits, it is commonly known that changing a bad habit can be done by recognizing its triggers and then changing our routine. Habits follow this pattern: there is a stimulus or a trigger, then we go through a routine, and then we receive some reward. Here's an example: we feel nervous in a situation, then we notice our fingernails tingling, we bring our fingernails to our teeth, and when we are finished biting our nails we feel satisfied that our nails are clean. To change the habit of nail biting, we need to be able to recognize the trigger (anxiety), and deliberately ignore the tingling in our fingertips, but instead do something else like chew a piece of gum. The reward can still be felt when we know we have overcome the urge to bite off our fingernails.

SELF-CONTROL MAJOR POINT #1

How does this relate to spiritual self-control? Sin is habitual.

We have to realize that with baptism we are freed from sin (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 3:16). That doesn't mean that our habits are immediately rewired, though. But we don't have to

be the servant of sin any longer! And with God's help we can overcome! "*I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me*" (Php. 4:13).

With this faith (remember the seventh fruit of the Spirit?) we can remove sinful habits in our lives (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5, 8-9), and develop new habits, new routines, which reflect our belief in Jesus (Gal. 3:27). This is a daily process (Col. 3:10-14), and we should work at it (Php. 2:12), but always know that we are not alone (Php. 2:13).

SELF-CONTROL MAJOR POINT #2

The freedom to not serve sin is not something that we achieve through habit formation, but was given to us with our obedience to the gospel.

I have found there is a lot of wisdom in the many books available on habits and routines. Remember, these books don't give us freedom from sin, but they can help us learn more about habits. Here are three:

- *The Power of Habit* – Charles Duhigg
- *The Miracle Morning* – Hal Elrod
- *The Freedom Journal* – John Lee Dumas

As Christians we can't overestimate the importance of having self-control in our lives. Without it, we can't defeat temptations, we can't overcome the works of the flesh, we can't grow in Christ as we should, and we can't bear the fruits of the Spirit! Much like love at the first of the list of the fruits of the Spirit is key to all the rest, self-control at the end of this list is just as important in developing the others.

We have every reason to develop self-control to a very high level. We have been set free from the dominion of sin, we have the indwelling spirit that will help us grow, we have the assurance of forgiveness if we fail, and we know if we repent we have the promise of help from God. The key question is, "Do we want it?"

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Gal. 5:25)

CHAD PRINCE
(Oxford, AL)

SENIOR VERSION OF "JESUS LOVES ME"

VERSE: Jesus loves me this I know,
though my hair is white as snow.
Though my sight is growing dim,
Still he bids me trust in Him

CHORUS: Yes Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes Jesus loves me,
the Bible tells me so.

VERSE: Though my steps are oh, so slow,
with my hand in His I'll go.
On through life, let come what may,
He'll be there to lead the way.

REPEAT CHORUS

VERSE: When my work on earth is done,
And life's victories have been won.
He will take me home above,
Then I'll understand His love.

REPEAT CHORUS

VERSE: I love Jesus, does He know?
Have I ever told Him so?
Jesus loves to hear me say,
That I love Him every day.

REPEAT CHORUS

Submitted by
MIKE KIRBY

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Melchizedek was a high priest, but also king of where?
2. Which prophet told Jeroboam he would rule over ten tribes?
3. What miracle did Jesus perform just before healing Legion of his unclean spirit?
4. Where did Philip preach the good news about the Kingdom of God leading to many baptisms?
5. Paul thanks God that he did not baptize any of the Corinthians, except for which people?

...and remember last month's questions?

1. What is the name of Jesus' cousin, born six months before him? JOHN (Luke 1:36, 60)
2. Of what, specifically, was man not allowed to eat in the Garden of Eden? TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL (Gen. 2:17)
3. Why shouldn't we give anyone the title of "Father"? WE HAVE ONE FATHER, WHO IS IN HEAVEN (Mat. 23:9)
4. Which prophet anointed David as king? SAMUEL (1 Sam. 16:13)
5. What did Paul do to the soothsayer which made her masters unhappy? COMMANDED THE SPIRIT OF DIVINATION TO LEAVE HER (Acts 16:18-19)

TEMPLE OF GOD

When you are baptized for the remission of your sins, you are promised the gift of the Holy Spirit as stated in the words of Peter in Acts 2:38-39,

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

If you do not have the Spirit, you do not belong to Christ.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in

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you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Rom. 8:9-11)

Since you have the Spirit dwelling within you, your body is now the temple of God.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. (1 Cor. 3:16-17)

Since your body is the temple of God, you must not defile your body or God will destroy you! Your body is now holy – separated and dedicated to God. To defile is to corrupt, make impure or dirty, depraved, contaminated or perverted.

You could defile your body physically by what you eat, drink, or with drugs or other bad ways that you might physically treat your body. I strongly encourage you not to defile your body physically. But perhaps more importantly, you do not want to defile your body with sin such as sexual immorality.

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor. 6:18-20)

Your body and your spirit do not belong to you any longer. You have been purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ. Consider your body and your spirit to belong to God. You must use them as He desires, not as you desire. Therefore, you are to glorify God with your body and spirit. You are not to defile your body with sins such as sexual immorality.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
August 17 - 20	Oak Grove Eubank, KY	Hunter Bulger (Prattville, AL)

members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. (Rom. 6:12-13)

You are told that what you say can defile you.

Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. (Jas. 3:5-6)

Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. (Mat. 15:11)

Be careful that your tongue is used for good and not for evil. Evil uses of your tongue include lies, boasting, blasphemy, cursing, gossip, words to tear down another, foolish talking, course jesting, and so forth. Pay special attention to the words that come out of your mouth so that they don't defile you, the temple of God.

My encouragement to you is that you appreciate that your body is the temple of God. The Holy Spirit lives within you. You do not belong to yourself; you have been bought at a price. You must not defile the temple of God (your body). You can defile the temple with sins such as sexual immorality or evil use of your tongue. Use your body and spirit to glorify God!

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