



Come as you are, but don't stay that **WAY!**

Growth Group Discussion Questions

Lesson: DEVELOPING SELF-CONTROL

Key Bible Verses: Proverbs 16:32; I Peter 1:13-14; Titus 1:7-9; I Timothy 3:1-6;
I Peter 5:8; James 1:13-15; Galatians 5:22-23; Mark 11:23; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Spring Quarter - Lesson 10 - Week of June 6, 2021

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. What is your favorite way to relax?
2. Has not having self-control ever gotten you in trouble?

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps, like many people today, you feel that your life is out of control, and maybe it is. Maybe you feel overwhelmed by circumstances and different pressures from life. If so, then this study is for you. Many of our problems are caused by a lack of self-control. People often ask themselves questions like: Why can't I lose weight? Why can't I hold on to a job? Why can't I get more done? Why can't I break the bad habits in my life? Why can't I get out of debt? Why do I get so angry with people and just lose it? The answer to most of these questions is a lack of self-control. God and the Holy Spirit can help us to develop it.

DISCUSSION

Self-control is defined as control or restraint of oneself or one's actions, feelings, etc. Among the graces of the Spirit, which are the fruits of abiding in Christ, none is more important than self-control. Proverbs 16:32: *"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city."*

Temperance means full self-control. True temperance is control over not only food and drink, but over every phase of life. It means control over anger, carnal passions, appetites, desire for worldly pleasure, and selfishness. Before one can rule a city, a community, a club, a church, or a nation, he must first be able to rule his own spirit. Temperance is true self-love. He who respects himself, who considers his body to be a temple of the Holy Spirit, will exercise control over his own impulses. What area(s) of your life would you be honest to say that you lack self-control?

The Bible talks a lot about self-control. It is a characteristic God wants His children to have. Proverbs 16:32 (NLT): *"Better to be patient than powerful; better to have self-control than to conquer a city."* I Peter 1:13-14 (NLT): *"So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then."*

Read Titus 1:7-9 and I Timothy 3:1-6.

1. Was self-control a characteristic the apostle Paul said needed to be in the life of an overseer/elder?
2. Why do you think it is so important for an overseer/elder in the church to have self-control?

Self-control and self-discipline are key factors for success in overcoming your fleshly lust and the devil's temptations. Ephesians 4:27: "*nor give place to the devil.*" One of the ways we give the devil place in our lives is through our lack of self-control over this flesh of ours. That is why the Bible tells us to have self-control! I Peter 5:8 (NCV): "*Control yourselves and be careful! The devil, your enemy, goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to eat.*" Samson may have been the strongest man in the world, but he was enslaved by his lusts and desires because he lacked self-control. Strength without self-control got him into trouble. Read Proverbs 25:28. What point is the writer of this verse making about a man who is without self-control?

Seven Steps to Developing Self-Control:

People will try almost anything to gain self-control or to make up for the lack of it. Pills, therapy, seminars, resolutions, surgery, etc. - people try them all and still, many times, end up with no self-control. Now if quick and easy answers don't bring self-control, how do we develop it? God's Word is quite clear on this subject. Let me offer and suggest seven steps to developing self-control.

1. **Accept Responsibility.** Read James 1:13-15. These verses teach us that we do things because we like to! When a person does something he knows is bad for him, he does it because he wants to. It comes from an inner desire. That is why a person who lacks self-control is dominated by his flesh. Why do you think taking responsibility for our lack of self-control is so important in our process of developing self-control?
2. **Yield Yourself to the Holy Spirit.** The second step in developing self-control is yielding yourself to the Holy Spirit's work in your life. Read Galatians 5:22-23. What are some of the ways you think the Holy Spirit produces the characteristic of self-control in our lives? One of the main ways He does this is through circumstances when you feel your flesh rising up. It's at those moments (if you will acknowledge Him and ask Him for help) that He will give you the power you need to succeed in overcoming the flesh. Looking to Him leads to yielding to Him and receiving power from Him.
3. **Put Your Feelings in Check.** In this step, you need to challenge your feelings! We put far too much emphasis on our feelings today. If we don't feel up to something, we usually don't do it or even attempt to. I don't feel like working out. I don't feel like studying the bible. I don't feel like I can overcome this addiction. Do you let your moods/feelings manipulate you? Read II Peter 1:3.

4. **Believe You Can Change.** Now, if you are going to change and become more disciplined, you have to start believing you can change. You can change. You can be different. You can overcome your fleshly desires. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you! Your beliefs control your behavior. The person who says “I can’t do it” and the person who says “I can do it” are both right. We are victorious or defeated by what we believe in our hearts and speak with our mouths. Read Mark 11:23.
5. **Change the Way You Think.** What you have your mind set on matters! Read Romans 8:5-7(NIV). If your mind is constantly thinking about your sinful and fleshly desires, then you will continually be living a life controlled by your flesh. Read Romans 12:2. Have you struggled with self-control in the past? The way we think determines the way we feel and the way we act. Therefore, we must strive to keep our minds in line with the Word of God.
6. **Make Yourself Accountable.** If you are serious about self-control, find someone in the church to assist you in making yourself accountable. Having someone hold you accountable is tough, but it works. So many remain in bondage because they don’t open up to other believers about their struggles. Read Matthew 26:36-46. Jesus did three main things when He was going through the most stressful time in His life: (1) He confessed His struggle and feelings to those close to Him (verses 37-38); (2) He went to the Father in prayer (verses 39, 42, 44); and (3) He chose the Father’s will over His own (v. 39). Because He did these three things, He could get through the most trying time in His life. If we will follow His example, we too can get through any trial or temptation.
7. **Avoid Temptation.** Avoid things that tempt you and stay away from situations that weaken your self-control. If you do not want to be stung, stay away from the bees.

Prayer Focus: Ask God to help you develop more self-control in your area(s) of weakness.