

SELF-CONTROLLED

Proverbs 16.32: Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.

1 Timothy 3.2: So, a leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. **He must exercise self-control**, live wisely, and have a good reputation.

Titus 1.8: Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, **who is self-controlled**, upright, holy and disciplined.

The Greek word for self-controlled literally means “of sound mind.”

It describes a man who thinks rightly, makes sound judgments and whose actions are controlled by his right thinking and his principles, rather than being determined by his emotions and his _____.

Galatians 5.22-23: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and **self-control**.

If the Spirit of God is really at work in your life and you are truly growing in your relationship with God, you will more and more be characterized by several traits, including self-control.

Titus 2.6-7: Encourage the young men to be **self-controlled**. In everything set them an example by doing what is good.

Titus 2.2: Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, **self-controlled**, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

Becoming more self-controlled isn't automatic.

Growing older is not the same as growing ____ -- the former is inevitable; the latter is optional and happens only if we work at it.

Self-control – it doesn't come with age; it's not easier for men; and it's not _____ for those of us who want to please God and be worthy of respect.

TO BECOME MORE SELF-CONTROLLED

1. We Need to _____ We have a Problem.

Some of us slip up every now and then when it comes to anger, impatience, lust, etc. But others of us have a real problem.

One of the reasons we don't address the area in our life that's out of control is because giving into it makes us _____ -- it takes away our anxiety, makes us feel in control, allows us to feel superior, or gives us an excuse for failing.

The area that's out of control in our lives, when we give into it, it changes how we feel for the moment.

And we like that, even if it creates problems for us later.

Think about the area in our life where you have a problem.

Ask yourself:

(1) What am I receiving by allowing this part of my life be out of control?

(2) What's the psychological/emotional benefit to having this in my life?

You can be a good person who loves and trusts in Jesus, and still have a part of your life that's out of control.

You don't have to be _____ of that.

As a matter of fact, shame will just make it harder for you to get better.

But you do need to admit that you have a problem and that you need to address it.

2. _____ about It.

Get honest with God about what's going on within you.

The prayer begins with confessing this is a problem in my life and acknowledging that I am responsible for it (no matter how it became a part of my life) and for moving forward.

The gateway Jesus gave us to lives that are good and full and blessed is found in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5.3: Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of God.

Getting our lives right begins with admitting we can't get our lives right – not by ourselves, not in our own strength, not through our own wisdom.

Spiritual transformation begins when we acknowledge we are so _____ spiritually that we need God to be at work in our lives.

3. Work to _____ the Cause Behind Your Behavior.

When we have a problem with self-control, it means something else is controlling us.

A. It could be something in our _____.

What we experience when we are young put its imprint upon us, and it doesn't go away just because we are older or because we have forgotten what happened.

William Wordsworth: The child is the father of the man.

The hurts, the lies, the shame, the identities that were placed on us as boys created the man we are today and lead to all kinds of negative behaviors – parts of our lives that are out of control until we understand and deal with them.

If something in your past is causing some part of your life to be out of control, your solution is probably not your _____.

B. It could be something in our _____.

It could be a schedule that's overwhelming, a job where we feel disrespected, or a marriage where we feel unappreciated.

All that pressure can build up within us like the air expanding in a balloon until it explodes.

When that happens, if we're not careful, we lose control of our emotions and we give into negative, even sinful, behaviors.

C. It could be something in the _____.

When we're filled with anxiety, we'll do something to get rid of that feeling.

There's planning and there's prayer and there's talking to others and there's gutting it up and bearing the pain.

But often what we do is seek out something that will take away the fear with some _____ behavior that changes how we feel in the moment but does nothing to prepare us for the future or deepen our reliance on God.

Understanding why your life is out of control will not fix your problem, not by itself. But if you don't understand it, you're not likely to _____ it.

"You cannot give to God what you don't have."

Until you have your problem, it will have you.

And until you "have" your problem, you cannot give it to God.

4. Know Your _____ and Work to Prevent Them.

Ephesians 5.15: Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise.

If you struggle with self-control, to live wisely you must _____ what is likely to trigger your out-of-control behavior – and avoid those situations.

In the recovery movement, people are told to be careful when they are hungry, angry, lonely or tired.

The first letter of those four states spell the word _____.

Each of these conditions can serve as a trigger for out-of-control behavior.

So, take care not to get into those situations; and if you do, halt – stop and address the state you're in.

Knowing our particular triggers is called self-_____.

1 Samuel 30.6: David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.

2 Samuel 11.2-4: One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." Then David sent messengers to get her.

Know your triggers and as far as you can prevent them from coming into your life.

When you see them showing up, have the self-awareness to know you're in danger and protect yourself.

5. Humble yourself, get some _____ and do the work.

There are times when we are not going to get the help we need unless we go to someone, tell him what's going on, and do the work that's needed to overcome our problem.

We want God to be our problem-fixer.

But God wants to be our life-_____.

To change your life, usually you have to look at your life and your problems, understand why you do what you do and develop new ways of relating to people and handling your problems.

And that is almost always done best with other people who love you and will walk with you.