

Self Control

If you are a guest...I am really glad you are here... All of us are here for one purpose...to fill out connect cards...

Bearing Good Fruit Jesus basically said...my followers should be obviously different. If they are truly following me...you will see in them.. Amazing things that are supernatural. they will show you....ME My love...my joy...my peace... It will be deeper and greater than what you normally see. You will know it is from me. The will grow...Spiritual Fruit... Because when they trust me... I will give them my spirit...and it will grow... It will grow spiritual fruit

Galatians 5:22-24 (ESV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

We have said we want to learn to grow the juiciest fruit... We want people to look at us and know.... That we have been with Jesus. Today we are going to continue this series....by exploring Self Control

Introduction Story A frazzled mother entered a grocery store with a crying child. "Emma," she said, "you can do this. We just have to get a few things." Moments later, the child became more upset and the woman said calmly, "It's OK, Emma. Just a couple more items." When the child became hysterical in the checkout line the mom took a deep breath and said, "Emma, hold it together. We'll be in the car in a few minutes." In the parking lot a woman stopped her. "Excuse me, I couldn't help but notice you in the store and I just wanted to compliment you on how patient you are with little Emma. You have so much self control" The mother laughed. "Well thank you, but the truth is, I'm Emma."

Edmund Hillary the first man who conquered Mount Everest was asked by an interviewer about his passions for climbing mountains. He gave this replay "it is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves"

Peter the great of Russia is quoted as saying "I have been able to conquer an empire but I have not been able to conquer myself"

Solomon, a Jewish King, said in **Proverbs 25:28 (ESV) 28 A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.**

There has never been and never will be a great Life without self control.

But what is self control?

We tend to think of "Self Control" ...as Self Discipline Having more will power to resist. A conscious choice to be strong in the face of temptation A strong resolve...developed with training to resist. Someone who has mastered their desires and developed control of them We hear self control...we picture self discipline

We see self control and think "I need to be in control of myself" I need to be ready to master temptation Our attempts at self-control are like a big Wak A Mole Game (Photo) We approach temptation and try to wak it when it pops up This approach can be exhausting...and always fails.

Too many Christians are exhausted and disillusioned Because they are trying to master their temptations. Trying to obtain and maintain...Self Control

The World view of self control.... Is really self-discipline to overcome temptation

James 1:13-15 (ESV) 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Sin always follows this pattern.... Desire...temptation...choice...sin...death The World says...I will be self controlled...I will focus on the temptation So that when I am tempted..I have enough self discipline to resist

The World view of Self Control... Is usually motivated by wanting to beat down a desire It doesn't depend upon God it depends upon us. It is therefore limited to only what we can achieve on our own. Anyone can do it...with enough will power.

Unless...the desire is too strong.

In our own power...desires can become too strong for us to resist We have all proven that we are unable to control our desires. We all have our breaking point. That moment when the desire... overwhelms our ability to resist.

Think about the paradox....Self Control....Controlling Self....Controlling our flesh.....we CANT DO IT

But Biblical Self Control is a much deeper concept When you see self-control in the Bible....think of "Christ Controlled"

Godly Self Control is not someone who is in control of themselves... But rather someone who is surrendered and under the control of the Holy Spirit

Equestrian Photo The power, energy and efforts..working together... In perfect sync...and harmony...to achieve a goal. We are like the horse...broken and surrendered... Under the control and power of the Holy Spirit... Not being whipped to move...but connected together in purpose and soul Our desires beautifully surrendered and aligned with the One who leads us.

The Biblical Self Control is not about temptation.... It is about the desires that precede and lead to that temptation... It means you are a person of integrity and purity.... Not something you choose...someone you are. Someone you have become...transformed into. Being Christ Controlled is not just mastering your temptations... It is about allowing the Holy Spirit to transform your desires

Christ Controlled People... Don't just focus on the temptation...

Remember...Desire...Temptation...Choice...Sin... Being tempted is not a sin....Jesus was tempted

Hebrews 4:15 (ESV) 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Do you know why Jesus never sinned? We tend to think it was because He had some supernatural will power He was God so He had God sized will power to resist. That is not true...He was fully human. The reason Jesus never sinned was because His Desires were pure He desired what the Father wanted

His temptations were real....but his desires were stronger

Being Christ Controlled...Having the Spiritual Fruit of Self Control.... Means that we are allowing the Holy Spirit to transform our desires

We are learning to put God's desires ahead of our own... What we discover is that things that use to tempt us...no longer have an attraction... Because God has transformed our desires....He is slowly creating in us...His holiness

The more we give ourselves to him the more our desires become like His and the less we desire the things of the world that tempt us. In other words...the deeper our roots...the juicier our fruit.

People see in us...a self control...that is not of us...and not of this world. They see God in us.... And they are drawn to God...through us. Biblical Self Control is not something we do..but rather someone we have become....

Let's turn to the story of Cain and Able in Genesis 4 I think we can learn a great deal... From Cain's failure to be able to control himself.

Genesis 4:2-5 (ESV) 3 In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.

We often talk about giving God your very best The first fruit of whatever you produce. That God's portion is set aside from the beginning and not touched. That we give to God before we give to ourselves Note that Abel brought the firstborn...the first fruit....Cain brought AN offering Don't bring your leftovers to God and expect Him to bless it.

When Cain realized God was displeased...he got angry

4 Lessons about Self Control we can learn from this story

1. Stay Alert

Stay on watch for evidence that things might be getting out of control We need to aware of our areas of weakness. Each of us struggle in different areas... We all have desires...some stronger than others. What tempts me..may not tempt you...because you don't desire it. I see a beautiful Sign PHOTO 1 and I am longing for home PHOTO 2you may not be tempted that way.

We all have different areas of vulnerability The first lesson we must learn is to be alert. The minute we feel upset or downcast...we need to be on alert.

1 Peter 5:8 (NIV) 8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Let me challenge you....to do something this week. Set aside some time....and plan an assault...on you. Answer this question..."If you were Satan, how would you destroy you?"

No one fights a battle without knowing their areas of weakness without knowing where they are vulnerable to attack Every Christ follower must know...where they are weak...and where they are vulnerable to temptation

Then they must establish alerts or alarms in those areas. We must be alert... When we fall in our areas of weakness...it is rarely a surprise attack... Usually it is a series of small events...each building on the other...leading to sin There are multiple opportunities to turn back...if you are alert.

Genesis 4:6 (ESV) 6 The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?"

Translated...Why Cain are your pouting? Some people explode when they are angry...others pout and stew....they withdraw into a shell of anger Cain should have been more alert...more aware of what he was feeling... That leads us to our second lesson from this story

2. Search Your Heart

Many think they lose self control because.... They didn't try hard enough to do it right But that is not why

Our hearts are deceitful... Our attempts in the flesh to cover up that deceit will only last so long Eventually the truth will come out. That is why we need the Spirit of God God is trying to get Cain to search his heart "Cain why are you so angry?"

Cain examine yourself....look inwardly... Try to understand what you are feeling Imagine the discussion they could have had...if only Cain would have answered God

We make this mistake all the time... The Holy Spirit prompts us to examine ourselves.... But instead of learning what God wants to teach us. We get angry with God for questioning us... And we shut off the dialogue.

We love to challenge God with questions... Few do so...ready to respond to His answer. We must learn from Cain's mistake.. When God wants to teach you something.... It almost always involves searching your heart. And listening to what God has to say. Then surrendering to His truth...not yours.

If Cain was honest..."I am a selfish person who wants to be my own God. I care more about me than I do about you, God..... or my brother...or anyone else"

Had Cain taken his emotions to God to process them.... And learn from them He would have received the gift of God's self control... Abel would be alive...and Cain would have received God's blessing

Cain chose not to answer God's question.... But God tries to teach him anyway

Genesis 4:7 (ESV) 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

God is trying to get Cain's Attention This message has not changed in thousands of year.... Sin is still crouching at the door and God is still trying to get our attention We are in a constant battle with our sin nature.

1990's TV Show "When Animals Attack" Wild Animals...like a tiger....raised from a cub Treated like a house pet... Until they attack their owners.. The owners that survive usually say something like... Wow we are really shocked Killer has never acted like this before. What happened?

Killer is a tiger! Attacking and killing is part of his nature... He is doing what Tigers do

Do you know what our nature is? Our sin nature...our human nature...is an obstacle to our self control

Without the Holy Spirit you have no ability to have true self control that is why it is a supernatural fruit..it is not of you It goes against your human nature.

The only person that can battle sin effectively is the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit of the One who has Defeated Sin..You and I are helpless to experience true life change and true self control

Only those who trust Jesus and what He did for us... Receive the Holy Spirit...everyone else is dominated by their sin nature. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives that allows us to battle for self control

Galatians 5:17 (ESV) 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

If we have not surrendered to Jesus.... There is no spirit of God in us to oppose the desires of the flesh That is why we cannot expect and judge those who do not know Jesus.... To live as though they did. We are all fallen humans...in our natural state....born into sin... And naturally against the things of God. Jesus said it this way....

John 15:19 (ESV) 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Don't be surprised... Just Tigers being tigers... and fallen humans....being human. But God loves us long before we love Him He tries to warn Cain...before Cain does something stupid. that leads to our 3rd lesson from this story.

3. Obey God's Warnings

No matter how you look at it...it still comes back to your desire to obey God warned Cain that he is about to make a terrible mistake God sends people into our lives to warn us was well.... A friend that says...you seem to be drinking more... Do you have the money to gamble like that? You seem very close to your secretary.... You know he is married...right? You need to count to ..You need a TO baby...control yourself

But we immediately rationalize the warning... I don't drink much..we were just celebrating Its not hurting anybody... I always get even when I gamble...I will stop soon Its not hurting anybody We just enjoy working together...she is a great help to me. Its not hurting anybody I know his wife...we are all just close friends Its not hurting anybody I'm Italian....I always explode when I am mad... Its not hurting anybody.

We ignore the warnings.... Our decisions lead us into trouble... For many we decide to start praying now....God just get me out of this... Now we are ready to talk to God...not listen...talk

As disaster looms on our horizon we start playing Lets Make a Deal God. If you get me out of this...I will.....become a missionary..

Then we seem to dodge the bullet.... Man that was close... We get a second chance to turn back....

Second changes are Gods' megaphone that warning you that you lack self control He is trying to get your attention To get you to realize how much danger you are really in

It is a wakeup call.... God trying to get us to control ourselves.... Rather than face painful and perhaps devastating circumstances Look again at the specific warning God gave to Cain...

Genesis 4:7 (ESV) 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

Will you not be accepted? It means lifted up...exalted...praised... Sin is crouching...waiting to pounce. It has a desire for you....but we have a problem

That threat depends upon our view of sin... Some of us read this verse and see this...

Kitty Pounce Picture Others see sin as more of a threat.... **Mean Cat Picture** I think God has this in mind.... **Tiger Picture**

You and I have no chance against sin on our own. **Surrounded Picture** Our only chance to control the sin that wants to destroy us.... Is the power of God....the Holy Spirit. Like every spiritual fruit....the self control that rules over sin..... Is supernatural...it kicks in where we fail It is a self control that we do not possess It happens through us....as God manifests in our lives

So we underestimate the threat of Sin... If we see sin as a kitten.... We turn to ourselves and think.... "I need to control myself" But if we see sin as the Tiger that it is..... We know we are in trouble... This desire is too strong for me.... God I surrender.... "I need to be under your control"

Genesis 4:8 (ESV) 8 Cain spoke to Abel his brother. Lets go out into the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

Look at the pattern.... Trust Established....then begin deception Cain hid his desire...He lied about his intent. When we lose self control...we lie...we hide our motives... We hide the empty bottles...delete the Internet history....manipulate others who trust us Put the money in a separate account...hide the pills.. All evidence of our lack of self control

Cain....lacking self control...killed his brother. Then he goes on to discredit his relationship with his brother.

Genesis 4:9 (ESV) 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"

Note the two parts of Cain's response... A Lie "I do not know" Rejection of God's Authority "Am I my brother's keeper?"

God you are wrong... You don't have a right to ask me this You don't have that authority... His response is passive aggressive... Passive aggressive responses are always from.... An angry and rebellious heart.

"Am I my Brother's Keeper?" Some misinterpret this passage to indicate that we are to control each other Some use this passage to argue that we must dominate one another into submission But the original intent here is more likely "Am I to know his whereabouts?"

Not am I to control him but rather am I to keep up with him? That leads us to the fourth point.

4. Consider the Consequences

Cain didn't think about the consequences of what he did He thought everything was all about him

Genesis 4:10-12 (ESV) 10 And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. 11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."

God pronounces a curse on Cain for his behavior

We often don't think enough about the consequences of our actions We need to fast forward a bit and think about what could happen What will my life look like when this is discovered? How will it impact my family when this is revealed?

Think about the consequences of Cain's decision The line of Abel was wiped out forever Cain becomes a wanderer and fugitive Think about the grief he caused Adam and Eve A lack of self control can define you forever

But we are also to consider the positive consequences The things that happen when we make God honoring....self controlled decisions So many worries and anxieties can be avoided.

John Wooden....Legendary College Basketball Coach Photo 1 Devoted Christ Follower.... Died 11years ago at the age of 99 10 NCAA Championships in 12 years with 7 in a row Once won 88 games in a row. Coach of the year 6 times Photo 2 Well known for being very calm no matter what was happening. Nothing seemed to phase him... No matter how bad the refs called the game... No matter what his player did....He always manifested self control

He was once asked....how he managed to stay so calm...without emotion... He told the reporters... I have the same emotions that every coach has... I get just as angry...just as frustrated...in fact often furious

But rather than let those emotions...define and control me. I have learned to consider the consequences.. To think about what will happen if I lose control... The damage that could be done if I let my anger control me... Here is what I have learned...

When my emotions build...I reach into my pocket and feel a small silver cross that I carry there. I remember that cross...and basketball seems far less important. With my hand on that cross...I surrender to the power of the One who died on it. And He controls...what I...cannot. Jesus is the perfect model of self control

One of Jesus' most famous prayers.... Was a prayer of self control.

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.... Praying for God's will Praying to overcome the temptation of what Satan wanted him to do. Satan enticing him to take control and not do what the Father wanted. Jesus chose self control....He chose to allow the Father's will to supercede His.

There is a moment on that Friday morning... Jesus in front of Pontius Pilate He has been beaten mercilessly...the cross is hours away on the horizon Jesus in one of the most amazing moments of self control. He had all the power of heaven and earth available to Him He is in the most desperate moment any human has ever faced. Almost all have turned against Him...He is innocent but has been beaten beyond recognition He experiences every emotion to the extreme...rejection...anger...frustration...pain...suffering...

Every weapon is available to him...both physical and spiritual... And the one He chooses....is silence. Jesus in a critical moment chooses to not answer Pontius Pilate The prophet Isaiah said this would happen....

Isaiah 53:7 (ESV)

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

He could have said things that would have saved Him Pilate was looking for a reason to release Him. But Jesus had remained silent...until....

John 19:10 (ESV) 10 So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?"

And then in that moment Jesus decides to speak....

Beaten...wounded....bleeding...suffering Jesus.... Locks eyes with Pontius Pilate....and says....

John 19:11 (ESV) 11 Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above."

Translated....Understand clearly Pilate...you are not taking my life.... I AM GIVING MY LIFE And there is a huge difference..... Jesus Christ willingly chose to lay His life down He had enormous self control to follow the Father's will

He said and did exactly what He had to do to get to the cross... It was His defining moment...the purpose of why He came to us. The essence of sin is man substituting himself for God The essence of salvation is God substituting Himself for man

Jesus put Himself where you and I deserve to be.... So that one day we could be where we don't deserve to be Jesus created a way...where you and I could be with Him. And the cross is the bridge....of that journey It allows passage from our sin....to God's throne. You cannot get to God..... Without trusting what Jesus did on that cross.

Because we trust Jesus to be our bridge home.... He promised to give us His Holy Spirit. And God said we would know the Spirit by its fruit.

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control;

Let me ask you this... Are there any of these 9 that you do not want in your life? If God promised to pour out these 9 things in your life Would you be disappointed? If you could add to your Spiritual life....wouldn't this be what you want?

Imagine your life one year from now... What if God began working through you.... And you exploded in love....you had so much joy you couldn't stand it Your life is crazy but somehow you abound in peace. You use to get really frustrated with others....but you now have this weird patience. You replaced your selfish thoughts with kindness....goodness...

You use to have a fear of everything...tied up in anxiety....trying to control it all... And yet welling up inside of you.... Is an enormous sense of faith Your trust in God grows and as you do so... You become faithful in all areas of your life. Your once harsh exterior is replaced with gentleness toward others.

You have areas in your life that have always been out of control.... And yet somehow....you can now control impulses and urges with a power that is now from you. The more you surrender the more self control you receive.

Can you imagine what could happen..... In your relationships? Imagine how it would transform your marriage....your parenting...your friendships... Think about how your coworkers would change. Think about your outlook on the future.

Now imagine.... That this transformation is not just in you... But in every person in your church family... Imagine if Remnant began exploding in love....expressing joy....at great peace.... Abounding in patience...kindness...goodness...faithfulness...gentleness and self control

What if we not only were fruitful...but so full of the Spirit.... So ripe and plump and juicy That everyone could see these things pouring out of us. These things don't come from us..... They only come from God living through us. We become Juicy Fruit....

For the next few moments...I want you to come to the altar... And do whatever business you need to do with God... To make sure that you are positioned to not just imagine those things But to make them a reality Jesus said if you abide in me... You will produce...much fruit... It is a promise... Jesus can use this church to change the world... But we must let Him change us first. Let's pray.