

The Definition of Self-Control: to restrain one's thoughts, desires, emotions and will from sinful intent and involvement in order to bring them into alignment with God's will.

I. The Purpose of Self-Control

- A. Self-control is for the purpose of devotion to God's order for existence – God's people are to enter the spiritual gym to cultivate the muscle of self-control to protect and reinforce our respect, devotion and submission to God and His will.¹ (1 Timothy 4:7)
- B. Self-control is for the purpose of demonstrating the character of Jesus Christ – Spirit-enabled self-denial cultivates a life of restraint from evil in order to develop, maintain, and demonstrate Christ-like character.² (2 Peter 1:5-7)
- C. Self-control is for the purpose of delving into a proper regard for others above oneself – “It is this proper subordination under God and proper regard for others above self that is at the heart of ethical behavior. Self-control enables us to function in that ethical behavior that guides us to have a proper regard for others above self.”³ (2 Peter 1:5-7)
- D. Self-control is for the purpose of disciplining self in order to receive eternal rewards from Jesus in the future to come – “The believer can and will say no to any wrong desires when he has said a bigger yes to Christ's will for him.”⁴ (1 Corinthians 9:25)

II. The Picture of Self-Control

- A. “One who is self-controlled does not let himself become a slave to whim, uncontrolled passions, the deceitfulness of riches, carnal lusts, or other evils.....”⁵
- B. “One who is self-controlled puts himself under such control, that whatever good and profitable thing he must desire to do, that is the godly thing that he pursues by faith.”⁶

¹Jim Berg, *Essential Virtues: Marks of the Christ-centered Life* (Greenville, S.C: JourneyForth, 2008), 55-56.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.,65

⁴ Ibid., 60

⁵ Richard J. Smit, *The Fruit of the Spirit of Jesus Christ* (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2012), 140.

⁶ Ibid

- C. "Self-control is the believer's wall of defense against the sinful desires that wage war against his soul." ⁷
- D. "Self-control is not control by the natural self but the control of the natural self and often sinful self. Natural desires must be gratified only within scriptural boundaries, and sinful desires must be denied entirely." ⁸

III. The Pitfalls that Keep Us from Self-Control

- A. A central pitfall that keeps us from self-control is listening to the logic of our flesh above the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:16-17)
- B. A central pitfall that keeps us from self-control is living by the logic of our flesh on a regular basis above the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:19-21)
- C. A central pitfall that keeps us from self-control is lusting after the things of this world above valuing the love of God and love for God. (1 John 2:15-17)
- D. A central pitfall that keeps us from self-control is living by the wisdom of this world above living by the wisdom of God. (James 3:13-16)

IV. The Practice of Self-Control

- A. Surrender your devotion, your desires, and your direction of life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- B. Study the Word of God on a regular basis in order to learn and embrace the proper order and priority of things in all aspects of life according to God.
- C. Through the Holy Spirit's enablement, cultivate the discipline of detaching and detoxing from desires of the soul that are keeping you from aligning with the guidelines and guardrails of God's standards.
- D. Through the Holy Spirit's enablement, cultivate the discipline of adjusting your desires to align with the guidelines and guardrails of God's standards within the context of any situation and act or respond according to God's guidelines and guardrails.

⁷ Jerry Bridges, *The Fruitful Life: The Overflow of God's love Through You* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 153.

⁸ Jim Berg, *Essential Virtues: Marks of the Christ-centered Life* (Greenville, S.C: JourneyForth, 2008), pp.57.

Key point: Self-control is a valuable virtue operating behind the scenes to sustain a healthy, holy life. It is foundational for a life of freedom from the bondage of sin and flourishing in the newness of life granted to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Self-control is what allows a person to live a life that glorifies God and blesses others. Whenever you resist to control yourself, you place yourself under the control of that person, place, product or pleasure you have given in to.

(Insights gleaned from *Your Future Self Will Thank You: Secrets To Self-Control from the Bible and Brain Science* by Drew Dyck, pp. 17-18, 213.)