

How's YOUR SELF-CONTROL ? by Linda Ensley



Self control can be seen in many different forms. It's the hand that helps you resist the cookie or say "No" to the that second helping. It's the voice that says "No" to the sales item that you really don't need. It's the commitment you make to limit the time spent with the TV, computer, or your smartphone. It's that promise you make to yourself to try not to respond in a negative way to others. It's the vow you made to make prayer the first priority of your day.

Self-control is the act of restraining one's emotions, actions, and desires, and thus be in harmony with God's will. These are areas in which we try to resist the cravings of our flesh. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. It is a gift from God. It is a submission of our own will to the leading of the Holy Spirit. When we follow the Spirit's leading, we will live our lives in a way that is pleasing to God and in harmony with one another.

Each day we need to ask God to help us listen to the Holy Spirit and let Him lead us in our choices. **Titus 2:11-12** says *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age."*

As you repeatedly say "No" to the flesh and submit to the Spirit, the more the fruit of the Spirit will be evident in your life. But you don't have to fight this battle alone. We are told in **Zechariah 4:6** *"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD Almighty."*

Jesus is our best example of someone with self control. He was constantly led by the Spirit. In **Luke 22:42** we hear Jesus pray *"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."*

1 Peter 2:23 says, *"When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."*

Proverbs 25:28 gives us further insight: *"Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control."* There are four main walls that need to be kept in good repair in every Christian's life. We must master our moods, watch our words, monitor our reactions, and prioritize our schedules.

Master your moods. A moody, grumpy, anxious Christian will not draw others to Christ. Paul tells us in **Philippians 4:4** to *"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"*

Watch your words. We must always put our minds in gear before opening our mouths. If that seems difficult at times, call upon the Holy Spirit to give you words that are kind and fitting for the situation. **Proverbs 13:3** says *"He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin."*

Master your reactions. Do you often lose your temper? Are you easily offended? Your reactions are also something you can put in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Ask the Spirit to guide you in your responses. The more often you submit your reactions to the Holy Spirit, the easier it will become. Solomon tells us in **Proverbs 19:11**, *"A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense."*

Prioritize your schedule. Make God the first priority in your day. Invite Him into all the events, appointments and commitments on your calendar, but also let Him know you are open to any unseen interruptions He may bring your way. Watch for the opportunities He gives you to share your faith and the source of your joy with others. Paul's advice to us, in **Ephesians 5:15-16** is to *"Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."*



Do you lack self-control? Let us remember, the Holy Spirit is ready and waiting to guide you in all areas of your life. Make the choice today to follow His voice. When you are led by the Spirit, His fruit will mature you and you will soon find that self-control will come with little effort.