



Self-Control

Chapter 11 of *The Fruitful Life*, by Jerry
Bridges



Where We Are

Chapter 1: Taking on God's Character

Chapter 2: Devotion to God

Chapter 3: Humility

Chapter 4: Love

Chapter 5: Joy

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Chapter 8: Kindness and Goodness

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The Importance of Self-Control

If you do not have self-control, you will be destroyed by your sinful desires.

- Prov. 25:28, “A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.”

What is self-control?

- Bridges: “Self-control is the exercise of **inner strength** under the direction of **sound judgment** that enables us to do, think, and say the things that are pleasing to God.”

What messages do we hear from culture about
self-control?

Foundations of Self-Control

- Our self-control is founded upon our new identity in Christ
 - Rom. 6: 5-14, “Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.”
- We are motivated by the imperishable reward of eternal life with God.
 - 1 Cor. 9:24-27, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”
- We follow the example of Jesus.
 - Matt. 16:24, “Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

Foundations of Self-Control

2 Peter 1:5-7, “For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.”

- God’s power enables us to practice self-control.
 - 2 Pet. 1:3, “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness”
- Self-control keeps us from being ineffective Christians.
 - 2 Pet. 1:8, “For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- The fruit of self-control provides assurance of our salvation.
 - 2 Pet. 1:10-11, “Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Self-Control: the Body

Three vitals areas for us to exercise dominion over our bodies are:

- **Gluttony**
 - Proverbs 21:17, "Whoever loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich."
 - Prov. 23:20-21, "Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags."
- **Laziness**
 - Ecc. 10:18, "Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks."
 - Prov. 19:15, "Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger."
 - Eph. 5:15-21, "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."
- **Sexual immorality**
 - 1 Cor. 6:18-20, "Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God. You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

Self-Control: the Mind

- We are called to be sober-minded
 - 1 Peter 4:7, “The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.”
 - 1 Peter 5:8, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
 - 1 Peter 1:13, “Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
- We must direct our minds to the things of God
 - Col. 3:1-3, “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”
 - Rom. 8:6-7, “For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.”
 - Phil. 4:8, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Self-Control: the Emotions

Scripture speaks extensively of the importance of controlling one's temper.

- Prov. 14:29, "Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly."
- Prov. 15:18, "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention."
- Prov. 16:32, "Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."
- Prov. 19:11, "Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense."
- Prov. 29:22, "A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression."
- Eccl. 7:9, "Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools."
- Eph.4:26, "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil."
- Eph. 4:31, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice."
- James 1:19-20, "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God."
- Col. 3:8, "But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth."

What are the biggest sources of temptation
against self-control that we face as modern
American Christians?
