

DAY 1 - (week beginning Mon 5 Aug 2019)**Read – Gal 5:22**

'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.' v22

If there is any quality lacking in Christian lives today there may be no greater one than the spiritual fruit of self-control.

We as Christians are getting defeated in every area of our lives because we lack self-control.

Without this fruit of the spirit of self-control it is impossible to walk with God in any great degree or grow into full maturity as a Christian.

Without self-control there can be no great faith, no great love and no great spiritual fire for God.

Without this spiritual fruit, our lives will be a mess and we will never be a disciple in practical day to day living for the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are spinning our spiritual wheels without self-control.

It is the last fruit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 but it may be the most critical for all the other fruit to work effectively and to their maximum capacity.

The fruit of the spirit are not meant to be like a bowl of fruit where we pick the one we like the best. All the fruit work together to bring about a harmonious, godly life. We can't have patience, for example, unless we have love for others, kindness and peace within ourselves.

Prayer: Lord, make us more aware of our self-control in everything we do.

DAY 2**Read – Gal 5:16-17**

'So, I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.' vs16-17

The presence or absence of self-control is one of the most significant factors in whether we will do well or have serious problems in our Christian life.

It affects how we manage -

- our time; our money;
- our ability to overcome temptation;
- our development of godly character qualities;
- controlling our temper and our tongue;
- regulating our health (through proper diet, exercise, and rest);
- and, most importantly, whether or not we spend consistent time in the Word and prayer.

Will we walk by the flesh or by the spirit? This is a daily decision we must make and the spiritual fruit of self-control is critical for us to rise above the flesh, the world and the devil and walk in Christ rooted and built up in Him.

God builds a man and woman for His purposes when we exercise this supernatural fruit of self-control in our lives.

Prayer: Lord, help us to walk by the Spirit in everything we do.

DAY 3**Read – Titus 1:8**

"Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined." v8

The Biblical definition of "self-control" – flows out from within oneself, but not by oneself. It is the virtue of one who masters his/her desires and passions.

The English dictionary defines self-control as using control or restraint from our actions.

So, they are pretty similar, yet the difference comes in the fact that the English dictionary and the world define self-control as our ability to control or restrain ourselves. **It's all up to us.**

But Biblical self-control means this can only be accomplished by the **power of the Lord within us.**

That's a huge difference.

Because too many times we can't do it on our own.

We need the power and strength of the Lord to help us overcome our temptations.

In Galatians Paul is not telling us to be self-controlled, he is encouraging us to allow the Holy Spirit to make us more self-controlled. Big difference!

Prayer: Lord, give us the power and strength to overcome all worldly temptations.

DAY 4

Read – Gal 5:13

'You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.'
v13

So, how do we get self-control, so we can fight off those temptations which come in all shapes and sizes?

Firstly, understand that it's part of our will. Self-control is within us. We have it, but we make a choice. Sometimes we don't want to demonstrate self-control. When we don't, normally there are consequences to our actions or lack of actions. So, on the one hand, we have this power within us which comes from God, but God gives us the choice to basically say, YES or NO!

I can give in and take that drink, or take those drugs. I can say yes to pornography, to anger and resentment, I can say yes to sex. I can drink and drive. I can speed. These are all choices, which are pretty simple, but we're faced with these decisions on a daily basis.

But you may say, at my age, these are no longer temptations! I get you! But what about the anger, resentment, bitterness. How are you handling those? What about your quick wit which gets you in trouble? Is it your tongue or does your stomach get you in trouble?

We all have the choice as to how much of the Bible I'm going to read. Or how much I'm going to pray. Are you practicing spiritual disciplines? That's your choice. So, self-control hits all of us. Nobody is exempt.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for giving us the freedom through You.

DAY 5

Read – Gal 5:22

'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.' v22

So, where does self-control come in?
Everywhere.

It takes self-control to show true Godly **love** instead of infatuation, to love others not as the world loves, but as Christ loved us. (Ephesians 5:2).

It takes self-control to have Godly **joy** when we are facing a difficult situation in life. (1 Peter 1:8).

It takes self-control to get along with others and make **peace** instead of constantly getting into conflict. (Matthew 5:9).

It takes self-control to **patiently** bear with others rather than quickly condemning them. It's very hard to "be patient with all" (1 Thess 5:14).

It takes self-control to not automatically look out only for yourself but **kindly** look out for other people (Philippians 2:4).

It takes self-control to do **good**, to go through the narrow gate toward life rather than the evil, wide gate toward destruction (Matthew 7:13-14).

It takes self-control to be **faithful** and not have our faith shattered by the mocking of scoffers (2 Peter 3:3-4).

It takes self-control to be a **gentle** servant of the Lord (2 Timothy 2:24), showing compassion and mercy with real love as God does with us.

Prayer: Holy Spirit lead us, we pray.

DAY 6

Read - Luke 4:1-13

'Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil' v1-2.

Jesus Christ is the perfect example to follow for all of the fruit of the Spirit, it is fitting to use Him as the example of self-control.

We look to His experiences and actions as a human being and then try to model our lives after Him.

Jesus Christ's time as a human being defines self-control. In order to pay the penalty for our sins, Jesus had to live a sinless life. This required constant self-control with the help of God. Even in the face of blatant temptation by the devil, who offered Him the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, Jesus Christ remained in control (Luke 4:1-13).

Jesus Christ also needed amazing self-control to allow God's will to happen in the perfect way it had been planned.

For example, Christ had to refrain from calling for legions of angels to save Him from torture and death (Matt 26:53-54). Also, He had to refrain from disagreeing with God's Will (Matt 26:39), looking to the spiritual rather than just the physical.

As with all the fruit of the Spirit, Jesus Christ is the only perfect example to follow in demonstrating self-control. Without His self-control, we would all still be under the death penalty for our sins.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for being our true example.