

Day 4

Self Control

Silence (2 minutes) Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

Scripture *“Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.”* Titus 1:7-8

Discussion Paul writes to Titus, *“The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you”* (Tit. 1:5). Paul then writes the above description of the character expected for overseers, though these are certainly qualities all Christians need to aspire to. Among the list is self-control. *“Come, my children, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it”* (Ps. 34:11-14). The fear of the Lord is to acknowledge and honor God’s holiness by staying away from sin. It is submission to God as God. Staying away from our temptations and sin requires self-control. Exercising self-control is easy when things are going well, when there is calm. But, when we are tired, experience intense negative feelings (anger, frustration, sadness, fear and worry, guilt, shame), are in conflict with others, looking for a way to cope, and when we see unethical short-cuts; then self-control is hard. The Lord sees and hears when we exercise self-control and when we don’t. He is always present. *“Does He who implanted the ear not hear? Does He who formed the eye not see?”* (Ps. 94:9). Maturing in self-control is a long-term project, like training to run a marathon. So, the sooner we commit ourselves to it, in all its complexity, the better. And it shouldn’t surprise us, but self-control is not only what God wants, but in His love and wisdom, it is good for us.

Application Self-control is the marker of a mature faith. All Christians should seek this Fruit of the Spirit, but truly exhibiting self-control and being known for it takes time. This should remind us that self-control will mature as our faith in God grows and as we mature in our walk, it is not merely a matter of trying harder. As you seek to grow in self-control this week, take time to ask God for the strength and perseverance to run the race put before you and experience His growth in His time.

Prayer Father, I praise You that You are holy, wise and loving. You know that self-control, the fear of the Lord, honors You and is good for me. Thank You that You created me to be in relationship with You, to belong to You. *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent”* (Jn. 17:3). Father, please teach me self-control. Please show me the areas of my life in which I need more self-control. Thank You for Your mercy when I fall short. Please give me strength and perseverance. Please continue to change me to be more like You. I commit myself to follow You. Amen.

Silence (2 minutes) Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

Scripture memory for the week: *“Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.”* Titus 1:7-8

