

Day 9

# 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** *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you.”* James 4:7

**Discussion** James directs us to submit to God and resist the devil. What does that look like? It is developing our relationship with the real, live, personal, and loving God, not a list of rules, though our relationship with God should shape our behavior. We come near to and submit to God by both habitually and spontaneously talking to Him. We praise Him for His characteristics, thank Him for what He has done, confess our sin, forgive those who have sinned against us, commit ourselves to follow and obey Him in whatever He wants, ask that what He wants in the world be accomplished, pour out our desires, fears, and struggles to Him, and ask that he protect us from the evil one. Just as a healthy human relationship requires frequent conversation, so too having a healthy relationship with God requires that we talk with Him regularly. We also need to continually be in the Bible itself (not only books about the Bible); learning about God’s actions and character. In particular we need to know about who Jesus is, what He did, what He told us to do, and His relationships with people. We need to be in the Bible deeply, by studying short passages, reading whole books of the Bible, memorizing verses that are important for us, and pondering stories or teaching. Also, the Holy Spirit is talking to us and we need to practice listening for what He tells us. And, we need to be serious by obeying Him. To do all these things is part of resisting the devil. Drawing near to God and submitting to Him is a lot of resisting the devil. However, there is more. To resist the devil requires that we pay attention to what temptations we have and sins we commit; particularly those we have repeatedly. We need to confess our sins to God, but we also need to learn what are the areas of our lives in which we are repeatedly weak and vulnerable. Then we need to regularly talk with God about them and take action to protect or strengthen these weak areas. We need to grow into talking to God about our temptations while we are having them, before we sin. If that temptation somehow involves another person, such as resentment, we need to pray for that person, praying as Jesus would pray for them. Lastly, worshiping with brothers and sisters in Christ and talking with them about our experiences in prayer, the Bible, and following the Holy Spirit strengthens our faith and blesses us with rich fellowship.

**Application** At the end of the day, tell God all the ways you saw how He exercised self-control and thank Him for it.

**Prayer** Holy Spirit, thank You that You love me, You remind me of Jesus’ words, and You have kindly made me more like Jesus. I know there is so much more that needs to change in my life; to be more like Jesus. Thank You that You will continue to work in me. I commit myself to follow You, Jesus, though I know I will make mistakes. I will sin and need Your forgiveness, but I know You love me and will forgive me. Thank You that You love me and that I belong to You. I praise You that You are God and You are good. 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

