

Day 6

# 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** *“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.”* 2 Timothy 3:1-5

**Discussion** Paul is giving Timothy instructions about his leadership in the church at Ephesus. The above Scripture is part of Paul’s warning of people’s behavior. The list of behaviors includes “without self-control” and everything else can be an example of behaviors that need self-control: It is good to love ourselves, but knowing and loving God and our neighbor is to be our primary love. Recognizing our strengths is good, but our lives are to be a demonstration of honoring and submitting to God above all. We are not the center, the most important, and what we accomplish is by God’s power and kindness. Money is important to provide for the needs and enjoyment of our families and ourselves. It also provides opportunities for us to be generous like God is, to support the Church and demonstrate the mercy and love of Jesus by assisting those in need. But again, our seeking and appreciation of money need to be shaped and limited by our love of God and our neighbor. Parents make many mistakes, but children are to obey their parents. We are all to honor our father and mother. There are circumstances and people who irritate us and as followers of Jesus we are to be patient, forgiving, and speak the truth in love. We are to grow in the fruit of the Spirit and live them out in relationships. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit”* (Gal. 6:22-25). When we do need to speak criticism, we exercise self-control by not attempting to make others feel as miserable as we possibly can, though at times that is our desire. We resist telling half-truths and misrepresenting others. We may discuss our opinions, but we exercise self-control, not complaining to someone we know shares our opinion in the hope it will stir them up, so we can experience a camaraderie and celebration based on complaining and bitterness. Instead, we are to be lovers of what is good. All good gifts come from above and we are to be grateful to God for them. God is holy, loving, and forgiving. We are called to become like Him.

**Application** Consider that a lack of self-control is one marker of those who do not love God. The love of God means that we will ultimately desire to exhibit self-control as a way of obeying God and living a life worthy of our calling. This kind of life-changing relationship with God is the power of God in our lives and how we can show the world that we are different, set apart, and full of the Holy Spirit. Consider: is your self-control evident to those around you? In your everyday life, are you marked by your ability to control your desires and obey God’s will instead of your own? Ask God to show you this week just how you make self-control a greater part of your faith.



**Prayer** Lord Jesus, Your goodness, holiness, love and self-control are beyond my understanding or even my imagination. There are so many areas of my life that need to change. The longer I know You, the more of them I see. Thank You that You know everything about me, far more than I know about myself, and yet You love me as I am now. Thank You for Paul's words to the Philippians, *"Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus"* (Php. 3:13-14). And thank You for his words to Timothy, *"...train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come"* (1 Tim. 4:7-8). You are a good, good God and I commit myself to train myself in godliness, knowing I will often have to ask Your forgiveness. I praise You Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that You are God. You do love and forgive me. Thank You for the comfort that I belong to 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

