

## Self Control

The last **“fruit of the Spirit”** is most certainly the one that helps us overcome all of the temptations that we face in this life. Self control – the ability to command mastery over the natural human reactions to temptation – will cause us to do what God says we must do.

Just before Paul tells us of the fruit that the Spirit of God gives those of us who are His, he lists what he calls the **“works of the flesh.”** He says this in **Galatians 5:19-21**:

**“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”**

In each and every situation listed, being able to control the situation and not react in a fleshly, sinful way will certainly defeat Satan and his attempt to control you. Peter, in **2 Peter 1**, gives a list of his own of God's attributes that will lead to control over Satan's schemes. He had told them several times in 1 Peter to be **“sober minded and alert”** because he knew of their inclination to sin. One of these warnings comes in **1 Peter 5:8-9**, where he says:

**“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith...”**

Just how do we resist? What of God's characteristics do we use? **2 Peter 1:5-7**:

**“...make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.”**

Many of these are similar (if not exactly the same) as the **“fruit of the Spirit”** that we have been examining the last several weeks. I believe there is a reason for placing **“self-control”** between **“knowledge”** and **“perseverance.”** To learn to be self controlled, one must gain a knowledge of God's expectations. He wants us to resist, and He gives us all we need to do that. That is the very reason Paul says the **“armor of God”** (**Ephesians 6:10-18**) gives us the ability **“to stand against the devil's schemes.”** Getting back to **2 Peter 1**, learning self control will help us to endure, to persevere. Perseverance, patiently enduring until we see Christ again, will assure us of our reward.

No matter how hard it is to obtain, obtaining self control will help us resist sexual sin, anger, violence, vain-glory, and a willing of oneself over to the devil that will result in an eternal life without God. Paul told Timothy and Titus of the need to teach self control to everyone they had influence over. (**1 Timothy 3:2, 2 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:8, 2:2, and 2:5**) Young men, older men, women – all need to learn self control. All of us must learn it, also.

Let me close with the words of Solomon in **Proverbs 25:28**. The words are descriptive and teach a lesson we all can understand.

**“Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self control.”**

--Johnny Stephens

