

Fruit of the Spirit — Part 7

Steve Berger September 17, 2017

What the Holy Spirit wants to produce

- **Galatians 5:22-23**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

- **Self-control** — self-rule over all evil propensities of the flesh, dominion over sinful desires, power over evil passions of all kinds. All kinds — you name it!

**There is no temptation, impulse or sin
that Holy Spirit empowered self-control cannot tame!
If we say there is, we are saying there is sin stronger than God.**

How can we have self control?

- **John 15:4-5**

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

I am absolutely convinced that Adam and Eve did not have full understanding of what their disobedience would bring to themselves and all of mankind.

- spiritual death and separation from God while continuing to live in a fallen world and a sinful body... what indescribable pain, suffering and struggle was created
- **Ephesians 2:1-3**
... we were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Application — *dead men walking under the influence and sway of the enemy, in sin, worldliness, disobedience, lusts of flesh, desires of flesh and mind... by nature children of wrath*

No wonder Paul says in Romans 7:18, 20 that in our flesh no good thing dwells, it's all sin.

But thanks be to God, He didn't abandon humanity!

- **Ephesians 2:4-6**

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...

**God loved us, enlivened us, raised us, sat us in heavenly places in Christ!
Due to spiritual life being restored and sitting us in place of power,
we no longer need to live in habitual, destructive, flesh patterns —
there's a choice, an option, victorious self-control
over our fleshly impulses, desires and temptations.**

“The very concept of self-control implies a battle between a divided self. It implies that our self produces desires we should not satisfy, but instead control...self-control is saying no to sinful desires, even when it hurts.”¹
John Piper, The Fierce Fruit of Self-Control

Some New Testament passages

- **2 Peter 1:3-9**

as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

***Application** — knowing God's power has given us all things, knowing His promises, partaking of divine nature, having escaped lustful corruption of world, being diligent to make sure self-control is an important part of your life... won't be barren or unfruitful!*

**Self-control is a fruit that produces more fruit in your life!
Spurgeon says, “It is a preventative, preservative, and a cure.”²**

However — if we lack the things we've just listed, including self-control — we've become shortsighted, almost blind, forgetting we've been cleansed from past sins and “cluelessly” living without self-control in our present.

Self-control needs to be worked into ALL areas of our life —

- **1 Thessalonians 4:1-8**

Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

¹ <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-fierce-fruit-of-self-control>

² Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Salt Cellars* (Delmarva Publications, Inc. 2015)

Our sexual appetites need to be governed by self-control, holiness and honor, not taking advantage of people, using people for sexual satisfaction — hetero and homosexual both, none gets a pass because it's an impulse — control it in Christ!

Fear a decrease, even absence of self-control in many religious people's lives —

- **2 Timothy 3:1-5**

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

**A lack of self-control among the religious has contributed to the peril in society.
As the church goes, so goes the world.**

Paul summarizes faith in Christ —

...but must look at necessary backstory intro first

- **Paul** is brought before Governor Felix in Caesarea by angry Jewish leadership
- **Felix** is a freed slave who swindled his way up the Roman hierarchy, appointed Governor by Emperor Claudius, brother of Pallas, another freedman who served in the courts of the Emperor, husband of three royal ladies. First, Drusilla, niece of Anthony and Cleopatra. Second, Drusilla, our story, daughter of King Herod Agrippa, but, she was already married to Azazus King of Emesa region of Syria. Felix hired a wizard to put a spell on her so she would fall in love with him and leave her husband — she did! **Felix indulged in all manner of lust and cruelty. He crushed Jewish zealots and crucified hundreds. Felix exercised uncontrolled regal power with the disposition of a slave.**
- **Paul** is brought before Felix and Drusilla for causing trouble... but is given a little grace...
- **Acts 24:23-25**
So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him. And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."
- **Paul** summarizes faith in Christ with three points
 - **righteousness** — how to be right/live right, to very unrighteous man, **HOW?**
 - **self-control** — Spirit empowered ability to rule self and conquer sinful behavior. **Why does self-control and righteousness even matter?**

- **there's judgment to come** — we'll stand before God to give an account of life!
- **Felix was afraid, trembled, literally... Righteousness, Self-control, Judgment too much...**
 - **“Go away for now”** — how often do we silence the voices of Righteousness, Self-control, Judgment — because they confront our out-of-control lifestyle? **DON'T DO THAT!**
 - **“I'll call you when convenient”** — There is never a convenient time for self-control — it always comes with a battle from our flesh!

• **FACTS**

- there's a battle going on for control of your life — flesh or Spirit?
- Spirit will give you self-control to conquer flesh, to live a holy life!
- either bow the knee to Jesus, or turn your back on Him like Felix did.
- judgment, eternity awaits your decision
- **Sinners** — you can live a transformed, holy, life.
Forget the poor example of many so-called Christians.
Cry out to Jesus and watch Him give you salvation, self-control and victory!
DO IT NOW!
- **Saints**- if you need self-control in a battle you're in now — cry out for it.
Start abiding in Jesus and watch the Holy Spirit download self-control in your life!
- **All — Proverbs 25:28**
Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.
 - that which we wish to preserve gets plundered
 - that which we wish to avoid gets access
 - self-control builds walls of preservation and protection!

Discussion Questions

1. Why do we think that our personal past abuse or wounding gives us permission for sinful behavior?
 2. What battle have you, or do you fight in your flesh, where you need Fruit of the Spirit self-control?
 3. In 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, God is very specific that it is His will that we abstain from sexual immorality. How does this affect how you talk to your children, other family members, friends?
 4. Charles Spurgeon calls self-control a fruit that is a “preventative, preservative, and a cure.” What does he mean?
 5. Do you know anyone who has been turned off of church because of the immorality they have seen in Christians? What can you say to them?
 6. Felix told Paul to come back when he had a “convenient time.” Are you waiting for a “convenient time” to start self-control in *any* particular area of your life? (*It does not have to be sexual or alcohol ... it could be temper, or greed, or selfish ambition...*)
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