

# **THE NEED FOR SELF-CONTROL**

**1Cor.9:24-27**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Self-control is defined as “The act, power, or habit of having one’s faculties or energies under control of the will.” (The Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary)
2. In nearly every situation, if not every situation, that will arise in a person’s life, self-control will be a key element to how that person handles the situation.
  - a. When facing a work project, self-control is essential to getting the job done right.
  - b. When facing disappointments or emotional turmoil, self-control is essential to not acting hastily, not doing something you will later regret.
  - c. When facing school work and tests, self-control will allow the student to finish studying and making preparations.
3. Self-control is highly essential in living a godly life. It is the purpose of this lesson to examine the subject of self-control and Christianity emphasizing some of the truths concerning it taught in the N.T.

## **II. DISCUSSION**

### **A. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE ESSENTIALITY OF SELF-CONTROL?**

1. Self-control is linked with righteousness and the judgment, Ac.24:24-27.
  - a. In order for a person to strive for righteousness, he must set out to live a righteous life. Living a righteous life requires self-control.
  - b. In order for a person to continue living a righteous life, he must exercise self-control.
  - c. If a person is living righteously, he will be prepared for the judgment.
2. Self-control is essential in obtaining an imperishable crown, 1Cor.9:24-27.

- a. V.25 reads, “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things...”
  - (1) The word “temperate” is translated from the Gr. Word *egkrateuomai* {eng-krat-yoo’-om-ahee} which means, “1) to be self-controlled, continent 1a) to exhibit self-government, conduct, one’s self temperately...” (Thayer)
- b. Paul wanted to go to heaven. In order to accomplish this, he knew it was necessary that he control himself in a way that would direct him in serving the Lord faithfully.
- c. In V.27, he wrote, “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
  - (1) Other translations use the word “buffet” for “keep under” and “disqualified” for “castaway”.
  - (2) The phrase “I keep under” is translated from the Gr. Word *hupopiazō* {hoop-o-pee-ad’-zō} which means “1) to beat black and blue, to smite so as to cause bruises and livid spots 1a) like a boxer one buffets his body, handle it roughly, discipline by hardships...” (Thayer).
  - (3) The phrase “bring into subjection” is translated from the Gr. Word *doulagōgeō* {doo-lag-ogue-eh’-ō} which means, “1) to lead away into slavery, claim as one’s slave 2) to make a slave of and to treat as a slave, i.e., with severity, subject to stern and rigid discipline.” (Thayer)
  - (4) Paul worked diligently to keep his own body under the right control.
    - (a) Knowing that Satan tempts us through fleshly means, it becomes imperative that we maintain the proper control over our fleshly desires, which we can do. Cf. 1Cor.10:12,13; Jas.4:7,8; 1Pet.5:7-9.
    - (b) Paul controlled his body; his body did not control him. So it must be with us!
- d. Paul said he did this, “...lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
  - (1) The Gr. word translated “castaway” is *adokimos* {ad-ok’-ee-mos} and means, “not standing the test, not approved; that which does not prove itself such as it ought; unfit for, unproved, reprobate,” Thayer.

- (2) Paul knew that if he taught the truth but did not live the truth, then he would not only be a hypocrite but would be lost eternally.
3. Self-control is a part of the fruit of the Spirit, Gal.5:22-26.

**B. THE NECESSITY OF SELF-CONTROL IS TAUGHT BY BOTH O.T. AND N.T. EXAMPLE.**

1. Before we address some areas wherein we are to be exercising self-control, let us first look at some Bible examples, both good and bad showing the need for self-control.
  - a. David did not exercise self-control when he was Bathsheba and suffered the consequences for his sin, 2Sam.11:2-4.
  - b. Another example of people who did not exercise self-control where the Gentiles of the O.T. period who also suffered the consequences of their actions, Rom.1:18-32.
  - c. On the other hand, Joseph, unlike David, did exercise self-control when tempted by his master's wife and is held before us as a good example to this day, Gen.39:7-12.
  - d. The apostle Paul is still another good example of one who was successful in exercising self-control and one who taught that we also can do it, 1Cor.9:27; Cf. 1Cor.10:13; 15:34.
2. Therefore, we, too, can and must, as followers of Jesus Christ, exercise self-control in every area of our lives.
  - a. We must keep everything in proper perspective by exercising self-control in thought, word and deed.
  - b. We must maintain control over what we eat and drink, the pleasures in which we engage, our behavior at work, etc.
  - c. There are some areas where total abstinence must be practiced; such as: lying, stealing, sexual immorality, etc.
  - d. We must control our temper or our anger or our emotions.
    - (1) "He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly," Prov.14:29 {NKJV}
    - (2) "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city," Prov.16:32 {NKJV}
    - (3) Paul wrote in Eph.4:26: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

### **C. FINALLY, SOME BRIEF SCRIPTURE STATEMENTS EMPHASIZING THE NEED FOR SELF-CONTROL.**

1. Through self-control, we will receive an incorruptible crown, 1Cor.9:25; Cf. 2Tim.4:6-8; Jas.1:12
2. Through self-control, we will not be a castaway, 1Cor.9:27.
3. Through self-control, we will bear the proper type of fruit, the fruit of the Spirit, Gal.5:16-25.
4. Through self-control, we will receive an entrance into heaven, 2Pet.1:5-11,
5. "Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls," Prov.25:28, NKJV.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

1. Do you have enough self-control, or are you willing to exercise enough self-control, to live a life that will lead you to become a Christian, live as a Christian, and seek that hope of eternal life in heaven?
2. If you are not now a Christian, we urge you, plead with you, to exercise self-control, obey the gospel and become a Christian this very hour!
3. If you are a Christian, then we exhort you in all earnestness to continue to exercise the necessary self-control to keep yourself on the strait and narrow way leading to eternal life.
4. There are many other areas where self-control is a vital element. Let us not forget about the part that self-control plays in our profession of faith and our practice of Christianity as a disciple of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.