

GET OUT OF BEING OUT OF CONTROL

Proverbs

OBJECTIVES

- To examine self control and explain why it's so important to Christians.
- To discuss how we can develop self-control.

OVERVIEW

I hated it when my parents would question my stupid acts of disobedience with the big question, "WHY?" I never had great answers to explain my stupidity. I tried all different types of angles, but I usually tried to get out of the conversation by saying, "I couldn't help it." I couldn't help it that I threw the toy truck at my little sister's head.

This made no sense, since I really could have helped it; I just chose not to care. These words ("I couldn't help it") usually meant I was throwing in the towel and giving up any chance of making a verbal defense of my action. For some reason, "I couldn't help it" got my parents to leave me alone. I can't imagine that they actually believed me. I'm sure they thought, "We've got him now. He's resorting to the lame, 'I-couldn't-help-it excuse.'"

Imagine if we allowed that excuse to become a valid one throughout our world. What if the President said, "I didn't want to press the button to set off the nuclear attack. I couldn't help it." Or what if your principal said, "I realize there is no legitimate reason for all Christian students to be given extra homework, but since I thought of it, I immediately put it into action. I couldn't help myself." We would never allow such things to happen without a lot of complaining and noise over the injustice. The controversy would come over the fact that the President and your principal could have exercised self-control. We can help it. We can employ self-control.

The Bible reveals that one fruit of the Spirit is self-control. This is where we learn to put away our own desires and do what's right. This means we have control over our thought lives. Control over our language. Control over the expression of our sexuality. And control in every other area that is difficult to control. As Christians we have everything we need to live good lives that display control over choices.

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness (2 Peter 1:3 NIV).

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OUTLINE

This teaching outline provides four biblical ways in which the believer can get control of his life.

How to Seek Wisdom

1. Get in Control.

These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel. The purpose of these proverbs is to teach people wisdom and discipline, and to help them understand wise sayings. Through these proverbs, people will receive instruction in discipline . . . Fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. Only fools despise wisdom and discipline (Proverbs 1:1-3, 7 NLT).

The Proverbs are filled with wisdom. They aren't pithy sayings, but deep spiritual insights. Study the book of Proverbs and you will be drawn to focus on God's character and how you can live in a growing relationship with Him. God's wisdom is available. Seek it and you can live in a growing relationship with Him. **God's wisdom is available!** Seek it and you will discover your first step in self-control.

2. Through God's grace.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age . . . (Titus 2:11-12 NIV).

God's grace is His favor that we don't deserve. Because of God's grace we are saved and rescued from sin. Our proper response to this gift should be right living. God gives us the power and understanding to live according to His will. It's with that power and understanding that we can experience self-control in our everyday lives.

3. Through the Holy Spirit.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7 NLT).

Self-control is available to us because the Holy Spirit lives in us. By following the Holy Spirit, we will grow to express the fruit of self-control and overcome the fear that makes us insecure.

4. By clothing ourselves in Jesus.

Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature (Romans 13:14 NIV).

How do we clothe ourselves in Jesus? By taking on the qualities that Jesus displayed while He was on earth. We need to think through how Jesus might respond in a given situation. We must refuse to give in to the desires that would lead to sin. By expressing our new identity in Christ, we discover a natural formula for self-control: Christlikeness.

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

Open

- During this sharing time make sure you give a clear definition of self-control. Self-control is having POWER over yourself. If you have self-control you have the power to make choices. You can choose not to do something that might seem natural. Or you can choose to do something strange and unnatural.
- What's a specific area of your life that you find difficult to control?
- Give an example of how the lack of self-control has led to problems.
- Has your self-control improved in this area of your life?

Dig In

1. Transition into your study by discussing the need to grow in self-control.

2. Read and discuss the following verses:

Proverbs 25:28

- What is the result of not controlling oneself?
- How does the lack of self-control leave you defenseless?
- Why is self-control important for someone who wants to grow as a Christian? (See Genesis 4:7.)

2 Timothy 3:1-3

- Why are these things going to happen during the last days?
- What do these actions have to do with self-control?
- How do you think a person with self-control will act during these last days? (See 1 Peter 4:7.)

CLOSE

1. Share James 5:16: *Confess your sins to one another and pray for each other so that you might be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results (NLT).*

2. How can confession, prayer, and accountability help those of us who struggle with self-control in different areas of our lives?

3. What specific actions can you take this week to help you develop self-control?