



“I shall always be ready to remind you of these things...”
2 Peter 1:21



CABOT WESTSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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When We Meet

Sunday

Bible Classes – 9:00 am
Worship – 10:00 am, 5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes – 7:00 pm

Our Elders

R.D. Hopper
Norman Kemper

Our Deacons

Troy Hunter
Kelly Kendall
Tony Ramick

Our Preacher

Alex Hale

Self-Control by Alex Hale

What do the following people have in common?

- The alcoholic headed to the liquor store
- The student flunking out of college because she never studies
- The person who is always late for appointments
- The compulsive eater
- The smoker
- The man who frequently looks at pornography on the Internet
- The drug addict
- The Christian who never grows because he does not study and pray

The answer is that **they all lack self-control**. Proverbs 25:28 reads, *“Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.”*

Paul lists self-control as a characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit, standing in opposition to the works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-23). Self-control is listed as a qualification for church elders (Ti 2:8). Peter includes it in his list of Christian qualities which must be developed (2 Pet 1:6). The biblical term carries with it the idea of mastery. The Jewish writer Philo described self-control as “having superiority over every desire.” One author wrote, “By definition, self-control means overruling your emotions because of a higher goal.”

Self-control originates from within. Scripture teaches that spiritual problems begin with inward thoughts and attitudes (Prov 4:23; Mk 7:21-23; Jas 1:14-15). We have to be able to control our heart, dealing with temptation before it goes any further.

Self-control comes with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will help us build the ability to control our lives in line with God’s purpose for us (Gal 5:16). The Spirit’s power gives us power (Col 1:29).

Self-control is not denial, but discipline. Some people have the idea that being a Christian is about making yourself miserable and denying yourself certain comforts. This is called asceticism. For example, monks may eat a meager diet, sleep on a hard mat in a cold room, and take a vow of poverty or celibacy in an attempt to control the flesh. Paul addresses this mentality, concluding that it has little value (Col 2:20-23). On the other hand, Paul mentions the example of an athlete who exercises self-control in order to win a contest (1 Cor 9:24-27). The apostle goes on to say that he disciplined his body so that he would remain qualified to preach the gospel. With both the illustration of the athlete and the real-life example of Paul, there is a purpose to the sacrifice. One’s motive in controlling self is crucial. For example, a missionary in a Muslim country might not eat pork because it would be a needless offense to Muslims (cf. Rom 14:14-15, 21). However, someone not eating pork because they think it will somehow make them more spiritual is nothing more than asceticism.

[To be continued next week]