

Day 1 *Self-Control*

Silence (2 minutes) Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

Scripture *"For this very reason, 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. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."* 2 Peter 1:5-8

Discussion Peter has just described how God has provided ways for us to become more like Him. Peter now calls on the readers to make an effort at developing eight qualities which build on each other. The fourth is self-control. As we grow in knowledge of God and ourselves we learn about God's character and blessings, as well as how we do and do not mirror God's character. We are called to develop self-control in what we have learned. And it isn't easy, so Peter tells us to add perseverance to our self-control. It can be quite revealing to ask God to help us grow in self-control. We can do this by daily or weekly slowly reading through the ten commandments, the "seven deadly sins" (pride, lust, anger, sloth, envy, gluttony, and greed), or the fruit of the Spirit, praying after each one, "Lord, please teach me what You mean by this word, and show me if I need to confess a sin and need to grow in self-control in this area." We need to pray through these slowly, listening for what the Holy Spirit has to reveal to us. As we do this over time, we may notice God broadening and deepening our understanding of each word or concept in our daily lives. We may also notice patterns; that there are some areas in which we are repeatedly stronger and others about which we need to confess sin frequently. This is beneficial because we are becoming more aware of our strengths and temptations. We may also notice patterns of when we are more vulnerable to those temptations, such as when we are tired, hurt, frustrated, or busy. We persevere and ask God to assist us in preparing for and resisting our temptations.

Application Self-control can seem a daunting fruit of the Spirit to pursue. If we really think about the sins we commit over and over, we might even question if truly exhibit self-control when it matters! It's important to keep in mind that as we are making every effort to add to our faith that God is who we ultimately rely on to grow. Self-control won't just appear in our lives without us first asking God to work in us. This week, pick a time each day to pray specifically for self-control. Dedicate this time specifically to the Lord and view it as the first step toward relying on God as the source of your self-control.

Prayer Lord God, I praise You for Your perfect self-control. I praise You that You are not tempted by anything. Thank You that You love humanity and want us to know You and become like You. Thank You for your Holy Spirit working in me, showing me where I need to grow in self-control. I commit myself to mature in self-control and I ask that You work in me and change me. Thank You for Your repeated forgiveness. I pray that I may be more like You and become increasingly effective and productive. Thank You for Your steadfast love. Amen.

Silence (2 minutes) Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

Scripture memory for the week: *"Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined."* Titus 1:7-8

