

## Day 2

# 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** *"Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control."* Proverbs 25:28

**Discussion** What a sad proverb. What a broken and vulnerable person. There are so many aspects of our lives that require self-control. How do we manage our emotions? Do we exercise some self-control in how we express anger, frustration, sadness, fear, or closeness? Or do we just let it fly? What happens when we let it fly? How well do we apply *"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry..."* (Jas. 1:19)? Do we speak, text, or post online whatever we want in the moment? What damage is done by our anger to ourselves, others, and our relationships within the Church or with unbelievers? Do we have limits regarding what we see and hear about sexuality? What are our guidelines for hinting, joking, speaking, and behaving sexually? Do we regulate where we look and what our thoughts are? *"But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away... And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away"* (Mt. 5:28-30). How do we *"Love the Lord your God ...with all your mind"* (Lk. 10:27)? Do we dwell on every thought that pops in our heads or are there some that we choose to expel? What happens if we don't let go of thoughts? Are we able to let go of anger and bitterness? Does what we listen to repeatedly stir us up to be angry and bitter? How do we *"Love the Lord your God...with all your strength"* (Lk. 10:27)? Does that verse impact what and how much we eat, whether we exercise, get rest, and whether we use legal/illegal substances? How do we apply these verses to our lives? *"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven... You cannot serve both God and money"* (Mt. 6:20,24)? What is the place of money and possessions in our lives? Are we generous? How focused are we on comfort? Do we make sure our entertainment does not get in the way of meeting responsibilities? Self-control will help us to filter what good and bad can come into our lives.

**Application** Whatever your sin bias is, without self-control aided by God we have no defenses against it. Defending against sin is not only a matter of avoiding temptation but of resisting temptation when it does arrive, just like the walls of a city defend against an attacking army! Consider what temptation you most often find yourself yielding to: are your defenses up? Do you acknowledge that this is an area where your walls are down? Don't be discouraged by this, instead, run to God in prayer and confess that in this area you desperately need His help to build your walls back up. God wants to help you build!

**Prayer** Lord God, You are a holy and loving God. I submit myself to You. I submit my thoughts, my attitude, and my speech to You. I submit what I listen to and see to You. I submit how I treat others to You. I submit my sexuality and how I treat my body to You. I submit my finances to You. I submit my levels of entertainment and responsibility to You. I submit all of these to You, to be shaped as You wish, in your love, mercy and wisdom. Teach me what it means and to live out each day, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind", and "Love your neighbor as yourself"* (Lk. 10:27). 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

