

Day 5

# 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** *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."* 1 Peter 5:8

**Discussion** Peter has given instructions to the elders and young men, and then told everyone to be humble and give their worries to God. He now addresses protecting themselves from Satan, who is actively searching for someone who is vulnerable, like predators in a PBS nature film who hunt down the young, weak, and isolated. Peter warns us to be self-controlled and alert, because neglecting these are some causes of vulnerability. If we lack self-control in our thoughts, speech, sexual desire, and expressions of emotion, particularly anger, our relationships can be damaged or destroyed. If we lack self-control in our eating and relaxation we can become overly focused on comfort and ourselves, making it harder to listen to the Spirit's voice. Paul writes to Timothy about the lack of self-control regarding money. *"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs"* (1 Tim. 6:9-10). When we lack self-control we are more vulnerable to Satan's strategies of tempting us to focus on our desires of the moment while he distracts us from the numerous consequences to our marriage, family, other relationships, employment, finances, reputation, health, our individual relationship with and service to Christ, as well as the stability and growth in the Church. Once we give in to the temptations Satan then lures us to lack self-control in our thoughts by tempting us to obsess about our consequences, again drawing us away from listening to and following Jesus. We need to be serious in exercising self-control and be alert to our own temptations and Satan's searching for the vulnerable. Paul writes this about forgiveness and Satan, *"And what I have forgiven – if there was anything to forgive – I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes"* (2 Cor. 2:10-11).

**Application** Self-control can be exhausting! Resisting temptation on our own can feel like an ordeal, gritting our teeth and choosing not to live in the flesh. Remaining alert of our spiritual needs and knowing when we will face the strongest temptations is part of self-control. Even the most self-controlled individuals will yield to temptation if they are unprepared and unaware of when and where temptation comes from! Consider what times and places wear you down and present you with temptations. Do you remain aware at these times of the temptations that may come? As you take time to focus on self-control this week, note these times and places and ask God to greater awareness of these temptations.

**Prayer** Father, it is a comfort and a joy to belong to You. I acknowledge belonging to You is not to be taken lightly and I commit myself to be serious about being self-controlled as You wish. Because You are loving and wise, please show me the areas of my life that need more self-control. I submit myself to Your will. I praise You Father, that Satan has no power before You and I thank You that You enable me to grow in self-control. Father, thank You that You do not let me be overwhelmed by Satan. I praise You that You are good and righteous. I praise You that You are fully and perfectly self-controlled. I praise You and love You, Father. 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

