



ABIDE

LESSON FOUR: SELF-CONTROL

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Titus 2: 6-15 tells us, *“Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope - that appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.”*

Paul continues to mention the word self-control to Titus as a characteristic of the godly life. What is self-control, and what should it look like in the life of a believer?

The Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines self-control as being, “control of one’s actions or emotions by the will. The New Testament teaches that self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The Christian is to be governed by God, not by self.” The NIV Life Application Study Bible defines self-control(led) as, “restraint exercised over one’s own impulses, desires, or emotions; temperance.”

I jokingly tell people that I suffer from OBS, or what I refer to as Open Bag Syndrome. What I mean by that is I can purchase a bag of candy which can sit in the pantry for days or weeks without a second thought... until someone opens the bag. Then I think non-stop about the candy at home that is waiting for me to enjoy. I will remember the open bag at work and look forward to enjoying the candy when I return home. I promise myself that I will only enjoy one serving size of the sugary treats, but one serving occasionally turns into two servings.

So, what is your OBS trigger? Is it a hot temper, laziness, food, or over-imbibing? Do you struggle with what you read, the music you listen to, the television shows, news channels, or movies that you watch, or is it the images you pour over? Is it depression, negative thinking, or anxiety?

Whatever your OBS trigger is, God offers you an escape out. 1 Corinthians 10:13 tells us that, *“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”* Another reminder that we can overcome with God’s help is found in Galatians 5:24-25, *“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”* Remember that when you accepted Jesus He sent His Spirit to dwell inside you to help you in this world. Romans 8:1-2 instructs us, *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.”*

YOUR TURN: Pray before rereading Titus 2:6-15 and ask the Lord to reveal to you His purpose for you in this lesson.

- o In what areas of your life are you struggling with self-control? Is it the result of a sin you are having difficulty expelling? Is it boredom, or shopping? Is it foul language, negative thinking, or something else? Repent and confess of whatever you are dealing with to God and ask Him to reveal its root to you and to help you and lead you with steps needed to remove it from your life. Keep in mind that you may need the help of a doctor, pastor, or counselor depending on what you are dealing with because some hurts and issues can run very deep.

- o Read Galatians 5:22-23 and list the fruits of the Spirit in the space below.

- o Titus 2:8 reminds us that, *“we are to have soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.”* Which fruits of the Spirit do you desire to grow in our life? Is it love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, or self-control? Ask God to help you grow the fruit or fruits of the Spirit that you desire to cultivate in your own life which will lead to your good and His glory.

- o If you do not have a Quiet Time established already, begin today. A Quiet Time is an appointment you set aside each day to spend with the Lord by reading scripture and praying. Some people add reading devotionals and listening to praise and worship music in addition to reading the bible and praying. Choose a book in the Bible to begin with such as Psalms or Proverbs. Have a journal handy to write down anything that you feel you have learned during your time together. Give thanks to God for sending His Son, Jesus, who is our High Priest and for His comforter, the Holy Spirit, who indwells in us. Read the following scripture passages and write down what each one means to you in your journal.
 - Hebrews 4:14-16
 - Hebrews 7:26-27
 - John 14:26
 - Romans 8:26