

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: SELF CONTROL

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCE

James 3:1-10

ADDITIONAL STUDY

I Corinthians 6:12-20

I Corinthians 9:25

Psalm 141:3

CONFESSION

I put my whole body in subjection to the Holy Spirit's leading; I exercise self-control in my thoughts, speech and deeds. I will not fall prey to Satan's manipulations because I am Jesus's sheep and His voice alone will I hear and follow always.

We all make mistakes often, but those who don't make mistakes with their words have reached full maturity. Like a bridled horse, they can control themselves entirely. - James 3:2 (CEB)

Self-control is the quality that allows you to stop yourself from doing things you want to do but that might not be in your best interest or even that of others – E.g., eating an extra-plate of unhealthy food, when you know it is not good for you. It is the ability to master your desires and passion, and keeping yourself from doing that which is evil. It is 'forcing' yourself to do the things you know are right; e.g., to seek God first thing when you wake up rather than run to your social media page, Television or mobile phone. We have to exhibit restraint in our words, deeds and thoughts. Inability to do so will make us victims of our flesh – our unchecked desires, impulses and feelings.

"Hold your horses!" is a saying used to tell someone to stop and consider carefully their decision or opinion about others. This idiom is perfect since it speaks of how wild and unruly horses can be without being tamed. James says, "We put bits in the horse's mouth to control them and have them obey us." A person without self-control can be like an untamed horse, a lot of kicking (tantrums), noise (neighing), stubbornness and self-will.

Lack of self-control mostly manifests in the way we talk – if we are not careful, our tongue can hurt, can kill, can bring trouble and can ruin our relationships or our lives. James says, "If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect (self-controlled) man, able also to bridle (bring under control) the whole body." We must allow the Holy Spirit to help us exercise restraint in our speech. Don't just say it the way you feel it! Think before you say it! Ask yourself, how will this make the other person feel? Stop being unkind in words to your spouse, stop talking down at your staff, stop being rude to your team members. Remember, BEING RIGHT DOES NOT GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO BE RUDE. Let your words be coated with God's love. Self-control will keep you from being rash in decision making; it will save you a lot of heartache, and exempt you from being a slave to sin and Satan's manipulations. Never forget these words from the wisest man who ever lived, "Losing self-control leaves you as helpless as a city without a wall." ~ King Solomon, Proverbs 25:28 (CEB)

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