

Self Control

What is the value of self-control? Self-control is that which enables us to hold our tongues when we are tempted to viciously put someone in his place once and for all; or when we know a juicy bit of gossip that would be entertaining to the group and would turn us into the "life of the party"; or when an occasion almost demands that we betray a confidence that must not be betrayed under any circumstances.

Self-control is that which enables us to control our passions when another is provoking us to anger; that keeps the clinched fists in the pockets when the agitator is only half our size; that keeps the lips sealed when another is railing and swearing at us. Self-control is that which enables us to be like our Lord "who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (I Peter 2:23).

Self-control is that which enables us to maintain purity of heart and to thrust out evil thoughts before they can take root; that enables us to place the best possible construction on another person's actions when unproven rumors could easily destroy our confidence in him; that helps us to maintain a cheerful disposition when everything around us has turned sour. Self-control is that which enables us to love the unlovable and to hate that which the world loves.

Self-control is that which enables us to rule our appetites; to say "no" when our lusts would lead us to sin or when that which is harmful to our health is placed before us. Self-control is that which enables the smoker to put down his cigarettes and the alcoholic to put down his drink and never return to it. Self-control is that which enables us to rule rather than to be enslaved.

The Bible does not glorify the indifferent and impassive. It is not our goal to be uncaring. To be like Paul, we must be able to have our spirit stirred within us when we are surrounded by evil (Acts 17:16). To be like our Lord, we must sometimes feel anger when surrounded by hypocritical self-righteousness (Mark 3:5); we must even react with occasional outbursts of goodness on occasions, as when the Lord cleansed the temple (John 2:13-17). But, all such outbursts must be tempered with self-control, that in our anger we "do not sin" (Ephesians 4:26).

God does not view our uncontrolled actions with amusement. Our temper tantrums and harsh, unbridled words are soul threatening, a potential bar to the abundant entrance into the Lord's everlasting kingdom (II Peter 1:5-11). We must not minimize the danger. We must not surrender to this evil.

What is the value of self-control? It is one of the qualities that enable us to go to heaven. The possessor of it is rich indeed.

- by Bill Hall

Just Say, "No"

We have adopted in this country for several years a slogan for young adults to use when faced with drug pushers. "Just say, no," we tell them. It is a wonderful slogan for many situations, and one that adults and parents can also use.

It is a difficult phrase, however, for fathers and mothers to use when they themselves set poor examples. Can parents persuade their children to say "no" to drugs if they are addicted to nicotine and alcohol? Can they convince siblings not to watch suggestive TV shows when they attend sex-plicit movies on a night out? Think about it!

- by L. A. Stauffer

Will Your Children Go To Heaven?

Church leaders all over the nation are concerned about the drop-out rate of young people. And well they should be. It is a tragic thing to see these precious boys and girls, who are so thrilled with Bible Study as little people, grow cold and uninterested in the Lord's work as they grow older.

Lately, several congregations have made in-depth studies of the factors leading to youth leaving the church, with an eye to learning what might be done to help solve this problem. What do we need? More youth programs? More rallies? Special teachers?

A great central truth has begun to emerge from these studies. Their faithfulness to Jesus doesn't have anything to do with special programs or teachers. It is not dependent on whether they are members of a large congregation or a small one. The single most important factor is their own immediate family.

One congregation found that when both parents were faithful to the Lord, and that includes active interest in the local congregation's programs, 93 percent of the children remained faithful. On the other hand, if only one parent was faithful, the figure dropped to 73 percent. Where both parents were only marginally active, it fell to 53 percent. Now comes the shocker-when both parents attended infrequently, 6 percent of their children remained faithful to the Lord.

Do you want your children to go to heaven? Then make certain you are leading them. The likelihood is they'll go no other way!

- by Ron Readhimer

'I Will, But Not Right Now'

What would you think of a man who tells his wife:

"I know there are some things I need to change in order to be a proper husband – and I plan to make those changes – but not right now. I have some things I want to do first, pursue some of my hobbies, hang out with my friends, go places and do things I like. After I get all of that stuff done, I'll take care of my 'home duties'."

You would think this fella is an incredible jerk! What is he thinking! Does he really expect his wife to wait – to put up with his selfish, childish conduct until he is ready to get serious about their relationship? NO! He needs to get things right – RIGHT NOW!

If this is what we'd expect and demand from a husband toward his wife, why would we think differently about an individual's duties toward God? Can you imagine how He feels when people selfishly pursue all their own desires while continually postponing their obedience to Him. There are many who know what they should do – and they claim that they intend to do it – but they keep procrastinating. It is an affront to the God who loves us and who constantly blesses us with "every good gift" (James 1:17).

For all those who express their plans to obey the gospel, 'but not right now', we urge you to think seriously about how God perceives this delay.

For those who have initially obeyed, but have fallen into a state of unfaithfulness – please consider that God says you have "trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith (you were) sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29).

Planning to do right, but not right now? Better think again!

- by Greg Gwin