



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday –January 28, 2024

To Know Christ...

1 Corinthians 9:25 "Everyone who competes in the games exercises **self-control** in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable."

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **self-control**; against such things there is no law." (verse 24 too)

Luke 9:23 "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must **deny** himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

Scripture states that even fleshly people can exercise *some* form of self-control. Makes us wonder ... why is it so lacking among the saints? Athletes who aspire to conquer championships and temporary crowns change the routines, eating habits, and activities of their life in order to strive for earthly goals. What keeps us from exercising self-control for an eternal and imperishable goal? Our own passions & desires!

Self-control is a marvelous key in unlocking the barriers that keep us from godly living by the Holy Spirit. When you consider the result (fruit) of walking by the Spirit, how can we be loving without self-control? How can we be patient without self-control? How can we be gentle without self-control? We can only strive for this Christ-like life by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that means we must continue to refine the mastery of self-control! How good are we at telling ourselves, "NO!"? Do we seek to slay our passions & desires that manipulate our lives away from following the Lord? Our answer is a reflection of the commitment we have to Christ, for better or worse. We must even have self-control over our knowledge. (See **2 Peter 1:6**) Jesus did not overwhelm people with His mountains of wisdom all at once. He had control of Himself. Self-control even helps us to persevere. In other words, without self-control, we will not be able to endure to the finish. What benefit is derived from never reaching the final goal & destination?

Self-control is a daily pursuit of denying self in order to follow Christ, striving for His spiritual character. (love, patience, gentleness, endurance, etc.) Athletes learn how to plan for transformation. Why do we not plan as we seek for an imperishable goal? The Holy One said it Himself, if you wish to come after Me, YOU MUST DENY YOURSELF, and take up your cross DAILY and FOLLOW ME. This is the recipe for faithful followers of Christ. Does this accurately describe us? Perhaps we once had a plan, and it is time to revive our devotion once again to eternal things. Or is it time to change our training regimen? Why not Today? The power of the Spirit is unfathomable to transform our lives! Or are we already training well for the imperishable goal? Keep pressing toward the eternal goal! (Notice the character that accompanies a life lacking in self-control ... **2 Timothy 3:2-4**)

- Carey Terry