

## Faith's Extension - Self Control

**2 Peter 1:2-11.** (Verse 6) After abundantly supplying **virtue** and **knowledge** to your faith, the next character quality you are required to supplement your faith with is **self-control**. And this nicely follows the previous thought which suggests that every piece of knowledge you acquire must rightly be put into practice.

The ancient word "*egkratia*" comes from the word "*kratos*", and in Modern Greek this means '*to strongly grab hold of*' or '*to grab hold of with great strength*'. What's being suggested here is very significant. The various 'powers' or 'abilities' which God has bestowed upon us are open to abuse, therefore, their correct usage demands that they come under the controlling power of the human will. Yet, they must still be in submission to the operation of the Holy Spirit.

The human will is very strong and that's why you must '*grab hold of things with great strength*' in order to exercise self-control. Someone who possesses self-control will be conspicuous by his moderation and balanced life. He will be moderate in his actions, thoughts and feelings. He would have learnt to restrain body and soul (his mind, will and emotions), and keep them in subjection to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Most people have never learned self-control in the natural, and as a result, it's very difficult for them to exercise self-control in the spiritual areas of life. This is a serious form of immaturity.

To operate correctly in the **power** and **energy** which God has placed in you, you must first have **knowledge** concerning spiritual matters, but then you must also be able to exert **self control**. Otherwise you will constantly be out of control - won't you? Many people think that to be spiritual is to be out of control. How many times have you heard someone say? "*The Holy Spirit told me to do it, and I couldn't control the urge.*" This is simply blaming God for a lack of self-control. Even if it was the Holy Spirit, it might have been the wrong time to do or say those things anyway!

Do you know something? You can control the Spirit of God on the inside of you – and this is not rebellion or bondage. Firstly, the Holy Spirit won't ever make you do something you do not want to do - especially anything that causes a spectacle or is embarrassing, making you, and Him, look foolish. The reason we have lost much credibility in society is probably because we have so many churches filled with people who have been allowed to run around "out of control." Discipline and order is essential in our quest to communicate the Gospel to the man in the street.

Once we mention discipline and order to some people they quickly say, "*Oh, that's just bondage. Jesus came to set us free!*" But there's a big difference between bondage and self-control. When giving instructions concerning order in the church, Paul said, "***The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets***" [1 **Corinthians 14:32**]. What does this mean? It means you are always in control.

Therefore, people who jump up in the middle of a service to give a tongue or laugh out aloud, saying that they can't control it, are wrong! They can control it, but they simply don't want to - that's the problem. Let me say it again; *God won't make us do anything if we don't want to*. He gently prompts and tenderly leads, or at worst, He urges us. But, He never forces us to do anything against our will. We are the one in control of what we do - in the natural and in the spiritual. It is the enemy who pushes people to do things, not God.

If any of you believe that you have no self-control then you are misled or deceived. Every Christian has the potential for personal restraint and self-control because it's a **fruit of the Holy Spirit** [Galatians 5:22, 23]. Now, maybe many of you don't have these fruits operating in and through you as much as others do, but

that's because you have not taken hold of your will. Self-control means discipline. If you do not discipline yourself daily in prayer, in reading God's Word, in coming to church and attending a home group, in your finances, and in your family environment, the pressures will surely get to you and overcome you. Without restraint all these pressures will pile up and cause severe tension, until one day you explode.

Self-control is showing restraint over your impulses, actions, thoughts, words and desires. You are able to control yourself; however, you are not going to do it without help. You can only do it effectively through the Word of God. It is the Word which renews your mind daily and enables you to live a controlled and balanced life.

I like what Kenneth Hagin Jr. has to say about self-control in the church. He says simply, "*stay in the boat at all times!*" Have you ever seen a small boat when one person decides to suddenly stand up? The boat begins to rock to and fro, but if everyone just remains calm and still, the boat will eventually come back under control.

It's the same in some churches. A little ripple, a small problem caused by some well meaning brother, comes and the boat begins to rock. Thinking the boat is going to turn over, some people get very excited. This fear causes them to be impulsive and erratic, so they get up and start moving around. Before you know it the boat capsizes and everyone in it falls overboard. If only they had exercised some self-control and kept still for just a little while, everyone would have been fine.

Many times self-control and self-discipline will require you to judge yourself. For how can you keep restraint when you won't admit your faults? And if you judge yourself then God promises not to judge you. He is a God of mercy to those who judge themselves. However, He is also a God of justice and discipline, "**For whom the Lord loves He disciplines**" – **Hebrews 12:6**. You can't go around doing whatever you want and not expect to reap some of the consequences. Remember, discipline is not bondage! It's your own lack of discipline and self-control that leads you into bondage. Therefore, if you are looking to operate correctly in the **power** and **energy** which God has placed in you, you must exert **self-control** at all times.