

Adding Self-Control (II Peter 1:5-11)
By Mark Hatfield
Lesson 3

Generally speaking, when you lack something that is important to completing any objective, you will do whatever it takes to add it to your life. In the case of our faith, which involves our spiritual life, disciples of Jesus were instructed through the apostle Peter, "Add to your faith..." In that list of qualities that were to be added to our lives, we find self-control. Peter went on to say, "For if these {qualities} are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these {qualities} is blind {or} short-sighted, having forgotten {his} purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you." It was at this point in my study that I realized why I often stumble when it come to controlling myself...I need to do some adding to my spiritual life.

In taking a closer look at the passage in 2 Peter 1:5-11, we will notice some other factors that encourage us to have self-control. First of all, Peter begins this message by saying, "Now for this very reason also..." For what "very reason"? Look at what he says in verse 4 when he explains, "...He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of {the} divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." Peter is basically saying to us, "Since you have been granted God's most wonderful promises and since He wants you to take on His divine nature, you need to be escaping the lusts and/or desires that corrupt you." Peter then gives a list of qualities that we are to apply with all of the diligence that we can give. In that list is the most excellent quality of self-control. Are you applying all diligence in adding self-control to your life? Peter concludes this section of the text and tells his audience, "Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you {already} know {them} and have been established in the truth which is present with {you.} (verse 12). Let this be a reminder to you, and heed the word of God in this regard.

It is no wonder why every man, woman, and child in the church is required to have self-control or what is also called temperance. Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus regarding the appointing of leaders in each local church, and he said the following, "An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, **temperate**, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. {He must be} one who manages his own household well, keeping his children **under control** with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), {and} not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside {the church} so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Deacons likewise {must be} men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much

wine or fond of sordid gain, {but} holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. Women {must} likewise {be} dignified, not malicious gossips, but **temperate**, faithful in all things.” There are a couple of points that I gather from this text. First, a man must be under control to be a leader, but his wife must also be temperate. If you notice the text also included the children being under control as well. So, what’s the point? In an ideal situation, men, woman, and children must have self-control. Notice the list of qualifications given for elders and deacons in the text. Tell me how these men would meet these qualifications without self-control as a personal quality in their life (See also Titus 2). There is no doubt that we need to add self-control to our lives. Have you added self-control to your life?