

# “God-mastered desire leads to life.” (Growing in Self-Control)

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Self-control is not about becoming rigid or joyless. It is about freedom—freedom to live the life God lovingly desires for you. The Bible teaches that self-control is **God’s good gift**, produced in us by the Holy Spirit and shaped through daily surrender. God is not trying to withhold good from you—He is inviting you into a **fuller, healthier, God-honoring life**.

## WHY SELF-CONTROL MATTERS

- **It guards our hearts and lives** “*A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.*” — **Proverbs 25:28**
- **It protects us from sin’s power** “*Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.*” — **James 1:14**
- **It shapes our words and relationships** “*If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.*” — **James 3:2**
- **It helps us live with spiritual maturity and purpose** “*Supplement your faith... with self-control.*” — **2 Peter 1:5–6**

**HOW GOD HELPS US GROW IN SELF-CONTROL** - God does not ask us to grow alone.

- **The Holy Spirit produces self-control** “*The fruit of the Spirit is... self-control.*” — **Galatians 5:22–23**
- **God provides strength and a way out of temptation** “*He will also provide the way of escape.*” — **1 Corinthians 10:13**
- **God’s Word trains our hearts** “*I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*” — **Psalms 119:11**

**GOD’S HEART FOR YOU** God desires self-control for your good.

- “*For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*” — **2 Timothy 1:7**
- “*It is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*” — **Philippians 2:13**

## PRACTICES THAT HELP US GROW

These are **tools God uses to shape us**.

- **Daily surrender to God** “*Do not let sin reign in your mortal body.*” — **Romans 6:12**
- **Learning to pause and guard our words** “*Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.*” — **James 1:19**
- **Healthy eating, drinking and exercising** “*Every athlete exercises self-control in all things... I discipline my body and keep it under control.*” — **1 Corinthians 9:24–27**
- **Fasting to train our desires** Fasting teaches us to let God be greater than every appetite. “*Man shall not live by bread alone.*” — **Matthew 4:4**
- **Replacing old habits with new ones** “*Put off your old self... and put on the new.*” — **Ephesians 4:22–24**

## REFLECT AND RESPOND

Area(s) where I desire God's help with self-control: \_\_\_\_\_

(Be honest—God already knows, and He is for you.) \_\_\_\_\_

### A PRAYER FOR HELP AND SURRENDER

**Father God**, I acknowledge that self-control is Your desire for my life, and I trust that You want what is good for me. I confess that I cannot master my desires on my own.

**Holy Spirit**, I invite You to work in me. Shape my desires, renew my mind, and give me discernment to know when to say yes and when to say no. Help me to submit what I want to what You want, trusting that Your way leads to life.

Teach me patience, discipline, and obedience—not through shame, but through grace. I place this area of my life into Your hands today. **In Jesus' name**, Amen.

### Discussion Questions:

#### **I. God-mastered desire leads to life** (*Genesis 39; Proverbs 25:28; Galatians 5:22–23*)

1. Looking at Joseph in Genesis 39, how did his submission to God influence his response to temptation?
2. Where have you experienced—or where do you long to experience—the kind of freedom and life that comes from letting God master your desires rather than suppressing them or indulging them?

#### **II. Desire-mastered life leads to destruction**

(*2 Samuel 11; Philippians 3:19; James 1:14–15*)

3. In David's story, or yours, how have you seen uncontrolled desire be destructive to self and others?
4. Philippians 3:19 says, "Their god is their belly." In what subtle ways can good or neutral desires take control in our lives before we realize it?

#### **III. God-mastered desire comes through submission to God**

(*Romans 6:12; Philippians 2:13; Psalm 119:11*)

5. Submission can sound passive, but Scripture presents it as active trust. What does daily submission to God actually look like in real life, according to the passages we've discussed?
6. What is one specific area where God may be inviting you to surrender control—not in shame, but in trust—so that the Holy Spirit can bring discernment and self-control?