

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own under-
standing; in *all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **self-control**. Against such there is no law.”

Quote: “Stand Fast” For those who are trusting exclusively and entirely in Christ alone, self-control is fueled by a passion to please Him Who gave His life to rescue us from the wrath that we all deserve.

For the glory of my Father’s praise, through the Savior of my soul, I’ll captivate my ev’ry thought. My mind I will control.

For the good of all that I hold dear, I will battle lust and sin. By faith, I will subdue my flesh through the Spirit’s pow’r within.

Self-control governs our temper, our tongue, and our hunger for possessions, power, and praise from others. Paul asked, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *one* receives *the prize*? Run in such a way that *you* may obtain it.... Therefore I run thus: *not with uncertainty*. Thus I fight: *not as one who beats the air*. But *I discipline my body* and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”¹ Paul feared “talking the talk” only to learn at the end of his race that he was disapproved for not “walking the walk.” He used the illustration of the Greek games to challenge the Corinthians to exhibit self-control. Far more than a source of passing pleasure, the Isthmian games for the Greeks were a passion. “The *gymnasium* was a prominent feature in every Greek city. Every candidate had to take an oath that he had been ten months in training, and that he would violate none of the regulations.”² His was a life of voluntary self-control in diet, in exercise and in abstaining from anything that would hinder his best effort. Paul wrote to Timothy, “...if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes *according to the rules*.”³ Athletics requires ambition, focus, knowledge, skill, effort, teamwork and self-control. Paul applied these same elements to his spiritual efforts. He feared failure! He feared being a

The Spirit’s fruit, self-control

castaway or disapproved after preaching to others. Paul did not want to just “compete in the game.” He wanted to be successful! To him, success was receiving “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;” it was hearing his Lord say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” Without self-control, this will never happen for any of us. With martyrdom looming on the horizon, Paul could say victoriously, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith....*”⁴

For us to achieve God’s “well done, good and faithful servant,” we must “set our mind on things above;” we must “lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us” as we “run with endurance the race that is set before us;” we must maintain the attitude that “to live is Christ and to die is gain;” we must embrace the truth that, by God’s design, “all things work together for good to those who love God (and are) the called according to His purpose” of conforming us to Christ’s likeness; we must filter our thoughts, words and deeds through the Word of God as we seek to do all for His glory and the eternal good of others.⁵ Matthew Henry offers helpful insights into the vital need for self-control. “By describing the works of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit, we are told what to avoid and oppose, and what we are to cherish and cultivate; and this is the sincere care and endeavor of all real Christians. Sin does not now reign in their mortal bodies, so that they obey it,⁶ for they seek to destroy it. *Christ never will own those who yield themselves up to be the servants of sin*. And it is not enough that we cease to do evil, but we must learn to do well. Our (manner of living) will always be answerable to the principle which guides and governs us.⁷ *We must set ourselves in earnest to mortify the deeds of the body, and to walk in newness of life*. Not being desirous of vain-glory, or unduly wishing for the esteem and applause of men, not provoking or envying one another, but seeking to bring forth more abundantly those good fruits, which are, through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.”

1 I Corinthians 9:24-27 2 Vine’s 3 II Timothy 2:5 4 II Timothy 4:7-8
5 Matthew 25:21; Colossians 3:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; Philippians 1:21;
Romans 8:28-30; I Corinthians 10:31-33 6 Romans 6:12 7 Romans 8:5