Growing in Self-Control

2 Peter 1:6

Sermon Handout

God's plan for your life is that you increasingly become like Jesus.

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to[c] his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire." 2 Peter 1:3-4

In this study, we are looking at "self-control."

"… and knowledge with self-control…" (2 Peter 1:6)

Why do we need to take growing in self-control seriously? Here are some examples:

- Careless speech can deeply injure:

"There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Proverbs 12:18

- Selfish desires create deep conflicts:

"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?" James 4:1

- Our sexual temptations can lead to deep shame and alienation:

"At the end of your life you groan, when your flesh and body are consumed, and you say, 'How I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof! I did not listen to the voice of my teachers ... I am at the brink of utter ruin in the assembled congregation." Proverbs 5:11-14

Growing in self-control is a grace given to us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. <u>What is Self-Control? 2 Peter 1:6</u>

Self-control is the Holy Spirit given grace to resist sinful/selfish impulses and to prioritize and pursue that which is good, excellent, and eternal.

- **Self Control is Resisting Sinful/Selfish Impulses**

"Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:19-21

"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep." 2 Peter 2:1-3

"They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!" 2 Peter 2:14

Self-control is bridling your life so that it is not driven by sinful impulses and desires.

- **Self Control Is Also Pursuing the Excellent and the Eternal.**

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." Galatians 5:19-23 (ESV)

Self-control is motivated and fueled by an increasing desire to know, to experience, and to become more like Christ.

What are some examples of excellent and holy ambitions that require self-control?

i. Knowing Christ Deeply

“Indeed, I count every loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ... But one thing I do; forgetting what lies behind, I strain forward toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:8-14)

ii. Perseverance in the Faith

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-3)

iii. To Win As Many as Possible

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So, I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified." 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

II. <u>How Do You Develop Self-Control? 2 Peter 1:6</u>

1. **Slow Down: Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. It is a result of meditating on God's Word and responding to God's Spirit.**

i. Consider the source of your impulses.

"Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these." Galatians 5:19-20

"Sin is what you do when your heart is not satisfied with God. No one sins out of duty. We sin because it holds out some promise of happiness." John Piper

ii. Carefully consider the warnings of Scripture.

"I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:19-21 (ESV)

iii. Fuel holy desires with the promises of God.

"The love of the world cannot be expunged by a mere demonstration of the world's worthlessness. But may it not be supplanted by the love of that which is more worthy than itself?" Thomas Chalmers, The Expulsive Power of a New Affection

"The best way of casting out an impure affection is to admit a pure one, and, by the love of what is good, to expel the love of what is evil." Thomas Chalmers, The Expulsive Power of a New Affection

What are examples of God's promises that help us overcome sinful desires?

- **God promises that sin will not have dominion over us.**

"For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." — Romans 6:14 (ESV)

- **God promises to provide a way of escape when we are tempted.**

"God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." — 1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)

- **God promises that He is at work within us, giving us both the desire and the ability to obey Him.**

"For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." — Philippians 2:13 (ESV)

- **God promises that Christ has set us free from the power of sin.**

"We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin." — Romans 6:6 (ESV)

- **God promises that He will complete the work He has begun in us**.

"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." — Philippians 1:6 (ESV)

- **God promises that His grace is sufficient and His power is made perfect in weakness.**

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." — 2 Corinthians 12:9 (ESV)

- **God promises that nothing can separate us from His love in Christ.**

"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." — Romans 8:38-39 (ESV)

1. **Becoming More Like Jesus:** 2 Peter 1:3-4 reminds us that God has given us everything we need for life and godliness. How does knowing that God is actively at work in us change the way we think about spiritual growth?

2. **Understanding Self-Control:** Self-control is more than simply saying no to temptation; it is also saying yes to what is good, excellent, and eternal. What are some practical examples of what this looks like in everyday life?

3. **Recognizing Our Impulses:** We all have areas where our emotions, desires, or impulses can get the best of us. Where do you think people are most tempted to respond impulsively rather than thoughtfully and prayerfully?

4. **The Heart Behind Our Desires:** John Piper says, "We sin because it holds out some promise of happiness." How does this insight help us better understand temptation? What are some ways we mistakenly look to things other than God to satisfy our hearts?

5. **Pursuing Something Better:** Philippians 3:8-14 describes Paul's growing desire to know Christ above everything else. How might an increasing love for Jesus change the things we pursue, the choices we make, and the things we are willing to give up?

6. **Slowing Down:** The sermon emphasized slowing down and considering the source of our impulses. What practical habits could help us pause, bring God's Word to mind, and respond to temptation in a God-honoring way?

7. **The Power of God's Promises:** Which of the promises in the sermon (Romans 6:14, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Philippians 2:13, or others) is particularly encouraging to you? How might that promise help you face a specific temptation or struggle?

8. **Replacing Rather Than Just Resisting:** Thomas Chalmers suggests that we overcome unhealthy affections by cultivating a greater love for something better. What are some ways we can intentionally fuel our love for Christ and develop desires that honor Him?

9. **Running the Race Together:** Hebrews 12:1-3 encourages us to lay aside every weight and run with endurance, looking to Jesus. How can Christian friendships, accountability, and encouragement help us grow in self-control and persevere in faith?

10. **One Step of Growth:** Is there one area of your life where God may be inviting you to exercise greater self-control? What is one practical step you could take this week, relying on His grace and the Holy Spirit's power?

Self-control is not primarily about trying harder; it is about loving Christ more deeply and learning to live in the freedom He has already provided. We don't pursue godliness to earn

God's favor. We pursue it because, through Jesus, we have received His grace, His promises, and His Spirit.

The goal isn't simply to become better at saying no to sin, but to become increasingly captivated by Jesus and increasingly delighted in what pleases Him.