



Controlling Ourselves

Listen: “I have had more trouble with myself than with any other man.” D L Moody

Dennis Welch’s line: “You’re your own worst enemy.” In “Own Worst Enemy”

Zig Zigler’s line: “The chief cause of failure and unhappiness is trading what you want most for what you want now.”

Our Question: How do we do what we should do? Where do we get the motivation and the power to escape our *addictions* and *bad habits* and *bad attitudes* and *terrible motives* and *lack of initiative* and *habitual failings* and “*mañana attitudes*” and *sins*?

God’s Answer Part A: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...” Galatians 5:22, 23

- So one of the outcomes of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives is self-control—the ability to do what we should do.

God’s Answer Part B: “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit...”

- **What is this?** Being filled with the Spirit is the Spirit’s absolute control of my life. This happens through the ongoing process of inviting His control in every detail—submitting to Him in everything and at every time.
- **Can you give me an illustration?** We could progressively and voluntarily submit to the control of wine—sip by sip by sip by sip.
- **What would I do to be filled with the Spirit?** Every day and all day I would say, “Holy Spirit of God please guide and control my whole life now and all day.”

What are the “competitors” of submitting to the Spirit?

- Submitting to personal, childhood commitments or self-promises.
- Submitting to personal hungers.
- Submitting to personal fears.
- Submitting to family pressure or peer pressure.
- Submitting to the world’s values and goals.
- Submitting to false ideas about how life works or beliefs about where to find joy.
- Submitting to what I want now and losing sight of what I want most/later.

Idea: *Self-control is a by-product of submitting to Spirit-control.*

Heavenly Father, I confess that I have submitted to “competitors” of Your “Holy Spirit—sinful and foolish things: _____ and _____. Please forgive me for this. Please enable and motivate me to submit to the control of Your Spirit in everything and at every time. Please arrest me at every crossroads to give control to Your Spirit. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

“Walking Papers”

Practical helps for walking the Christian walk each day this week.

Idea: *Self-control is a by-product of submitting to Spirit-control.*

- **Today:** One of the outcomes of planting corn and weeding it and watering it and fertilizing it, is corn. (To which you say, “Wow Dave, this is profound!”) How does this gardening truth help us understand Gal 5:22, 23? Any applications?
- **Monday:** In your life what would it look like to “have the ability to do what you should do?”
- **Tuesday:** One of the outcomes of taking drink after drink after drink after drink after drink of wine is intoxication. How does the drinking analogy above help us understand Eph 5:18? What are the core applications for you?

Here are the major “competitors” of submitting to the Spirit?

- Submitting to personal, childhood commitments or self-promises.
- Submitting to personal hungers.
- Submitting to personal fears.
- Submitting to family pressure or peer pressure.
- Submitting to the world’s values and goals.
- Submitting to false ideas about how life works or beliefs about where to find joy.
- Submitting to what I want now and losing sight of what I want most/later.
- **Wednesday:** Reflect on the competitor above that has had the most negative spiritual effect on your life. What do you need to do about this?
- **Thursday:** How have you been “Your own worst enemy?”
- **Friday:** How have you “traded what you want most for what you want now?”
- **Saturday:** What is the major, measurable thing you will do as a result of reflecting on Galatians 5:22, 23 and Ephesians 5:18?

Note for Connection Groups: *The full study guide for small group and personal study is available at: www.cypressbible.org and then click on “Get Connected” and the link is on that page.*