

## Wisdom of the Bible ~ Self-Control ~ Leader's Guide

[Scripture verses are NIV unless otherwise noted.]

1. How does the Bible speak of self-control as a Christian trait in a positive way?

1 Timothy 3:2 – So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. [NLT]

Titus 2:2 – Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely. They must have sound faith and be filled with love and patience. [NLT]

Titus 2:3-6 – <sup>3</sup> Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. <sup>4</sup> Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, <sup>5</sup> to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

<sup>6</sup> Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.

Titus 2:11-12 – <sup>11</sup> For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. <sup>12</sup> It teaches us to say “no” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

2. What does Peter say follows from self-control? (2 Peter 1:5-8) Is Peter qualified to write about this trait?

2 Peter 1:5-8 – <sup>5</sup> In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, <sup>7</sup> and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.

<sup>8</sup> The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [NLT]

3. How is the lack of self-control spoken of in the Bible?

Proverbs 25:28 – Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 – <sup>1</sup> But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.

<sup>2</sup> People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, <sup>4</sup> treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— <sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

4. Are you born with self-control? Are you taught self-control? (Jeremiah 35:6)  
What is another way that self-control enters your life? (Galatians 5:5, 16, 22-23)

Jeremiah 35:6 – But they replied, “We do not drink wine, because our forefather Jonadab son of Recab gave us this command: ‘Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine.’ ”

Galatians 5:5 – But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.

Galatians 5:16 – So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Galatians 5:22-23 – <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

5. The Bible tells us many reasons to have self-control. What are some of them?

A) To control anger

Proverbs 16:32 – Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.

Proverbs 29:11 – A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.

B) To control sexual sins

1 Cor 7:3-5 – <sup>3</sup> The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup> The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. <sup>5</sup> Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

1 Thess 4:3-4 – <sup>3</sup> It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable,

C) To prepare and be ready for Christ’s return

1 Thess 5:6-8 – <sup>6</sup> So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. <sup>7</sup> For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup> But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

D) To enable us to pray properly

1 Peter 4:7 – The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

E) To help resist Satan

1 Peter 5:8-9 – <sup>8</sup> Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

F) To control your tongue, both what you do and do not say

Psalms 39:1-2 – <sup>1</sup> I said, “I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked are in my presence.”

<sup>2</sup> But when I was silent and still, not even saying anything good, my anguish increased.

7. Is self-control easy or difficult for you?

James 3:2 – We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

9. Do you think that God realizes that self-control might be difficult for us? Is he willing to help us in this area? What do we have to do to gain his aid?

Clearly God realizes that we are not born with self-control. It is often taught, but even that wears off. So what is left? Prayer! Interestingly, there are no specific prayers in the Bible for self-control although elements of it are found in a number

of the Psalms and in the prayers of the prophets and, of course, Jesus. God tells us not to be wordy and long-winded in our prayers and in that spirit I present this short prayer for self-control that I found on an Internet blog posted by Stella:

“I pray dear God that you will plant self-control in me that will help me grow up like a tree of strength. I pray that you will help me rein in my passions, desires and emotions and make them subject to your Spirit. Please give me the self-discipline I need. Amen.”

1 Corinthians 10:13b

God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

James 4:7-8a

Surrender to God! Resist the devil and he will run from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you.