

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Self-Control

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**A**S we grow in knowledge, we should be increasing in self-control (*2 Peter 1:6*). This means we are developing inward strength to control the inward and outward man. It is a manifestation that the Spirit of God lives within us (*Galatians 5:23*).

Disciplining ourselves in the direction of God’s way is an activity that separates the Christian from the world. In general, the world is not involved in such discipline. Giving in to one’s desires, instead of keeping them in check, is generally the way of the world. Felix, in his desire for Drusilla, divorced his wife and married the object of his unbridled lust. He needed the message that Paul delivered to him and Drusilla on “*righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come*” (*Acts 24:25*).

“Grievous times” occur when men and women lack self-control (*2 Timothy 3:3*) Self becomes the center of the universe and is willing to satisfy any desire, regardless of how it affects others. The lack of self-control leads to broken marriage vows, leaving

in its wake broken homes. Lives have been shattered more than once due to one’s inability to keep oneself from such addictive drugs as alcohol and cocaine. Not being under the control of anything, which Paul exhorts all to do, is impossible when one cannot control one’s self (*1 Cor. 6:12*). Corruption and painful consequences of sin soon follows.

The church of our Lord is different from cults in that cult leaders seek to “*control*” people, while Jesus’ apostles and the elders of local churches “*lead*” people in the way of the Lord. Paul sought not to have “*Lordship over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for in faith you stand fast*” (*2 Cor. 1:24*). Elders oversee the flock without “*Lording it over the charge*” (*1 Peter 5:3*). Guiding through teaching, and exemplary conduct (*1 Timothy 3:2*), the leaders of the Lord’s church encourage Christians to cultivate all facets of the Spirit-led life, including self-control.

Sometimes the church will have to “discipline” its own members, who seem to be void of “self-discipline”. But even then, the goal of bringing one back from sin

to a state of righteousness is achieved through one waking up to one’s true state, instead of being forced to do something against one’s own free will.

In every action of parental discipline, the goal of the parent should be to help the child develop self-control. Learning early the painful consequences of not abiding in the boundaries set by parents, the disciplined child will more likely control oneself as an adult within the boundaries of God’s law and civil law. The godly parent is not out to control the child like a little pet, but to guide a tender mind into the maturity of self-control.

Self control is needed when fear seeks to control our minds. Paul reminded Timothy, “*For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline*” (*2 Timothy 1:7*). This “discipline” is a “saved mind” that is not going to be intimidated by fear. This is a facet of self-control. Isn’t it often true that when you face your fears, they seem to never appear? Self control keeps us fearlessly walking in the faith.