

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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As we grow in knowledge, we should be increasing in self-control. Peter exhorts, “...in your faith supply virtue, and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control...” (2 Peter 1:5-6). Manifesting self-control reveals the Holy Spirit is living 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 spiritual exercise. Giving in to one’s desires instead of keeping them in check characterizes 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 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. Paul warns that difficult times will be characterized by people being “slanderers” and “fierce.” But sitting between these two, is the lack of “self-control” (2 Timothy 3:3). Self becomes the center of the universe and selfishness seeks 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 by one’s inability to keep himself or herself from addictive drugs such as alcohol and cocaine. Not being under the control of anything, which Paul exhorts all to do (1 Corinthians 6:12), is impossible when we cannot restrict our desires. 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 “led” and today “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 Corinthians 1:24). Elders oversee the local flock without “...lording it over the charge” (1 Peter 5:3). Guiding through teaching accompanied by 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 awakening one to his or her true state before God instead of being forced to do something against one’s 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 learn to control oneself through adolescence and adulthood living within the boundaries of God’s law and man’s civil law. The godly parent is not out to control the child like a little pet but seeks 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 “sound mind” refusing 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? Or, if they do materialize, they are not as monstrous as first imagined. Self-control keeps us fearlessly walking in the faith. Add self-control to your daily exercises!