

Self-Control

The Source of Self-Control

Consistent victory in my life is never the result of my trying to become more self-controlled . Think about it. How can self be more self-controlled? Self is never going to deprive self of something it desires. *Victory comes when I focus not on becoming more self-controlled but on the things of the Spirit.* It is then that I experience the power necessary to overcome temptation (Stanley, *The Wonderful Spirit Filled Life* 200).

When we invite Christ into our lives and study His life, He works to reproduce. His character in us . . . It is necessary to keep in mind the fact that *the battle between Christ and Satan is over who will control the mind. If the mind cannot understand the things of God, how can it arrive at a valid understanding...Temperance alone is the foundation of all the graces that come from God, the foundation of all victories to be gained.* (White, *Temperance* 201)

Self-denial happens by my effort and focuses on specific things. When Christ admonishes us to “deny self” that involves me choosing to turn my life over to Christ and allow His power to be victorious over self in all of it’s parts. I must ask each day for Christ to live in me and to grow the fruit of the Spirit -- temperance.

Patience During Irritations

If impatient words are spoken to you, never reply in the same spirit . . . There is a wonderful power in silence . . . When all things seem dark and unexplainable, remember the words of Christ, “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.” (John 13:7) Study the history of Joseph and of Daniel. The Lord did not prevent the plottings of men who sought to do them harm; but He caused all these devices to work for good to His servants who amidst trial and conflict preserved their faith and loyalty (White, *Ministry of Healing* 487).

If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year-by-year we shall conquer self (White, *Ministry of Healing* 487).

Even the thoughts are not to be allowed to run riot. They must be restrained, brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Let them be placed upon holy things. Then, through the grace of Christ, they will be pure and true (White, *Ministry of Healing* 491).

Resting in God

He does not forget us for one brief moment. When, notwithstanding disagreeable circumstances, we rest confidently in His love, and shut ourselves in with Him, the sense of His presence will inspire a deep, tranquil joy (White, *Ministry of Healing* 488).

Our Bodies Are God's Property

You have cost much. "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20). That which you may regard as your own is God's. Take care of His property. He has bought you with an infinite price. Your mind is His. What right has any person to abuse a body that belongs not to himself, but to the Lord Jesus Christ? What satisfaction can anyone take in gradually lessening the powers of body and mind by selfish indulgence of any form? (White, *Selected Messages, Book One* 100).

The Power of Appetite

The controlling power of appetite will prove the ruin of thousands, when, if they had conquered on the point, they would have moral power to gain victory over every other temptation of Satan. (White, *Temperance* 16).

The Issue: who will control the mind, Christ or Satan.

The Battle: Gluttony

The Solutions: proper food, proper time, proper quantity, exercise etc.

THE SOLUTION: Christ in me. The battle must be His and not mine.

The Method: In the past I have focused on the solutions rather than THE SOLUTION—Christ. When I focus on Him, He leads me to the solutions and through Him, I may be victorious.

The Victory: I find victory by focusing externally on Christ rather than internally on self.

The Answer is not in self-control, but rather Christ-control.

When Jesus came to the man who had been paralyzed for 38 years. He asked him a seemingly ridiculous question: "Do you want to get well?" (John 5:6) It is a very important question. If you are not motivated to let Christ work in you to change, it will not happen. It is not until we realize our total helplessness and turn to Christ completely that He can place in us the fruit of temperance (God-control). Then we will be healed. This is the only way to win the addiction over gluttony – I surrender completely to Christ and He changes my motives and actions toward food on a daily basis (Author Unknown).

A Downward Spiral

When I struggle with feeling depressed or lack of purpose, TV and food cover up the problems. But TV and food lead to more feelings of depression and lack of purpose. A downward spiral is created. I need to address the root of the problem—depression and lack of purpose. “Be not conformed (by allowing your mind to be drawn to earthly things) to the things of this world, but be ye transformed (by choosing to focus on God and Christ and heavenly things) into God’s kingdom above.”

Sharing Our Freedom

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. (Isaiah 61:1) God is looking to be glorified through setting me free from gluttony and then letting me share the good news of how He changed me with others. When I am experiencing in my life, “good tidings,” freedom from “broken heartedness,” and “liberty” from the slavery of my sins, then I will do with great joy the three things noted in the text.

Struggles are Lessons

He [Jesus as a child] was familiar with poverty, self-denial and privation. This experience was a *safeguard* to Him (*Desire of Ages* 72).

God uses life’s trials and struggles to teach us to depend on Him constantly through out the day. For me, the battle with gluttony is really about learning to submit to His control in me moment by moment. He has promised to change my “thoughts, and resolutions and affections.”