

Holy Spirit: Spirit Fruit of Self-Control

Let's be reminded that the Apostle Paul speaks of the "fruit of the Spirit" as singular rather than plural, even though there are 9 virtues or character traits shown in Galatians 5:22-23 where he lists them. "Perhaps Paul is saying that the Spirit's fruit is not sometimes this, sometimes that; rather, the lives of Spirit-led persons are constantly and consistently marked by all the traits," says Bible scholar Dr. Sam Williams. Others have offered that it might be that the single fruit of the Spirit is love and the other eight traits are all manifestations of love. As we consider the last of the virtues, self-control, let's perhaps imagine that love and self-control might serve as book ends.

LOVE joy peace patience kindness generosity faithfulness gentleness **SELF-CONTROL**

- What comes to mind when you think of "self-control?"

- What role, if any, does self-control play in resisting temptation?

- Is self-control primarily about human will, a person trying harder to be good, or is it something else? Is self-control a work of the self, or is it truly a manifestation of a Spirit-led life?

- Since Jesus was without sin, did Jesus need to exercise self-control? How might Hebrews 2:17 and 4:15 help answer this question? What examples in the gospel record might you point to of Jesus exhibiting self-control?

Self-control is often thought of as self-discipline or self-mastery. How does Paul's athletic metaphors help? Paul wrote, ***I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*** (2 Timothy 4:7) In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 this metaphor is detailed to a greater extent where Paul refers to "Athletes exercise self-control in all things..." Do these references make it more difficult to see self-control as Spirit fruit rather than the work of self? Or do they help?

Next week we'll reflect more intentionally on what it means to live a Spirit-led life and how we might avoid grieving the Holy Spirit.