FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT DEVOTIONAL

SELF-CONTROL

BP CHURCH

“But the **fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22–23, ESV)

Love (Agape): Unconditional, self-sacrificing love. It is the highest form of love and is often used to describe God's love for humanity.

Joy (Chara): Deep-seated gladness, delight, or rejoicing, often independent of circumstances.

Peace (Eirene): A state of tranquility, quietness, and freedom from disturbance. It can also refer to harmony in relationships.

Forbearance (Makrothymia): Patience, longsuffering, or endurance in the face of provocation or adversity.

Kindness (Chrestotes): Goodness, generosity, moral integrity, and benevolence in one's character.

Goodness (Agathosune): Moral excellence, uprightness, and kindness in actions and behavior.

Faithfulness (Pistis): Fidelity, loyalty, and reliability in keeping one's promises and commitments.

Gentleness (Praytes): Meekness, humility, and a mild or gentle disposition.

Self-Control (Enkrateia): The ability to exercise restraint over one's impulses, emotions, and desires.

Day 1: Cultivating Self-Control

READ: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified." **(1 Corinthians 9:24–27, ESV)**

THINK: In 1 Corinthians, Paul reminds those living in Corinth that to follow Christ is to be totally committed like a runner who runs to win the prize. We should never be satisfied with a participation ribbon, but should seek to live a life that intensely desires to serve Christ and to see true transformation take place in the lives of those around us. That means that we like Paul must deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow after Christ. That is the reason Paul doesn't run aimlessly, his purpose is to "become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22, ESV). We also run with a purpose, and that purpose is towards Christ and the plans He has for us to accomplish in this world. We cannot accomplish this unless we discipline ourselves, and learn that quite often the road to winning the prize is through self-control and staying focused on the race that God has us to run.

DO: What are some of the obstacles to living a disciplined and self-controlled life?

Do you know what race you are called to run? Do you know what your purpose is? If not, consider these scriptures as inspiration.

> "And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **(Matthew 22:37–39, ESV)**
>
> "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."" **(Matthew 28:19–20, ESV)**

"The exercise of inner strength under the direction of sound judgment that enables us to do, think, and say the things that are pleasing to God."

- Jerry Bridges

Day 2: Fan Into Flame

READ: "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." **(2 Timothy 1:6–7, ESV)**

THINK: In 2 Timothy, the Apostle Paul encourages Timothy, a young leader over the church of Ephesus, to fan into flame the gift of God (1 Tim. 4:14), which was most likely the gift of pastoral ministry. Paul's concern for Timothy was that being much younger, he may have been intimidated by the false teachers or other church leaders around him. Paul did not want Timothy to shrink back because God had called him to lead. Therefore, Paul reminds him that his leadership should not be characterized by a spirit of fear, but by power, love, and self-control. He wanted Timothy to do his ministry out of a spirit of supernatural boldness, love and kindness rather than out of defensiveness, competition, or just a boisterous personality. He was told all of these things needed to be done with a strong sense of self-control. "Self-control" could also be translated as "self-discipline" or "soundness of mind", but the point is that a true minister must have self-control so that they can lead themselves first before they can lead others. Under the pressures of life, the temptation could be to lose control, be afraid, or give into fear. But Paul reminds Timothy, as he reminds us, that those who desire to lead should lead with the gifts that God has given them, and to exercise those gifts through His power, His love, and with self-control.

DO: Today, consider your life and examine any area that you may be called to lead in, but instead you have given into a spirit of fear. Perhaps it's the area of your family, your job, your personal life, your school. How can you fan into flame the gifts God wants to use in you to be a blessing to those around you?

Also consider how God has equipped you - with power, love, and self-control. How are you doing in these areas? Rate yourself below and think about how you can grow in each of these areas this week.

EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

ACTING IN LOVE AND KINDNESS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SELF-CONTROLLED AND DISCIPLINED

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

"Self-control is not about willpower, it's about being Spirit-led."

- Craig Groeschel


“AND DO NOT GET DRUNK WITH WINE, FOR THAT IS DEBAUCHERY,
BUT BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT,”
(EPHESIANS 5:18, ESV)

Day 3: Fortifying the Walls of Self-Control

READ: "It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it glorious to seek one's own glory. A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls." (Proverbs 25:27–28, ESV)

THINK: Both proverbs found in the passage above speak to being self-disciplined and exercising restraint.

Proverbs 25:27 reminds us of the reality that sometimes you can have too much of a good thing, which is we should exercise self-control. Anything consumed in excess like honey, cake, or going to an 'all you can eat chicken wing place' may start out as fun, but can wind up leaving us with feelings of regret, discomfort, or even pain.

Proverbs 25:28 uses the image of a city with broken walls to describe a person who lacks self-control. Just as the walls of a city protect it from external threats, self-control can help defend from threats both from without (peer pressure) and from within (harmful desires). Without self-control, we can become vulnerable to temptation or over-indulging. Self-control involves more than just resisting urges; it requires surrendering our will to God's guidance, cultivating discipline, and making wise choices. By aligning ourselves with God's will, seeking His strength, and by relying on the Holy Spirit, we can strengthen the 'walls of our heart' against the enemy's attacks. Let's make every effort to cultivate self-control, reflecting the character of Christ in all the areas and appetites of our lives.

DO: Here are 3 things you may want to consider in order to live out Proverbs 25:

Control Your Desires: Avoid excessive indulgence in anything, whether it's food or seeking attention for yourself. Practice moderation to avoid negative consequences.

Be Humble: Instead of seeking glory for yourself, focus on honouring God and serving others with humility.

Exercise Self-Control: It's important to have self-control and discipline in various areas of our lives such as our actions, thoughts, speech, and desires. Engaging in spiritual practices like prayer and fasting can help us develop self-control. When we exercise self-control in one area, it can often lead to being disciplined in other areas as well.

"No conflict is so severe as his who labors to subdue himself.."

- Thomas à Kempis

Day 4: Saying No In Order to Say Yes

READ: "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age," (Titus 2:11–12, ESV)

THINK: One aspect of self-control is knowing what you need to say no to in order to say yes to what God wants for you. When we do this, it helps our lives focus on what is truly important. Paul tells Titus to teach sound doctrine to his congregation, which for them means more than just knowing the right things, but living out that doctrine, as well. Here are the verses that precede Titus 2:11-12.

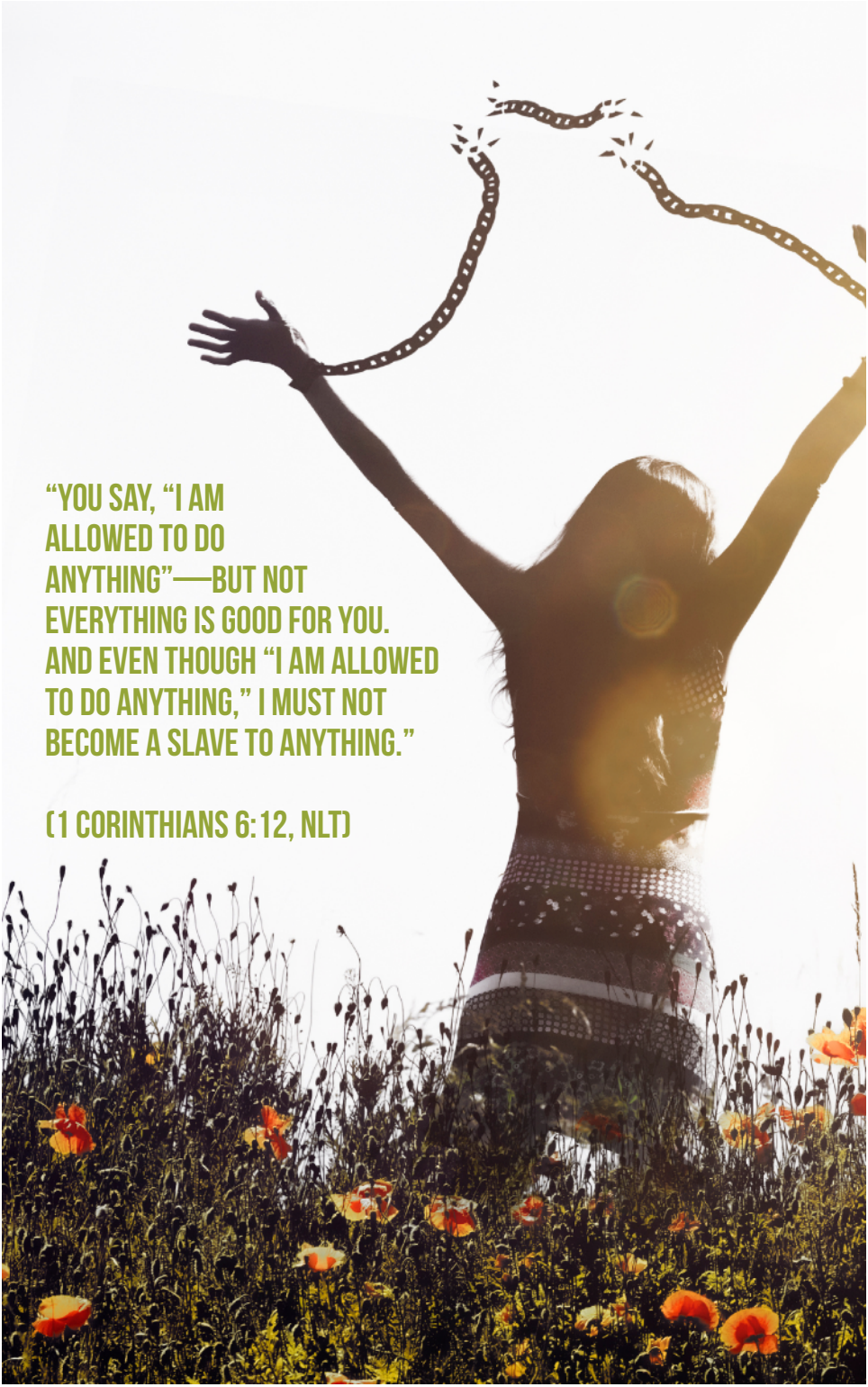
> "But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior."
> **(Titus 2:1–10, ESV)**

DO: Make a list using the passage above of the things we are are to say no to and the things we are to say yes to. What list do you find yourself practicing more? Pray that the grace of God would help you live an upright and godly life in this present age.

SAY NO TO:	SAY YES TO:

"The beginning of self-control is the realization that you are no longer a slave to your emotions."

- Joyce Meyer



"YOU SAY, "I AM ALLOWED TO DO ANYTHING"—BUT NOT EVERYTHING IS GOOD FOR YOU. AND EVEN THOUGH "I AM ALLOWED TO DO ANYTHING," I MUST NOT BECOME A SLAVE TO ANYTHING."

(1 CORINTHIANS 6:12, NLT)

Day 5: Surrendering Control to God

READ: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones." (Proverbs 3:5–8, ESV)

THINK: An aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is that it is just that, it is the fruit of the Spirit, and not the fruit of our labour. The fruit of our labour is a term to describe what we have achieved through our own effort and resources. To be a person of self-control is really to trust that the Holy Spirit is developing that fruit in you. This proverb reminds us that as we walk down the path of life, that God can make those paths straight if we trust Him and not lean on our own understanding, insight, or wisdom, but acknowledge His presence, His leading, and His authority. One of the first sins in the Bible was pride and disobedience, where God told Adam and Eve not to eat of this fruit, but they did what they wanted to do anyways. Self-control, as Edward Welch put it, "is not the same as self-dependence, in which we rely on personal willpower to control ourselves. Instead, self-control is a gift of the Holy Spirit, given through faith in Jesus Christ… Self-control is a strategic countermeasure to the insatiable cravings of sin." This is why Proverbs tells us to turn from evil, because not only is it a path that will lead us towards destruction, but it is a path that will lead us away from the refreshment, healing, and clarity that God has for us.

DO: If you seek to live a life that follows the straight path, here are a few ideas for you to consider in order to live out Proverbs 3:5-8:

Trust God Fully: Instead of relying only on ourselves, we should trust God completely in every situation. This means believing that He will guide us and make our paths straight, even when things seem uncertain.

Seek God's Guidance Always: We should involve God in everything we do, seeking His direction through prayer and wise counsel from others who follow Him.

Stay Humble and Obey God: Instead of thinking we know best, we should respect God and avoid doing things we know are wrong. This includes turning away from behaviours that don't honour Him and choosing to follow His ways.

"To gain self-control, give God control."

- Author Unknown