

Self-Control:

Restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires.



Self-control is one of the nine attributes of a Christian life inspired by the Holy Spirit living within them. The Fruit of the Spirit is produced by the Holy Spirit, not of one's self and will grow over time as Christians walk with Christ. Yet, many other Scriptures address the need for Christians to exercise self-control - to restrain their own impulses, emotions, and desires. Paul wrote that Christians are to; 'learn to control their own bodies in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God.' Self-control is an important aspect of living out the Christian life.

Yet, far too many *Christian* couples do *not* exhibit self-control in their lives. Yes, to the outside world, a couple may seem like an exemplary Christian couple, but within the four walls of their home, there is little self-control. The yelling, screaming, even physical abuse runs rampant in too many Christian homes. We have heard all the excuses; 'you don't know my wife (or husband), it's just the way I was raised, it's my personality - it's just who I am.' That may have been who you were, but if you are *in Christ*, you are a *new creation*.

Christians *should* be different than the world around them - different than the *heathen who do not know God*; Peter wrote that self-control is one of the qualities Christians are to make every effort to add to their lives (2Peter 1:5-8). Every Christian can exercise self-control. They must surrender their lives to the Lord, destroy the arguments that set up against the knowledge of God, take captive their thoughts, and walk in the Holy Spirit, not the flesh. "The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered." (Proverbs 17:27) Those who claim to be Christians should be growing taking control over their impulses, emotions, and desires to make it all obedient to Christ.

This means that we Christians are to exhibit self-control in our marriages. That we are to be gaining control over the impulses, emotions, and desires so that we can actually have a marriage that would glorify God - both inside and outside our homes. If you cannot get control over words or actions, get help! See your pastor, a Christian counselor, a respected person you can safely confide in. Do something to learn to control your own body (including your mind and your mouth) in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen who don't know God.

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Articles to check out:

Fruit of the Spirit in Marriage: Self-Control - by Brad & Heidi Mitchell - Buildyourmarriage.org

How is your self-control? - by Carolyn Tatem - marriagefromatoz.org

15 Ways How to Have Self-Control in a Relationship by Jenni Jacobsen - marriage.com