

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT “Temperance”

Gal 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, **temperance**: against such there is no law. KJV

Gal 5:23 gentleness and **self-control**. Against such things there is no law. NIV

I've entitled this message “Temperance” because the term has somewhat of a deeper nuance than simple “self-control.” But self-control is what temperance means, which is why most of the other versions translate it that way, from the Revised Version on up. So, through much of this teaching we will be calling this fruit “self-control” because the term communicates. Later on we will switch to “temperance” because temperance educates.

[Do you know the difference between a communicator and an educator? A communicator takes complex ideas and makes them simple. An educator takes simple ideas and makes them complex! Guess which one I am?]

*In this series, we have followed a pattern that first shows how the Holy Spirit Himself exhibits the character (the fruit of the Spirit) He works in us. We have usually done this by visiting several Scripture to establish that the fruit of the Spirit is indeed **of the Spirit**. Today, we are going to see the self-control of the Holy Spirit in a different way. Everyone take a deep breath. O.K., are you alive? The fact that we are alive is proof that the Holy Spirit knows how to restrain Himself, amen?*

Scripture lists many things. Sometimes the list is progressive, where one thing builds on another. Sometimes the list is climatic, where they all point to the end. Other listings give each ingredient the same importance, while some are simply listings with no particular emphasis or order given to any part. I do not believe the listing of the fruit of the Spirit is progressive any more than I think that the listing of the works of the flesh in verses 19-21 of Galatians 5 are. But if the listing is in any way progressive or climatic, it is in this: self-control caps them all.

Think about it for a moment:

What is **love** without self-control but **lust**?

What is **joy** without self-control but **mania**?

What is **peace** without self-control but **permissiveness**?

What is **patience** without self-control but **passivity**?

What is **kindness** without self-control but **indulgence**?

What is **goodness** without self-control but **naiveté**?

What is **faithfulness** without self-control but **fanaticism**?

What is **meekness** without self-control but **timidity**?

Without self-control it is impossible to exhibit the true character of Christ as worked in us by the Holy Spirit as we walk with Him. In other words, without self-control there is no real love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, or meekness!

Whether the listing in Galatians 5:22-23 is progressive or not, the one in 2 Pet 1 is.

2 Peter 1:4-8

4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,

6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,

7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. NKJV

Peter lists eight qualities in sequence that we must have to be fruitful. The first four are primarily internal and the last four are primarily external. The first four speak of how we must be and the last four speak of how we relate. Self-control is fourth in the list. Four is the number of the world and stands as the fulcrum which leverages out our internal qualities into fruitful relations with others.

A synopsis:

Faith - we must have faith in the saving grace of God.

Virtue - with this faith we develop moral excellence.

Knowledge - we make ourselves aware of the things that pertain to life and godliness.

Temperance – we subject ourselves to the demands of our faith, our moral excellence gained from Christ, and the knowledge we have received of him and walk accordingly.

So that we may exhibit:

Patience – correctly relating to my environment and circumstances.

Godliness – having a true, vital, spiritual relationship with God.

Brotherly kindness – right relationship with saints (brotherly kindness).

Charity – right relationship with a dying world (love of God most tested with enemies, not loved ones).

In short, the Christian life is impossible without self-control. It makes it possible for us to bring our faith, virtue, and knowledge to bear in all of our relationships. But not only is the Christian life impossible without self-control, any life is in danger without it.

Prov 25:28

Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls. NKJV

In ancient times, living in a city or village without walls was to invite danger. One was never secure from whatever marauder might come. So it is when we lack self-control. Any desire or lust can come along and destroy us just like raiders could easily dominate and destroy a city without walls.

The question this raises, though, is this: how is one to control or rule his spirit? I know that man's spirit can be subject to the passions of his body and the imaginations of his soul. And conversely, we know that man by his will [which is in his spirit] can direct his thought and control his flesh. But how is one to gain mastery over his own spirit?

It is precisely here that we must further define our terms. For, you see, true self-control is not controlling myself but having myself controlled.

Following is a portion of W. E. Vine's definition of the Greek word translated temperance in Galatians 5:23:

“the various powers bestowed by God upon man are capable of abuse; the right use demands the controlling power of the will under the operation of the Spirit of God;”

The controlling power of the will, what is that? The will of man which resides in his spirit. This will must be put under the operation of the Spirit of God. The only way to be free of the slavery of our own passions is to submit our will to His and live a Spirit-controlled life.

Now, I know that some might have a knee-jerk reaction to the phrase “a Spirit-controlled life.” For them it might bring up images of people “slain in the spirit” or mediums jerking uncontrollable as they channel information from the “other realm.” Relax. Get over it. We are controlled either by the Spirit or the flesh. Even if by control we meant that there are strings attached as with a puppet, so what? The real question is who you would rather have pulling your strings – God or your glandular system? That being said, the biblical picture of the Spirit-controlled life is not that of a puppet on a string. A puppet on a string is the picture of being enslaved by your flesh, however.

When we drive the speed limit, we are experiencing a state-controlled ride. Did a state trooper materialize by your side and hold your foot forcefully so that you couldn't go past the speed limit? No, if you are going the speed limit you have subjected your will, imagination, and body to the law of the state. This is the picture of a Spirit-controlled life: willful submission to His direction.

Rom 8:5-8, 13-14

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. NKJV

It is by the Spirit that we must put to death the deeds of the flesh. So we see that true temperance is not primarily controlling myself by my self, but submitting my self to His control: His leading and commands. We are not puppets on a string, but priests following the King!

Titus 1:7-9

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; **not selfwilled**, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, **temperate**;

9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. KJV

*The first tangible quality listed as necessary for an elder is that he is not self-willed (blameless is the general category and steward of God is the function or office). Another translation of self-willed is arrogant. In the Greek it is a composite word derived from **autos** and **hedone**. The arrogant man is one who does what he wants to please himself with no restraint. In other words, a self-pleasing man who follows pleasures instead of God.*

2 Peter 2:9-19

9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, **self-willed**. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries,

11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

12 But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption,

13 and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it **pleasure** to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you,

14 **having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.**

15 They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

17 These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

18 For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.

19 **While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.** NKJV

2 Peter 2:19

They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity-**for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.** NIV

This section speaks of people in the church! They were in the love feasts, compared to false prophets, have forsaken the right way and are called cursed children. The penalty for not having self-control is steep. For them is reserved the blackest of darkness! Not only does lack of self-control impact our inheritance in the Millennial Kingdom, it also chokes us out in the here and now.

Luke 8:14

And the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. NKJV

The pleasures of life are thorns. We think the pleasures are fun and good, but they are pricking us and choking us. "I want to enjoy myself," we say while all the while we asphyxiate! Is the answer a stoic and Spartan life? No, the answer is to delight in Him so that we may truly have joy and enjoy living!

Titus 3:1-6

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,
2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.
3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.
4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,
5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,
6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, NKJV

The washing regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit has saved us from the bondage of serving divers lusts and pleasures! Hallelujah, He has set us free! We have been saved! So let us not live like we were in bondage any longer. Any time we decide to once again live in bondage to our lusts and pleasures, we become like the Israelites who thought the severe bondage in Egypt was preferable to walking with the Lord in the wilderness!

This section also gives us a practical means of gaining self-control: remaining subject to governmental authorities and being ready to serve our communities with good works. Again, self-control is not controlling myself by my self, but submitting my self to Him. So why don't we for now depart from the language of "self-control" and shift to "temperance?"

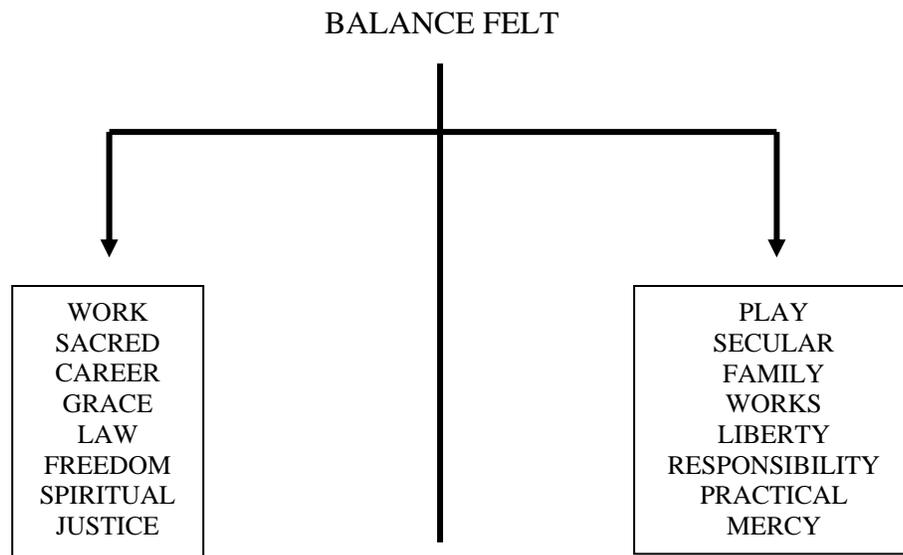
We shall, but we must clarify. In recent times, the classical understand of temperance was replaced with the idea of moderation. You know, "let all things be done in moderation." Remember that verse? If you do, I would like to see it. Scripture says "Let your moderation be known to all men." But this moderation means equitable, fair, mild, and gentle. When we speak of moderation we mean "not in excessive amounts." This is a huge shift in thought. Let me show you:

Temperance	-	no drinking
Moderation	-	drinking is small, measured amounts

Which would be a real virtue?

We didn't stop there, however. From temperance to moderation, we moved to balance. For example, "We need to have a balanced life . . . balanced walk . . . a balanced diet." You can fill in the blank, you've probably heard it. Now, we have a sense of what we are saying when we say such things. We mean to be saying that nothing in our life should be out of proportion. Being balanced today is what we used to call "well rounded." If we say someone has a balanced doctrine, we think this a compliment. And this philosophy, spurred on by this change of language, has led us to comments like "We need to pray and intercede, but we need to witness and eat too. We must keep things balanced," when Scripture says "pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17). Or maybe you've heard something like "our judgment and mercy must be balanced," when Scripture says that mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13).

I don't think we really appreciate how much the balanced philosophy has taken over our view of life.



Part of the definition of balance is "a stable state characterized by the cancellation of forces, weights, or the like **by equal opposing ones.**"¹ In other words, in balance we have a zero net gain. Perhaps the subtleness of this type of thinking can be seen for what it is when we balance:

LOVE	HATE
PEACE	WAR
GOOD	EVIL
LIGHT	DARKNESS
YIN	YANG

¹ *Tormont Websters Illustrated Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 1990 publication, Tormont Publications, Inc. Emphasis added.

As often as we use the term in teachings and sermons while exhorting congregations not to get out of hand (“let’s not get out of balance”), one would think that the word “balance” or “balanced” would be all over the Bible. But it doesn’t show up at all in the New Testament of the KJV, NIV, NKJV, NAS, or TEV. And in the ASV, RSV, and TLB it only shows up in the New Testament once in Revelation 6:5 where it is talking about a set of scales. And as a set of scales is how it is used in the Old Testament, not as a philosophy of life!

Why is this important and what does it have to do with temperance? It is important because ungodly beliefs sneak into our lives on the heels of fuzzy language. The biblical ideal of balance has to do with weights and measures, not the different proportions of areas of our lives.

Lev 19:36-37

36 You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37 Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I am the LORD.' " NKJV

The Lord associates honest scales and weights to observing His statutes and judgments. Biblical balance is coming up to the weight the Lord requires while being measured in an honest scale.

Dan 5:27 TEKEL: **You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting;** NKJV

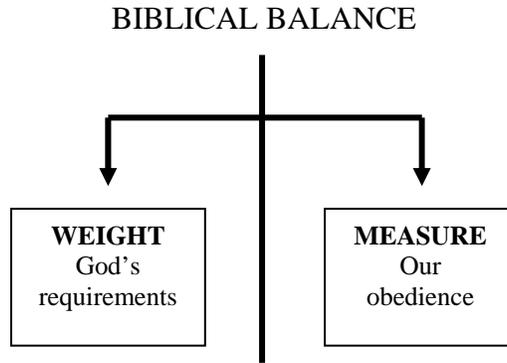
In the last half of the 17th century, clock makers were racing to make a clock accurate enough to help them calculate the longitude at sea. Pendulum clocks had been invented and they increased the accuracy of clocks immensely. But they were not accurate enough. And why they were not more accurate was not immediately obvious. Some theorized that the problem lay in the pendulum itself. That as heat and cold affected the metal, the pendulum would grow or shrink and thus affect the consistency of its swing. This idea was refuted, though, by a simple empirical test. A clock was made in Europe and its brass pendulum was measured with a carefully marked ruler. This clock was then shipped to the tropics. Scientist went to the tropics, measured the pendulum with the same ruler and found that its length had not changed one bit. There was only one problem in their experiment which they didn’t stop to consider. The ruler was made of brass!²

2 Cor 10:12

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When **they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves**, they are not wise. NIV

The standard is not what we think or want. The standard is Christ.

² From *Revolution in Time*, David Landes, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. © 1983, 2000 the President and fellows of Harvard College, p. 144.



OVERLAY THE CROSS

The only way God's requirements could ever have come into balance was through the obedience of Jesus Christ having offered himself a perfect sacrifice after completely obeying the will of God.

The word temperance comes from temper. To temper means to modify by the addition of a moderating agent or quality, i.e. temper severity with kindness. To temper is to mix in proper proportion. In tempering, there isn't a cancellation but an enhancement of qualities. To illustrate the difference between tempering and balancing, we can think of cooking recipes. In cooking, we generally temper things, we don't balance them.

BALANCE = 5 oz of sugar with 5 oz of salt

TEMPER = 1/3 cup of sugar (16 tsp) with 1 tsp of salt

As the word temperance comes from temper, we need to be tempered to exhibit temperance. In Scripture we find three types of tempering with regard to offerings and people. They are tempered with oil, salt, and/or fire.

Oil-

The Torah speaks of the unleavened bread being tempered with oil (Ex 29:2 and others). This same word is translated anointing in Ps. 92:10.

Ps 92:10

But my horn You have exalted like a wild ox; I have been anointed with fresh oil. NKJV

It is the anointing, the tempering of the Holy Spirit with our Spirit, that breaks the yoke of bondage.

Isa 10:27

It shall come to pass in that day That his burden will be taken away from your shoulder, And his yoke from your neck, **And the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil.** NKJV

Once the yoke of oppression is broken by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, we can submit to His yoke.

Matt 11:29-30

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." NKJV

Salt-

The holy incense was tempered together (Ex. 30:35) with salt. No sacrifice was to be offered without it.

Lev 2:13

Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; **add salt to all your offerings.** NIV

We are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1), thus we need to be salted.

Mark 9:50

"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? **Have salt in yourselves,** and be at peace with each other." NIV

We need to stay salted. This means to remain pure and be obedient to the covenant of our God. It is the "salt" of His covenant.

Heat (fire)-

Another aspect of tempering is "to harden, strengthen, or toughen by application of heat or by alternate heating and cooling." This is what the Bible calls being "tried in a furnace."

1 Peter 4:12-13

12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning **the fiery trial which is to try you,** as though some strange thing happened to you;

13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. NKJV

Mark 9:49 Everyone will be salted with fire. NIV

We are to be tempered with oil, salt, and fire. The oil is the anointing that breaks the yoke. The salt is our covenant sacrifice and purity. And the fire are the trials that test our faith and strengthen our resolve. Once we have been tempered (or to the degree we have been tempered) we can show temperance.

Being Temperate-

Acts 24:24-25

24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. KJV

Here temperance is paired with righteousness. Righteousness is God's requirements or claim (the weight in the balance) and self-control is to be our response.

[We should note that self-control was part of Paul's presentation of the Gospel. How often have you witness to an unsaved person and they have told you they weren't ready to become a Christian because they did not want to give up certain aspects of their life yet? But somehow, what the sinner knows intuitively the saint seems to forget and thinks that by grace we can do anything because we already have Christ!]

Gal 5:23

Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. KJV

Here, temperance is paired with meekness. We have seen that the only way to gain control over our lusts is to give control of our lives to the Holy Spirit. Submitting our will to His is meekness.

2 Peter 1:6

And to **knowledge temperance**; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; KJV

In Peter, temperance is paired with knowledge. This indicates that once we learn the requirements of God, we are expected to do them.

James 1:19-22

19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. NKJV

Once we are tempered by oil, salt, and fire, temperance requires righteousness, meekness, and knowledge. Jesus has made us righteous and has engraved His requirements on our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We need to meekly submit to these requirements and continually become knowledgeable of them.

How do we practically walk out self-control?

1. Make no provision for the flesh

Rom 13:14

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. NKJV

2. Bring our bodies into subjection

1 Cor 9:24-27

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

- 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.
- 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:
- 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. KJV

“Keep under,” literally means “give a black eye.” Paul says that he gives himself black eyes to make his body his slave. Sounds like plucking your eye out to not go to hell, doesn’t it? (Matt 5:29). This word is translated “weary” in Luke 18.

3. Pray

Luke 18:1-7

- 1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;
- 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:
- 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.
- 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;
- 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.
- 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.
- 7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? KJV

We need to cry out to God for justice and deliverance! Prayer and fasting will go a long way to discipline us toward self-control.

Scripture teaches us that we should examine ourselves to see if we are indeed in the faith (2 Cor 13:5). Following are some questions for self-examination about your level of self-control.

How much self-control do you have?³

- Do you give more time to spiritual pursuits than to the pleasures of the world?
- Do you bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ?
- Do you control your eating or do you indulge in foods you know are unhealthy?
- Do you literally cry out to God for deliverance from addictions?
- Do you remove provisions for indulgences so you will not fulfill them?
- Do you ever erupt in uncontrollable anger?
- Do you acknowledge your weakness so you can experience the power of Christ?

Christianity is not a balancing act. It is the filling up of the measure of the standard and weight the Lord requires of us in righteous living while controlling our natural and carnal desires by following the leading of the Holy Spirit so that by His power He may work the character of Christ in us. Amen!

³ Adapted from *The Power for True Success: How to Build Character in Your Life*, © 2001 Institute of Basic Life Principles, Oak Brook, IL, p. 163