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What Does the Bible Say About Self-Control (Temperance)? — Devotional and Prayer · KJV Scriptures with Strong's Numbers

A DEVOTIONAL AND A PRAYER · A SHORT READING TO CARRY, AND A PRAYER TO CLOSE

Temperance — Foundational Biblical Doctrine

OPENING WORD

Today, before the day carries you wherever it wants, take up the first rule: rule your own spirit. That is the greatest power a person is given — greater than capturing a city. You will meet a lawful thing that wants to master you, and an unlawful thing that wants to sell you; and the self-controlled person says no to both. Be sober. Stay alert. Keep your body under control, and make no room for the flesh. You do not need to be strong on your own, because self-control is a fruit of the Spirit — it grows on his vine, not on yours. Decide in your heart before the hour of temptation comes, the way Daniel decided before the king's food was set in front of him; and when the sin grabs your clothing, run, the way Joseph ran. What you let go of for his sake is a piece of clothing; what you keep is yourself. Grace teaches you to say no to ungodliness, and the self-controlled person runs for a crown that never fades away. Search it out.

GREEK KEYWORDS

“temperance” — **G1466 egkrateia** — self-control
the fruit of the Spirit is meekness, temperance — it grows from him.

“be sober” — **G3525 nepho** — to be discreet, to watch
be sober, be vigilant, for the adversary walks about.

HEBREW KEYWORDS

“rule” — **H4910 mashal** — to rule, to have dominion
he that rules his spirit is better than he that takes a city.

“rule” — **H4623 matsar** — control, restraint

he that has no rule over his own spirit is a city without walls.

I. RULE THINE OWN SPIRIT

Proverbs 16:32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth [H4910 mashal] his spirit than he that taketh a city.

HE THAT RULETH HIS SPIRIT = BETTER THAN HE THAT TAKETH A CITY.

(My personal thoughts — today, the great battle is not out there but inside you. You may never capture a city, but you can rule your spirit, and God counts that the greater victory. Be slow to anger today; hold your spirit the way a governor holds a city, and you are stronger than the mighty.)

II. TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS

1 Corinthians 9:25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate [G1467 egkrateuomai] in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

STRIVETH FOR THE MASTERY = TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS → AN INCORRUPTIBLE CROWN.

(My personal thoughts — notice the measure: self-controlled in ALL things, not just in some. An athlete in training denies himself many lawful things for one prize that withers away. Deny yourself one thing today for a prize that cannot wither, and you have run well.)

THE WORD TO HIDE IN THE HEART

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Galatians 5:23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE.

THE PRAYER

Lord, you are the God who gives the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit is self-control; so I am not asking for my own strength, but for yours. Teach me today to rule my own spirit, which is a greater thing than capturing a city; make me slow to anger, and sober, and watchful, because my enemy is prowling around. Keep my body under control, and let no lawful thing become my master; let me make no room for the flesh, to satisfy its cravings. Set the purpose in my heart before the hour of temptation comes, the way Daniel decided ahead of time; and when sin takes hold of me, give me the feet of Joseph, to run and keep myself pure. And because the love of many people will grow cold, give me the self-control to hold on to the end and not grow lukewarm — keep me competing by the rules, so that I will not be disqualified, but receive the crown that never fades away. So teach me, by your grace, to say no to ungodliness and worldly cravings, and to live sensible, upright, and godly lives, looking forward to that blessed hope. Amen.

CLOSING

1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

GOD IS FAITHFUL → WITH THE TEMPTATION HE WILL ALSO MAKE A WAY TO ESCAPE, THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO BEAR IT.