

Self-Control

All about Self-Control

Self-control separates us from our ancient ancestors and the rest of the animal kingdom, thanks to our large prefrontal cortex. It is the ability to subdue our impulses in order to achieve longer-term [goals](#). Rather than responding to immediate impulses, we can plan, evaluate alternative actions, and, often enough, avoid doing things we'll later regret. The ability to exert self-control is typically called willpower. It is what allows us to direct our attention, and it underlies all kinds of achievement.

There is significant debate in science as to whether or not willpower is a finite resource. Studies demonstrate that exercising willpower makes heavy demands on mental energy, notably on reserves of glucose, the [brain's](#) preferred fuel, creating [ego depletion](#). It's one reason we're more apt to reach for that chocolate chip cookie when we're feeling stressed than when we're feeling on top of the world. Recently, scientists have failed to replicate some of the studies underlying the concept of ego depletion, and more research is underway.

When the believer's spiritual life reaches its culmination, he can rule over himself.

When we say that the Holy Spirit within us lords over us, we do not mean that the Holy Spirit Himself directly rules over any part of our person. We choose to obey or disobey. (FREE WILL)

If the believer has this misunderstanding, he will either be possessed by the demons or become discouraged when he does not see the Holy Spirit ruling over his life in this way.

If a believer realizes that the Holy Spirit is leading him into self-rule, he will not fall into passivity; on the contrary, he will advance greatly in his spiritual life.

"The fruit of the Spirit is...temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23, KJV).

The original meaning of temperance is self-control.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to lead the believer's outer man into full submission to his self-rule.

The Holy Spirit depends on the believer's renewed will to reign over himself.

- **Whenever a believer acts according to the flesh, the outward man rebels against the spirit.**
- **This rebellion does not come as one integrated rebellion, but as uncoordinated rebellious acts.**

When a believer is really spiritual and when he bears the fruit of the Spirit, not only can kindness, joy, meekness, etc., be found in him (in his soul), but also the power of self-control can be found in him.

Although the outward man was confused at one time, it is now totally subdued and fully under the reign of his own rule in accordance with the will of the Holy Spirit.

First a believer must control his spirit so that his spirit is always in a proper condition.

It should not be too angry or too depressed, but in a proper position.

Our spirit, like our other parts, needs to be under the control of our will.

A believer can only control his own spirit and keep it in the proper place when his mind is renewed and when he is full of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The experienced believer knows that when his spirit becomes agitated, he has to exercise his will to control it.

When the spirit becomes too depressed, he has to exercise his will to uplift it.

Only in this way can the believer walk in the spirit every day.

When we say that the spirit controls our whole being, we mean that the intuition of the spirit expresses God's will.

Consequently, the spirit controls our whole being (including our will) through God's will.

When we say that our will controls our whole being, we mean that our will is directly controlling our whole being (including our spirit) according to God's will.

Experientially these two things are fully compatible with each other. **"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls"** (Prov. 25:28).

Second, the believer should control his mind and the other faculties of his soul.

Every thought should be subjected to the control of the will.

All wandering thoughts must come under the control of the will.

- **"Take captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ"** (2 Cor. 10:5).
- **"Set your mind on the things which are above"** (Col. 3:2).

Third, the body should be under control.

Man's body should be a tool to him and not become his master through wild cravings and lusts.

The believer must use his will to control, train, and subdue his body so that it can be completely obedient and wait on God's will without any resistance.

"But I buffet my body and make it my slave" (1 Cor. 9:27).

When the believer's will reaches the state of total self-control, he will not be frustrated by any part of his being.

Once he knows God's will, he can instantly respond.

Both the Holy Spirit and man's spirit need an autonomous will to carry out God's revelation.

Hence, on the one hand, we should be one with God; on the other hand, we should buffet our whole being so that it will obey us fully.

This is very important to our spiritual life.