

Self-Control

For even though I [Paul] am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ. (Colossians 2:5)

The last attribute of the fruit of the Spirit is *self-control*, which also means temperance, restraint, and self-discipline. As with all aspects of the fruit, we must examine ourselves and think about what we are doing (I Corinthians 11:27-32). We are exhorted to present the members of our body as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:8-14), and doing so requires self-control because we are so apt to sin instead. As examples of exercising self-control, we should:

- Be sober-minded (awake to righteousness) and stop living according to our sinful nature (I Corinthians 15:34; Galatians 5:16-21; Ephesians 4:17-24; 5:3-4, 11-12);
- Flee from sin; i.e., avoid or remove ourselves from sinful situations (I Corinthians 6:18; I Timothy 6:10-11);
- Avoid being angry or slanderous (Ephesians 4:31-32; James 1:19-21);
- Be mature in our thoughts and actions (I Corinthians 13:4-7; 14:20; 16:13-14); and
- Do the right thing because it is the right thing to do (Romans 12:17; II Corinthians 13:7; Colossians 3:17, 23; James 4:17; I Peter 2:15, 20; 3:17; 4:19).

Paul reminded the Colossian brethren to set their minds on things above instead on things of the earth (worldly thoughts) because they had been raised up with Christ (Colossians 3:1-3). Because we are in Christ, who is at the right hand of God in the heavens, all believers are considered by God to be citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20-21); therefore, we should think and act accordingly. It is apparent that the Colossian brethren generally were already doing so, because Paul rejoiced in their good discipline and the stability of their faith in Christ. Could the same be said about us?

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men [fools] but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15-16)

Brethren, do not be children in your thinking [understanding]; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. (I Corinthians 14:20)