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Ebb Tide by Sandy Simpson



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This is a timely word from A.W. Tozer, born 1897 and died 1963, from *Renewed Day By Day*, Vol. 2, December 8. As Christians we need repentance and self-control in a world and in a Christendom that has gone back to the days where "every man did what was right in his own eyes".

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. (2 Corinthians 7:10)

It is a fact that the New Testament message of good news, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures," embraces a great deal more than an offer of free pardon.

Surely it is a message of pardon—and for that may God be praised—but it is also a message of repentance!

It is a message of atonement—but it is also a message of temperance and righteousness and godliness in this present world!

It tells us that we must accept a Savior—but it tells us also that we must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts!

The gospel message includes the idea of amendment—of separation from the world, of cross-carrying

and loyalty to the kingdom of God even unto death!

These are all corollaries of the gospel and not the gospel itself; but they are part and parcel of the total message which we are commissioned to declare. No man has authority to divide the truth and preach only a part of it. To do so is to weaken it and render it without effect!

SELF CONTROL

Address Correction Requested

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Fruit Of the Spirit Series—Self-Control by Sandy Simpson

The Ninth Fruit of God's Spirit listed in the Bible is the fruit of **Self-Control**, sometimes translated **Temperance**.

Self control means that we have control over our bodies and our minds. Actions and thoughts do not control us, we control what we think, and what we do. When we know something is wrong, but we do it anyway, we aren't controlled by the fruit of the Spirit, one of which is self-control. When we feel like doing something we know we shouldn't, we are being tempted. Everyone is tempted to do wrong things sometimes. Even Jesus was tempted. We all sin and give into temptations now and again, but Jesus exercised God's spirit of self-control and never sinned.

Heb. 4:15

Growing up, Jesus must have been tempted many times to do wrong things, but God's Spirit enabled

Him to resist temptation. The Bible tells of a time, just before He begin His earthly ministry, when Jesus had to exercise a great deal of self-control, when He was tempted by the greatest of tempters, Satan the devil.

Matt. 4:3

Satan tried to destroy Jesus. Our battles aren't as big as the ones Jesus faced. But we do have many temptations, just like Jesus did. Jesus knew what was written in God's Word, and He didn't fall for Satan's tricks. If we know God's Word we, too, will know right from wrong. Jesus is our example and our strength. When we are tempted to do wrong we should rely upon the Word of God and remember how much God loves us and the trials and suffering He went through for us. That will help us resist the devil.

John 3:16, John 15:13, Jas. 4:7



Because Jesus was tempted He knows what it is like to suffer temptation. When we are tempted and ask for help Jesus understands. He tells the Father what it's like to be human, and God gives us the help we need to resist temptation.

Heb. 4:15, Heb 2:18

Practicing self-control (temperance) means we say no to things that might harm our bodies or our minds. It's not always easy to say, "That's enough!". That's why we need God's spirit of self-control. Some habits are hard to break. The best way to deal with bad habits is not to start them in the first place. Sometimes people lead us into bad

"Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." by Sandy Simpson

Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

The state of Christianity today has returned to a similar condition that Israel was in during the time of the judges. This statement in Judges 17:6 and 21:25 is not a positive

statement about Israel, but a negative one. This sin of "doing that which was right in (their) own eyes" was what accounted for the sin of Micah in continuing in idol worship. There were no judges in the land to point out this sin or restrain the people from it. The law of God had been forsaken and replaced with subjectivism. This is exactly what we are seeing today in our postmodern, relativist culture. It is to be expected that the

world will act like this, but this attitude has also entered and almost overwhelmed Christendom as we know it. Christianity is being remade in the image of imaginations of men (Rom. 1:21). The rules are being set by false teachers, and the Christian masses are quick to follow. Only those who listen to the judges of today, those with Holy Spirit and biblical discernment, will be saved in this age of apostasy.

Fruit Of the Spirit Series—Self-Control *cont.*

things they think are fun. They don't know that doing such things can lead to a lot of trouble. God tells us that a Christian's body is the temple of His Spirit.

1 Cor. 6:15

We need to treat our bodies with respect. If someone wants us to smoke, or drink, or do something else to harm our bodies we need to tell them 'NO!' just like Jesus told Satan when he wanted Him to do something that was wrong. Solomon tells us the same thing.

Prov. 1:10

A good athlete practices self-control so that he can play a good game. God wants us to practice self-control so that we can inherit His Kingdom.

1 Cor. 9:25

Having self-control doesn't mean we do without good things. Jesus enjoyed the good things God gave Him and some people, who didn't understand, called Him bad names.

Matt. 11:19

But Jesus knew it was all right to enjoy certain things in moderation.

He didn't let what other people said about Him upset Him. It's not always easy to practice self-control in dealing with others. Sometimes people say or do things that are mean. How do we deal with these people? God wants us to have a tough skin but a soft heart.

He wants us to forgive those who hurt our feelings. He wants us to try and help heal the hurts of others. God wants us to turn the other cheek and be peacemakers.

Matt. 5:38-48

God wants us to be friends with as many people as we can.

Rom. 12:18

Everyone makes mistakes, and everyone says things they shouldn't.

Jas 3:8

God wants us to learn to control our speech.

1 Pet. 3:10

He wants us to control our tempers too.

Prov. 16:32, Ecc. 7:9, Eph. 4:26

When someone is mean to us God

doesn't want us to be mean back.

Rom. 12:17

He wants us to exercise the spirit of self-control.

Rom. 12:21

Sometimes it works to be nice to the person who is being mean to us.

Prov. 15:1

Sometimes we have to avoid people who are mean.

Rom. 16:17

But we should always pray for them.

Luke 6:28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Biblical Examples Of Self-control

Daniel is one of many good examples from the Bible of a man who was self-controlled. He had many opportunities to act in a disorderly or impatient way, but he always showed self-control. When he was a young man he could have eaten like a glutton on the king's food, but he was self-controlled and followed the Law of Moses. Because of his stand for what he believed in he and his friends were put into service to the king himself.

Dan. 1:19-20 The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

When Nebuchadnezzar asked Daniel to interpret his dreams, Daniel never took personal credit for the interpretations but always gave the full glory to God.

Dan. 2:27-28 Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven

who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come.

Later in the kingdom of Darius the administrators and the satraps devised a plot to have Daniel killed by having Darius sign a law that prevented anyone from praying to any other god or man except himself for thirty days. Daniel could have become angry and gone to the king, but instead he continued his daily prayers for Israel.

Daniel 6:10-11 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened towards Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.

We all know how God delivered Daniel from the lion's den. God delivered Daniel because he was a faithful servant and to show that He alone was the one true God to the rulers of Persia. Because of Daniel's self-control in the face of impossible circumstances, death and lions God did miraculous things through him.

The Bible teaches self-control throughout.

Pr 25:28 Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.

Pr 29:11 A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.

This teaching continues into the New Testament Gentile church. Christians were to control their fleshly lusts.

1Th 4:4 that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honourable,

Tit 2:12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

Leaders in the church were to be men of self-control.

1Ti 3:2-3 Now the overseer must be

"Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." *end*

commit to it, and follow it or we die. We can claim we are "born again" all day long but if we choose to live by "Minnesota make-em-as-you-go rules" instead of the "law of Christ" we prove we do not love

the Lord, and He in turn will not love us (John 15:10). This article is a warning to all those who think they can rewrite Christianity in their own image. Think again! Δ

Bible Study *end*

mercy. He can cancel our debt and let us go free if He suffers the loss. Why would He do this? He wants to make us new creatures so that we can be reconciled to Him. He loves us and wants a day-by-day living relationship with us, but He is holy and we are sinners. **II Cor. 5:17-19**

Do we forgive others? We are created in God's image, and should be like Him, loving and forgiving others as He has forgiven us. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount that forgiveness and reconciliation must come before prayer and worship. **Matt. 5:23-24** What should be our immediate reaction to God's canceling of our sin debt? (Not only when we are saved, but each day afterward!) There should be appreciation for God's great mercy and commitment to following His example and being like Him. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." When we pray that we are asking the Lord to forgive us only if we have already forgiven others. Notice that the word "debt" is used to mean sin. Jesus just before He spoke this parable taught the disciples about how to handle a problem between brothers in Christ. **Matt. 18:15-17**

How big are the debts against us? Some of them are very small! Someone said something we didn't like or looked at us a certain way or didn't answer when we spoke! They are worth a few cents compared to our millions of dollars in debt. But what if someone had wounded us many times? It isn't easy to forgive wounds from the past that have hurt us deeply. But can it even compare with the way we hurt the

Lord often many times a day - through selfishness, ignoring Him when He wants to meet with us, disobedience to His Word, etc.? Even the biggest debts that are owed to us are very small compared with what we owe the Lord. We want to make others suffer ("in prison") for what they owe us. The least we can do is make them feel really guilty. The greatest punishment we give is to take revenge - maybe by using magic or curse

What are the results of our unforgiving spirit? People, like the other servants in the parable, notice what we are doing. They are surprised. "Wasn't he forgiven a huge debt through the King's mercy?" "I thought she was a Christian. She certainly doesn't act like one." They are greatly distressed at the gross injustice and lack of grace in our lives. We are demonstrating that: 1) we have no compassion on others; 2) we are very selfish; 3) there is no real gratitude in our lives for what God has done for us; 4) we demand the exact payment from people that we feel they owe us (or maybe more); 5) we enjoy seeing people suffer who have hurt us. Jonah is the prime example of these attitudes.

The Master knows what is happening and He will call us to account for it. He calls us "wicked". That makes it clear that in His accounting unforgiveness is sin. He reminds us of His mercy - His willingness to take our great debt as His personal loss by giving the life of His only dear Son! He tells us that His expectation was that we would willingly follow His example. How did Joseph do that?

Why didn't we follow His example of freely forgiving? "Refusal to forgive others shows that we have never truly repented of our own sins."

The Master turned his servant over to the torturers. Does this mean that we open ourselves to the enemy who likes to torture us when we have a proud, stubborn, unforgiving spirit? It is dangerous because a root of bitterness can grow up in our hearts and we may not be able to repent if we hold that grudge for a long time. **Heb. 12:15** How does Esau demonstrate this? The Lord may allow us to go through trouble and torment by the enemy until we can see that we must be merciful as He is. If we refuse to follow God's way and have His attitudes, He may allow us to be tortured to punish us or to discipline us so that we can see our failings and repent.

This wonderful parable is all about treating others as God has treated us. He has forgiven our huge debt; the least we can do is forgive the small debts of others. He has abundantly blessed us with spiritual blessings; we must pass on these spiritual blessings to others by telling them of Christ and teaching them His way. He has graciously supplied our needs; we must be open to see how He wants us to supply the needs of others. He has comforted and strengthened us; we should do the same for others. Jesus said in **John 13:14-15**, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." Δ



Juanita Simpson is a retired missionary still serving the Lord in Micronesia after 43 years of ministry.

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Video Study Series

Sandy Simpson

“Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” *cont.*

Let me give you just a few examples of ways in which Christianity is being remade in the image of what seems right to men. For corroboration of the facts of what is going on, come to the Apologetics Coordination Team web site for further information at:

http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com/

REMAKE

Postmodernism is good and even in the nature of God Christians can mix New Age Eastern Mysticism with Christianity.

WHO'S TEACHING IT

Emerging Church: Leonard Sweet, Brian McLaren, Dan Kimball, Richard Foster and many others.

REMAKE

Cultures were created by God and are being redeemed by Him Pagans can go back to worship of their former gods because they were really worshipping the true God all along

WHO'S TEACHING IT

Indigenous People's Movement/New Apostolic Reformation (NAR): YWAM, John Dawson, Don Richardson, Richard Twiss, Terry LeBlanc and many others.

REMAKE

Anything to get more people into churches. Compromise of the Gospel and truth because the end justifies the means.

WHO'S TEACHING IT

Church Growth Movement: Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, Robert Schuller, C. Peter Wagner, Paul Yonggi Cho and many others.

REMAKE

Our mandate is to take over the world, the governments, the businesses for Christ, thereby

ushering in the return of Christ. Whole cities and nations can be saved and transformed

WHO'S TEACHING IT

Dominionism: NAR, Transformations movement, C. Peter Wagner, Ed Silvano, George Otis, Jr., YWAM, Bill Hamon, Paul Cain, Francis Frangipane, and the majority of Christians and Christian teachers.

REMAKE

Promises of "healing in the atonement" are made in order to fleece the flock. Wild claims and stories are told with no proof in order to build a following and secure fame and fortune for those who teach these things. We are all little gods who can create reality by what we confess with our mouths

WHO'S TEACHING IT

Word-Faith: Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, and almost every teacher on TBN, Daystar, and other TV networks.

REMAKE

Psychology mixed with Christianity. I'm ok, you're ok. Positive thinking, positive confession. Suppression of the hard facts of the Gospel. "Talkstory" with Scripture twisting.

WHO'S TEACHING IT

Positive Thinking/Schullerism: Robert Schuller, Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, Joel Osteen and a host of others.

REMAKE

Heavy shepherding (Nicolaitanism) control of churches and all Christendom. Agenda based on false prophecy and implemented by false apostles. False Latter Rain/Dominionist teachings

WHO'S TEACHING IT

New Apostolic Reformation (NAR): C. Peter Wagner, Cindy Jacobs, Dutch Sheets, Bill Hamon, Mike Bickle, YWAM and many

others.

REMAKE

Legalism, adding works to salvation

WHO'S TEACHING IT

Hyper-Fundamentalists, Hyper-Pentecostals: Many denominations on both sides of this extreme.

REMAKE

Antinomianism, holding that it is not necessary to exhibit moral behavior as a Christian as we are saved by faith alone. A denial of the importance of sanctification because "once saved, always saved". Easy believism.

WHO'S TEACHING IT

Hyper-Calvinists: Many denominations.

REMAKE

Holding that there is good in all men and the Holy Spirit is just looking for that good. The fall of man was not complete and he is able to choose to be saved because he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

WHO'S TEACHING IT

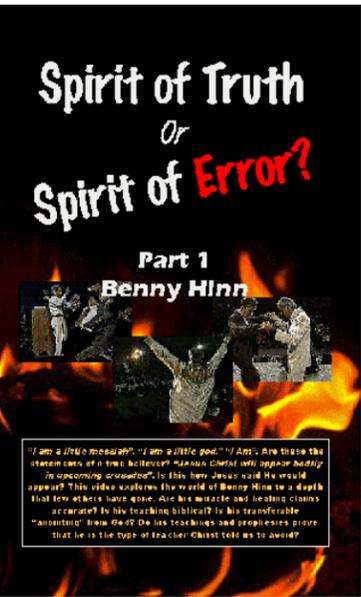
Hyper-Arminianists/Pelegianists: Rick Joyner, Francis Frangipane, many denominations.

CONCLUSION

These are just a few examples of the redefinition of Christianity in the image and imaginations of men. But the Bible clearly teaches against these concepts. Yet in an age where everyone does what is right in their own eyes it is not surprising to see the Bible redefined or simply ignored. But there are consequences to doing what is right in our own eyes. It is "the way of death" (Prov. 14:12). Those who teach these things are bringing strange fire before the Lord Jesus Christ and will be judged for it. They will not simply lose their rewards in heaven. If they continue that Bible says they will suffer damnation if they continue to disobey the Lord. You cannot just make up Christianity. As Larry Norman once sang "The rules were set down long ago when the spikes went in the wood". The truth of this world is not that it is subjective, but that the objective God set down His objective rules and agenda and we either accept it,

Spirit of Truth Or Spirit of Error?

**Part 1
Benny Hinn**



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Fruit Of the Spirit Series—Self-Control *cont.*

above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, **self-controlled**, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

The qualities of the true believer included self-control.

2 Pet. 1:5-8 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, **self-control**; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Self-control is God's method to keep us alert to deception.

1Thes. 5:6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be **alert and self-controlled**. 1Pet. 5:8 **Be self-controlled and alert.** Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Self-control also prepares us for action, for witness.

1Pet. 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; **be self-controlled**; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Self-control allows us to be ready for the return of Christ and to be able to pray with a clear head. In a moment we will read verses that totally destroy the false doctrine taught in many churches today that you must quit praying to receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit teaches us to have a clear mind and have self-control, not to get slain in the spirit, roll around on the floor, and make animal noises.

1Pet. 4:7 The end of all things is near. Therefore **be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.** 1Cor. 14:33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, 1as 3:16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

What are we to do with those Christians who are disorderly, not under self-control?

2 Thes. 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye **withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly**, and not after the tradition which he received from us.

We know that in the last days, which we are now in, it will be a time without self-control.

2 Tim. 3:1-5 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, **without self-control**, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God -- having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

We are to be self-controlled, having nothing to do with those who are not self-controlled. This is because those who practice no self-control tend to infect those who have a desire to live godly lives of self-control. Pretty soon everyone is out of control and God is out of the picture.

Stories Of Self-Control

"Self-control is the capacity to break a chocolate bar into four pieces with your bare hands - and then eat just one of the pieces."

Self-control is an act of the will. It is a strong act that results in humility and love.

Marshmallow Experiment

The most important thing about emotional self-control is the ability to delay immediate gratification or desires in favor of reaching a goal in the future. The importance of this fact was shown in an experiment begun in the 1960s by psychologist Walter Mischel at a preschool on the Stanford University campus. Children were told that they could have a single treat, such as a marshmallow, right now. However, if they would wait while the experimenter ran an errand, they could have two marshmallows. Some

preschoolers grabbed the marshmallow immediately, but others were able to wait what, for them, must have seemed an endless 20 minutes. It is hard for those who chose to wait so in their struggle, they covered their eyes so they wouldn't see the temptation, rested their heads on their arms, talked to themselves, sang, even

"Men are able to be free only as they are able to put chains on their own appetites."

tried to sleep. When the experimenter returned they were rewarded with two marshmallows. The interesting part of this experiment came in the follow-up. The children who as 4-year-olds had been able to wait for the two marshmallows were, when they were older children, still able to delay immediate gratification or fulfillment of desires in pursuing their goals. They were more able to deal with social life and were more bold and self-assertive, and better able to cope with life's frustrations. In contrast, the kids who grabbed the one marshmallow were as older children more likely to be stubborn, unable to make up their minds or indecisive, and stressed out.

Unfortunately we are teaching our children, in fact our whole world today is being taught through TV, movies, music, books, magazines that self-control is something that is undesirable. The world says that you can be much more free if you would just lose your self-control. This has even entered the church, especially with regards to slain in the spirit where it is being taught that you can only have the Holy Spirit if you lose your self-control. But self-control is actually the very thing that brings freedom.

Passions Forge Their Fetters

British statesman Edmund Burke argued, "men are able to be free only as they are able to put chains on their own appetites. Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it

there is within people, the more there has to be in society. It is an eternal principle of things that men who have no self-control minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters (their lack of self-control makes the chains that bind them).

I know many of you have been to school. I suppose you remember having to try to arrange your schedule to get your homework and special projects done, as well as all the other activities. This was where you learned about self-control. You could let everything go till the last second, but if you did it became much more painful and you worried about it the whole time until you got it done. One day you decided to get your work done ahead of time and you found out that not only did you have free time on your hands, but you didn't have the worry anymore either.

Self-control also goes over into the area of appetite. I am talking about appetite not just for food but everything in life. If we let our appetites get the best of us, we lose freedom. If we eat too much food we get fat and are not able to do some things we used to do when we were slim.

"You Can't Run the Country If You Can't Run Yourself"

During his term as President of the U.S., Lyndon Johnson was somewhat overweight. One day his wife challenged him with this blunt observation: "You can't run the country if you can't run yourself." Respecting Mrs. Johnson's wise observation, the President lost 23 pounds.

If we take drugs, we get hooked and sick. It even goes for small things. If women wear too much makeup, people get used to seeing them that way and they find they can no longer go without it. If young people start buying expensive clothes then they naturally start hanging out with kids who also buy expensive clothes. The problem is that now they have lost the freedom to wear cheap clothes because they will lose their friends.

This also applies to spiritual things. If we get an appetite for

Fruit Of the Spirit Series—Self-Control *end*

dirty movies where there is sex, filthy language, violence, we soon find ourselves thinking more about those things than about God and His Word. Those images color our whole life and the enemy is able to use them to tempt us to sin. If we get an appetite to listen to and spread gossip about people pretty soon that gossip turns around and hurts us. We lose our witness and we get critical towards other people, and soon our relationship with the Lord suffers. We find that we cannot forgive others, and so how can we expect the Lord to forgive us?

How to Demonstrate Self-Control ...at Home

Refuse to allow other family members to provoke you to anger. ... Never discipline in anger. ... Look for ways to serve other family members rather than yourself. ... Purpose never to raise your voice in anger in the home.

...at Work/School

Purpose ahead of time that you will stand alone for what is right and refuse to compromise. ... Refuse to participate in harmful habits. ... Choose to walk away from questionable activities. ... Don't allow anger to destroy the effectiveness of your witness.

... at Church

Reject gossip about church leaders and other church members. If someone has private sin in their lives, follow the principles in Matthew 18:15-20 to restore someone who has a fault. If they are publicly teaching heresy or making false prophecies, then admonish them once or twice. If they still continue without repentance then they must be rejected as heretics. Continue to pray for them but calmly warn others away from them. This is the Biblical way to deal with problems. ... Never react in anger to those who disagree with you.

We need to be careful, in the body of Christ, with our true brothers and sisters in the Lord, to have self-control over what we say.

Friendship

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into

the back of the fence. The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence...

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone.

The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there. A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one. Friends are a very rare jewel, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share a word of praise, and they always want to open their hearts to us.

Be careful to keep the bonds of friendship among the body of Christ. Take out the nails then repair the holes.

Self-Control on the Battlefield

"The battlefield is chaotic and deadly, and it is on the battlefield that we hold the responsibility of enormous destructive power in our hands. There, most of all, self-control is the premier ethical virtue."

"Self-control is a crucial value for all Marines to develop. It requires discipline, patience, self-understanding and a willing deference to others and the greater good. In a hectic world where so many things are beyond our control, self-control provides personal balance and a firm anchor of peace. As Marines develop self-control, they also improve their character." *Semper Fidelis, C.C. Krulak, 1996*

This is a motto of the Marines which also has many applications for a soldier of the cross. Self-control shows the world that we as believers are fair, prudent, just, in control of our appetites and our

minds, and in tune with the Word of God. This is how we can demonstrate that we belong to Christ. There are many Christians today who are very bad examples for Jesus Christ. They lack self-control in their lives, in fact the lack of self-control is glorified on TV and in Third Wave meetings. This is a black eye on Christianity from which I don't think we can now recover. Therefore we must be salt and light as individuals, helping people to see that those false brethren do not represent us. We must not let our light go out and our salt become unsalted.

Like the Scrubbing of a Doctor's Hands

Dr. Maltie Babcock was approached by a member of his congregation who was concerned about his health. Handing Dr. Babcock some theatre tickets he said, "Take these. You need the recreation of going to this play." His pastor looked at them. Seeing they were tickets to a play of a kind he could not conscientiously attend, he said kindly, "Thank you, but I can't take them. I can't go."

"Why not?" the physician asked.

"Doctor, it's this way. You're a physician - a surgeon, in fact. When you operate, you scrub your hands meticulously until you are especially clean. You wouldn't dare operate with dirty hands. I'm a servant of Christ. I deal with precious human souls. I wouldn't dare do my service with a dirty life."

When we dirty our hands, or as the Bible says "dirty our clothes" in the things of this world, we lose our witness, thus we can be of no service to anyone. There are many ways to dirty your clothes, but in almost every way we dirty our clothes by the lack of self-control. This is why self-control is so important to our witness for Christ in this world.

Hudson Taylor

Hudson Taylor, dressed in a Chinese costume, while waiting for a boatman to take him across the river, stood on a jetty. Presently a richly dressed Chinaman came and also stood waiting. When the boat drew near this man not seeing that Mr. Taylor was a foreigner, struck him on the

head and knocked him over into the mud. Mr. Taylor said the feeling came to him to smite the man, but God immediately stopped him. When the boat came up, the Chinaman looked at Mr. Taylor and recognized him as a foreigner. He could hardly believe it, and said, "What, you a foreigner, and did not strike me back when I struck you like that?" Mr. Taylor said "This boat is mine. Come in and I will take you where you want to go." On the way out, Mr. Taylor poured into that Chinaman's ears the message of salvation. He left the man with tears running down his face. Such is the power of the Gospel of Christ. --*The King's Business*

Conclusion

Self-control is so important in the life of the believer, yet today our society and even the church are not doing very well in that department. Yet it is a fruit of the Spirit, and if we do not have self-control we are not Spirit-controlled but rather controlled by the world, the flesh and the devil. I believe this is one of the major battlefields of the enemy in the life of Christians. May we seek to have self-control in our lives, to live them not for our self-gratification but for the glory of God! Δ



Bible Study by Juanita Simpson

The Parables of Jesus – Part 13 The Unforgiving Servant Matthew 18:21-35

How willing are we to forgive others? When people hurt us or are unkind to us, are we able to forgive and love them anyway? **Matt. 18:21-22** To whom was Jesus speaking? He was speaking to Peter and probably all the disciples and the women who traveled with them. Peter asked Jesus, "Should I forgive my brother 7 times? That's a lot!" Jesus' answer was: "No! It's not enough! '70 X 7 (490) times!' In **Luke 17:4** Jesus said, "If someone sins against you 7 times in one day, and comes back 7 times to repent and ask forgiveness, you must forgive him." We need to ask ourselves, "Have I ever sinned against God 7 times in one day and then repented and asked His forgiveness? Did He forgive me?"

Did Jesus mean that we should keep a record of the number of times we have forgiven someone? If we already forgave him 7 times today, can we stop forgiving? If we have already forgiven someone a total of 490 times, can we stop? Do you think that anyone would keep a count up to 490? Our conclusion is: There can be no end to our forgiving. That's what we call "a

forgiving spirit". It becomes natural to forgive - a habit - like brushing our teeth or showering.

Jesus begins His parable with: "The kingdom of heaven is like...". It's like saying: "Living in God's family is like.... Belonging to God is like....Being part of God's kingdom is like...." Jesus used this opening to many of His parables. Who are the characters in this parable/story? There is the King or Master, his servant, that servant's fellow servant and the other servants who were watching.

What did each character do? The King wanted to settle his accounts. It was something like having the IRS come to us to check our tax records. The King had every right to collect his debts. One of his servants may have been in charge of a whole province because of the huge size of his debt. When the King came to this man who owed millions of dollars, he ordered that he and his family and all that he had be sold into slavery to help repay the debt. The size of the debt is like the national debt which the whole country can't pay, let alone one person. If a day worker of that time received a denarius a day it would take him 150 years to pay off a debt of that

size. Selling him and his family and all he owned would not be nearly enough. Why did Jesus use such a huge amount of money in his parable? It was to show that the debt He really referred to could never be paid, not even if the man had eternity to work it off!

The King's servant who owed this huge debt fell on his knees and begged for mercy. He said, "Be patient with me and I will pay back everything." Could he? No way! That would be like you trying to pay off the national debt. Why did he have such a big debt? We don't know whether he borrowed money, gambled, invested his Master's money in poor investments, embezzled a lot of money or what. We do know that he had been unfaithful. Nothing short of a miracle could save this man and his family. A miracle was what the master performed for him. The master took pity on him (had mercy, was gracious, gave him "undeserved and unmerited favor"). The King canceled this huge debt and let him go free as if he had never owed it. The servant and his family were spared lifelong slavery. But who had to bear the loss of millions of dollars then? The Master had to bear the loss so that the servant didn't have to.

The servant's fellow servant owed him a very small debt of a few dollars. As soon as the forgiven servant went out from meeting with the King he found his fellow servant and demanded that he repay his debt. The fellow servant used the exact same words to beg for mercy, "Be patient with me, and I will pay you back." Could he pay it back? YES! Because it was only a small debt. But the man refused to be merciful to him and instead had his fellow servant thrown into prison.

The other servants saw what had happened. They were greatly distressed at the injustice and the ingratitude of the servant. So they went to tell their Master everything. The Master was very angry. He called his servant "wicked". He reminded him that he had generously canceled his debt out of mercy and compassion. Then he

asked, "Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" Then he turned him over to be tortured until he paid back the whole debt. Why does Jesus use the picture of selling the man's wife and torture? The Jews considered those practices inhuman. It is to emphasize the terrible consequences of judgment.

The conclusion of the parable is: This is how our heavenly Father will treat us (turn us over to the torturers to pay the debt) unless we forgive our brothers from our heart. Forgiveness from the heart is here contrasted with a forgiveness that is only from the lips. Everything depends on the genuineness of the forgiveness.

Now let us see how we should apply this parable. First, the Lord forgives us. The King is the Lord who will call us someday to account for our lives and our sins. Because we are His creation (and maybe also His servants) we are completely accountable to Him. We owe a huge debt of sin. How many sins do we commit each day - bad thoughts, unkind words, actions that hurt others, etc? Our sin debt is definitely in the millions or billions. Every sin is an act of rebellion, and therefore small acts, which don't attract much attention, may be great sins.

Secondly, we have to pay with our lives for our sins. **Rom. 6:23a** We are like the servant and his family who were to be sold - give their lives - for their debt. Even if we try, we cannot pay what we owe. There is no way that we can erase our sins and make things right with the Father against whom we have sinned. Being "good", going to church, etc. will not pay for even one sin. Repentance and belief in the Son of God is the only way to forgiveness.

Thirdly, the only way our debt of sin can be canceled is for God Himself to bear the loss, like the King did. This is not just saying, "Oh, It's O.K." God personally paid the debt by taking the sin on Himself in the Person of His Son. **II Cor. 5:21** The only way the Lord can bear the loss is through His

This book was written to help believers to realize the absolute necessity of growing to maturity in Christ. What many believers today do not realize is that the Bible teaches that growth in Christ is directly tied to learning to discern truth from error, good from evil. Yet many churches are urging Christians to push aside discernment in favor of experience. It is our hope that this book will inspire many believers to fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith (2 Tim. 4:7).

To order this book, send \$14.00 by check or money order to: Alexander Simpson, P.O. Box 1759, Pearl City, HI 96782 or you can order online at the DITC web site.