

SELF-CONTROL

By Keith Greer

"Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you." {Acts 24:25}

In Paul's speech before Felix, what did he place after righteousness and before judgment? **SELF-CONTROL!** This I believe teaches us a very important lesson. Allow me to explain.

God's word is the sum of righteousness, Psalms 119:172. Yet, after finding out what righteousness is, I must begin to do these actions in my life. What can help me accomplish these acts of righteousness? Self-control plays a very important role in this area.

First let us define our term. Self-control simply means, "*control of one's emotions, desires, or actions by one's own will*". (American Heritage Dictionary) Let us examine some areas we must exercise self-control over.

OUR BODY. We must be the masters of our body and not allow our bodies to master us! What happens when one allows themselves to be addicted? Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or anything which will harm the body. Our body is a gift of God. However we use it should glorify Him. Carefully read 1 Corinthians 6:12.

SEXUAL DESIRE. We are not brute beasts! Surely we can practice some self-control in our sexual drives. God gave man a place to satisfy this drive. "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." {Hebrews 13:4} God created within man and woman these sexual urges. Yet, in His divine plan, nowhere did it give the right for any sexual immorality!

"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, " {Galatians 5:19}

"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." {Colossians 3:5} What does it say about one who is not able to control his sexual drive? Man may have the consent of other men to practice sexual immorality, but he does not have the consent of God!

TONGUE. So many problems between brethren can be traced back to this small member. What happens when the tongue is not kept under control?

"Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members

that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. "{James 3:5,6}

OUR MIND. For one to be pleasing to God they must get control of their mind. "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." {Proverbs 4:23}

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." {Matthew 5:8}

"But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man." {Matthew 15:18}

Now do you better understand why Paul placed self-control between righteousness and judgment? Think about it carefully. If one does not learn the art of self-control in their lives, what will be their verdict on judgment? So many different parts of our lives will be more difficult if we fail to master self-control. How much sin has been committed for failing to control the areas of this discussion? Do you practice self-control in these areas of your life? ***