

Godliness with Respect to Ourselves

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: 2 Peter 1:6.

B. These traits come in a logical order, but not a chronological order. We are constantly in progress in all of them.

C. The Christian traits this message discusses are fairly basic. A deeper study of Christian traits could involve Galatians 5:22-23 and Colossians 3:12-14.

D. Self-control and perseverance will be the theme of this message.

II. Self-control is our wall of defense against both from without (the world) and from within (our own sinful nature). (Proverbs 25:28)

A. Society appeals to the sinful nature's pleasure and self-indulgence.

B. We have an inner radar system that is searching for opportunities to respond to temptation.

C. Self-control is the exercise of inner strength under sound judgment to do, think, and say things that are pleasing to God.

1. Self-control keeps our appetites inside legitimate boundaries. It is also translated "temperance."

2. Self-control has also been translated "soberness" or "sound judgment". See Titus for this use.

3. It is impossible to exercise self-control if we are not growing in our commitment to God and in our convictions based on His Word.

4. Our judgment and our desires both influence our will, from which flows our actions. (Ephesians 4:22; 1 Timothy 6:9; James 1:14; Romans 10; Genesis 3:6)

a) Sin appeals to our desires, so we need to be guarding and screening our desires so that they are not contrary to God's will or in excess of God's will.

(Proverbs 2:5, 9-11)

III. Perseverance means continuing to move forward in spite of adversity. (Hebrews 12:1ff)

A. Encouraging someone else means that we fortify them with the spiritual strength and courage to persevere.

B. There are three things in this passage that show us how God's discipline helps us persevere.

1. Our adverse circumstances are under the sovereignty of God and He will use them for our good. (Hebrews 12:6; Lamentations 3:37-38; Matthew 10:28-30; Romans 8:28)

a) Discipline does not always involve correcting sin. It often involves training, growing, and maturing us.

2. God permits or brings adversity into our lives because He loves us.

3. God is infinite in His wisdom about what adversity to let into our lives. He knows what is best and how to bring it about. (Hebrews 12:10)

C. God's purpose in disciplining us is to make us holy. God never wastes pain and we can have hope in hardship. (Hebrews 12:11ff; Romans 8:28-29; Romans 11:33)

IV. So self-control enables us to resist what appears to be desirable in the world and perseverance helps us to keep going despite what is undesirable in the world.

Application questions:

1. How can you develop sound judgment?

2. How can you determine whether your desires are within the boundaries God sets?

3. How does the knowledge that God does not waste pain bring you hope?
