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Monday

Prov. 25:28 Like a city that is broken into and without walls
Is a man who has no control over his spirit.

We live in a world that is out of control and believers seem to be little different than nonbelievers. Anger, outburst, sexual promiscuity, deceit, gossip, disunity, broken relationships: these are the fruits of uncontrolled lives. Add to that the positive things we wish to do, but always leave undone. There is an answer and God has made it clear. Self-control is a fruit, an outgrowth of our relationship with Jesus. The stronger the relationship, the deeper the surrender, the longer the walk of obedience, the more abundant the fruit. Our lack of self-control must drive us back to the vine, the source of the fruit, back to Jesus. John 15:5

Tuesday

Prov. 22:7 The rich rules over the poor,
And the borrower becomes the lender's slave.

When it comes to money, the believer's need for self-control is clearly seen. Today, many of God's people are in bondage to fear and in danger of loss because they have little or no self-control when it comes to borrowing and spending. The problem is epidemic and often years in the making. What is worse, missions and ministry are crippled by the poor stewardship of God's people. The tithing of the Lord is used to pay creditors and both the individual and the church miss the blessing of the Lord. God's answer is the Spirit-filled life, the Lordship of Christ, and the obedience of the servant. Have you been too long a slave?

Wednesday

John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

Pornography is pervasive. Over 50% of patrons in hotel rooms rent pornographic movies. The internet brings pornography into many of our homes, enticing adults and children alike. Certainly, some who are reading this devotion and many in the Lord's church are under the prevailing influence of pornography. The uncontrolled life leads many past pornography and further into sexual promiscuity. There is hope. There is an answer for the guilt plagued problem of the uncontrolled life. Self-control grows as a fruit of your obedient relationship with Jesus. Focus upon Him, upon daily obedience in every area and see self-control grow in your life.

Thursday

Prov. 13:18 Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline,
But he who regards reproof will be honored.

Are you teachable? Do you look for God's correction and instruction in His word? Are you listening for personal application when the word is preached? How about in your devotional life? The disciplined life (both in its positive and negative sense) is reflected in the fruit of Spirit-filled self-control. The outcome is clear. Neglecting this fruit leads to ruin and shame, poverty and failure. But the teachable disciple, the surrendered servant will find honor in this life and the next.

Friday

Prov. 17:27 He who restrains his words has knowledge,
And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.
Prov. 17:28 Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise;
When he closes his lips, he is considered prudent.

Half of the poison-fruits mentioned in Gal. 5:19-21 are centered around uncontrolled speech (enmities, strife, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions). These poisoned-fruits destroy individuals, families, and churches. They are evidence of a deep need for the Lordship of Jesus in our lives. Is this a trouble spot for you? Take it seriously and take it to Jesus. The answer is not found in trying harder, but in surrendering control to the Spirit of the Lord.