

7 Life-giving Virtues: Temperance
Proverbs 25:26-28
2 Peter 1:5-11
WRCoB 6.26.22

I have a love/hate relationship with buffet restaurants.

I love them and I hate them!

I love that I can eat as much as I want.

I hate that I always eat more than I need.

That's the problem, I have little self-control!

I mean, it might not seem like a big deal.

Ok so what? An extra piece of chicken . . . or two

An extra dessert . . . or three

Go home, take a nap

Walk an extra mile tomorrow.

I always leave a buffet restaurant feeling ashamed of myself.

So consequently, I avoid buffets.

Too much temptation for me to handle.

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Moderation seems easy enough.

Just say no to the extra Oreo cookie

Or to the extra handful of chips

Or just say no to another episode on Netflix

Or a few more scrolls on Face Book.

As a result, we struggle with too much weight
Too many possessions.
And too many addictions.

We've developed voracious appetites for all kinds of things

But according to the Harvard Business Review

Research has shown that people with strong self-control have better health, relationships, finances, and careers. They are also less likely to have problems with overeating, overspending, smoking, alcohol or drug abuse, procrastination, and unethical behavior.

Overcoming temptation also seems to be intrinsically rewarding — people with high self-control are also more satisfied with their lives and experience their lives as more meaningful.

Words of wisdom from the secular world.

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We continue our sermon series on the 7 Life-giving Virtues.

Here is the 7 deadly sins and their counterparts.

<u>7-Deadly Sins</u>	<u>7 Life-giving Virtues</u>
Lust	Chastity
Gluttony	Temperance
Greed	Charity
Sloth	Diligence
Wrath	Patience
Envy	Kindness
Pride	Humility

This week we look at the virtue temperance.

According to Wikipedia: *Temperance is defined as moderation or voluntary self-restraint*

We think of temperance as total abstinence from alcohol.

But according to Merriam-Webster temperance means

Moderation in action, thought, or feeling. Habitual moderation in the indulgence of the appetite or passions.

Temperance is the idea

That too much of anything is not good for you.

Too much food

Too much drink

Too much sex

Too much free time

Even too much work.

The idea that we should control excessive behavior

Before it controls us.

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To live a temperate life

Is to live a life of moderation and self-control.

Better yet, as Christians, to live a life that is Christ-controlled.

David Mathis, Executive Director of DesiringGod.org

Self-control is simply that important, impressive, and nearly impossible practice of learning to maintain control of the beast of one's own sinful passions.

Remember the old proverb of 2 wolves living within us?

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Self-control is one of the fruits of the Spirit.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)

Self-control is just that . . . controlling the sinful self.

We practice self-control because it is beneficial

It is beneficial to our spiritual, physical and emotional health.

Not only does it benefit us but those around us

Live simply so that others may simply live.

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Self-control and spiritual discipline go hand-in-hand.

Again from David Mathis

The idea of controlling one's own self presumes at least two things: 1) the presence of something within us that needs to be bridled and 2) the possibility in us, or through us, for drawing on some source of power to restrain it.

The two wolves living in our hearts.

One is kind, the other is vicious.

The one we feed is the one in control.

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Previously we looked at the sin of gluttony.

Gluttony is the sin of overindulgence

Whether it be in food, drink, or possessions

Or really anything that takes control over you.

The opposite of gluttony is temperance.

We achieve a temperate life

Through moderation and self-control.

It begins with control over our emotions

And then control over our minds

And then control over our actions.

The Bible has much to say concerning self-control.

Church leaders are to have it.

1 Timothy 3:2-3 NRSV Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money.

Older men are to have it.

Titus 2:2 (ESV) Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

Older women are to have it too.

Titus 2:3 (ESV) Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior not slanderers or slaves to much wine⁵ to be self-controlled

Let's not forget younger men.

Titus 2:6 (ESV) Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

And then to make sure he covered everyone Paul concludes

Titus 2:11-12 (ESV) For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

How important does the Bible view self-control?

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To help us in living a self-controlled life

We need to turn our attention

From the thing tempting us to Jesus

And the old gospel sings

Turn your eyes upon Jesus

Look full in his wonderful face

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim

In the light of his glory and grace.

Maybe not so poetically but James says too.

**James 4:7-8a Submit yourselves therefore to God.
Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to
God and he will draw near to you.**

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So how do we fight the sin of gluttony
With the virtue of temperance?

One way is by developing good and healthy habits.

In a book by Gretchen Rubi entitled,

*Better Than Before:
What I learned About Making and Breaking Habits*

We learn that habits are, *the invisible architecture of daily life. We repeat about 40 percent of our behavior almost daily, so our habits shape our existence, and our future.*

With habits, we conserve our self-control. Because we're in the habit of putting a dirty coffee cup in the office dishwasher, we don't need self-control to perform that action; we do it without thinking.

Our habits are our destiny. And changing our habits allows us to alter that destiny.

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We improve our self-control by building good habits.

Forbes Magazine list 5 ways that help.

1. **Remove temptation** A study found that the way most people resist temptation is to remove the temptation. So, you can stop beating yourself up for not having

much self-control, we're not wired for it. If people are not wired to have self-control, how do disciplined people exist? They remove temptation, creating effortless self-control.

2. **Measure Your Progress** What gets measured gets managed. Monitoring helps us become experts on our own behavior, and it makes habits less difficult to govern and change.
3. **Learn How to Manage Stress** Make sure to exercise regularly, eat well and make sure you're getting enough sleep. It all improves focus, cognitive function and your health. Learning how to manage stress in healthy ways ensures you have the energy to keep grinding when work and life can feel overwhelming.
4. **Prioritize Things** Make a to do list for every day, week and month, so when you're feeling overwhelmed, you know you're making progress and doing the very best you can. It makes you feel more in control, because feeling overwhelmed and like things are out of your control only leads to disorganization, stress and wasted time.
5. **Forgive Yourself** You are going to fail, failing is a part of life. Forgive yourself and move on. Beating yourself up and worrying achieves nothing, it is wasted energy. Winston Churchill once wrote, "Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm."

Along with self-help guidance from the secular world
We find help through the grace of God.

2 Timothy 1:7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Use all the resources God has given you

To live the temperate life of moderation and self-control

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I close with some thoughts from Joyce Meyer

I tell you what when I see chocolate chip cookies I can't just eat one. I've got to eat a dozen. I don't have any self-control.

Well, come on! You're just talking yourself right into the pit! You do have self-control, and you need to start looking at those cookies and saying, "If I want you I'll eat you, and if I don't I won't!"

Come on! Talk to that plateful of food! I am born again and baptized in the Holy Ghost! I have the power of the universe on the inside of me, and if I do not want to eat you I will not eat you! I mean how do you expect to defeat the devil if you can't even defeat a chocolate chip cookie!?!?

Let's do our best to control excessive behaviors
So that they do not control us.

So, you buffet restaurants out there
As much as I love your food
You'll not see me at your doorstep.

I'll not be feeding my wolf at your buffet!