



PRAYER MEETING

August 9

A close-up photograph of a hand with fingers spread, held in a prayerful gesture against a dark background.

The Fruit of the Spirit: Self-Control

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Leader

O Lord our Father, and Jesus Christ the Son, we are grateful for this day and for our ability to come into this place to praise and pray. You are worthy to be praised.

We are blessed that you are in control of all things, and although we cannot see what's ahead, we know that you do. We believe that you hold all things together by your word. We trust that you are able and good and will bring all your promises to completion.

Your Holy Spirit leads us to glorify you through lives that are self-controlled and upright, truthful and faithful, composed and righteous. Grow and mature us to be wise and careful, disciplined and holy. Help us to give you control, that the fruit born out of your influence in our lives would bring praise to you, our God and Savior. Amen

Call to Worship

Galatians 5: 13-14, 16-24

New International Reader's Version

My brothers and sisters, you were chosen to be free. But don't use your freedom as an excuse to live under the power of sin. Instead, serve one another in love. The whole law is fulfilled by obeying this one command. "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."

So I say, live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your desires controlled by sin want you to do. The desires controlled by sin do not want what the Spirit delights in. And the Spirit does not want what the desires controlled by sin delight in. The two are at war with each other. That's why you are not supposed to do whatever you want.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the authority of the law.

The result of sin's control in our lives is clear. It includes sexual sins, impure acts and wild living. It includes worshiping statues of gods and worshiping evil powers. It also includes hatred and fighting, jealousy and fits of anger.

Sinful desire is interested only in getting ahead. It stirs up trouble. It separates people into their own little groups. It wants what others have. It gets drunk and takes part in wild parties. It does many things of that kind. I warn you now as I did before. People who live like this will not receive God's kingdom.

But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. There is no law against things of that kind. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their sinful desires to his cross. They don't want these things anymore.

Today, Lord, we thank you and ask for the Holy Spirit's fruit of **self-control**.

Music

Quiet your hearts and minds as you listen to today's music. Open to God and listen to what the Holy Spirit might say to you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFfztu8-bBQ>

Tenth Avenue North, Control

Praise

“This day, we praise You, O God for your attributes and your works. We praise you for giving us the capacity for discipline and self-control. We praise you that your control frees us to live wholly for you.”

Congregational Psalm/ Passages from Psalms

Leader and people together

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. You will instruct me and teach me in the way I should go; You will counsel me with your loving eye on me.

Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding but must be
controlled by bit and bridle or they will
not come to you.

Many are the woes of the wicked, but the
LORD's unfailing love surrounds the one
who trusts in him. Rejoice in the LORD and
be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who
are upright in heart! Ps 32: 7-11

The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

But who can discern their own errors?
Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your
servant also from willful sins; may they not
rule over me. Then I will be blameless,
innocent of great transgression. Ps 19:7-13

I desire to do your will, my God; your law
is within my heart.” Ps 40:8

Blessed are those whose ways are blameless,
who walk according to the law of the LORD.
Blessed are those who keep his statutes and
seek him with all their heart—they do no
wrong but follow his ways. You have laid
down precepts that are to be fully obeyed.
Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying
your decrees! Then I would not be put to
shame when I consider all your commands.

I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws. I will obey your decrees.

Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.

I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes. I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands. I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have preserved my life.

Ps 119:1-8, 34-35, 59-60, 93

Reading about the word of the day

“Fundamentally, self-control is the ability to regulate one’s personal life so that we are neither driven nor dominated, as the apostle John puts it, by the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, or the pride of life. 1 John 2:16

Without self-control, we become incapacitated, unable to serve God and one another or even our own best interests. We end up becoming slaves to our appetites. Whatever draws our desires and affections away from Christ and His kingdom will of necessity become our master and control our lives.

In Scripture, self-control is to be the product of one's faith relationship with God and not a matter of self-righteous self-denial. In the New Testament, two terms come into play. These are "to reign or have control over" and "to be master or to rule over."

What is it that rules or has mastery over our lives? What is it that controls us?

The essence of self-control is the growing manifestation of the holy qualities and character of the Lord Jesus as Christians seek to exchange their lives, which were formerly dominated by the cravings of the old life, with the new and glorious life of Christ.”

Excerpts from J. Hampton Keathley, Bible.org

Scripture Reading

Leader

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through

them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with

godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1; 3-8

Reflect

Scripture Reading repeated

Leader

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Individual Silent Prayer

A time to pray and talk to God about what you heard and noticed. Pray for your needs. Pray thanks. Confess sin. Ask for help. Pray for others, for direction, for guidance, for God's glory.

Response

Responsive Reading

Leader and people

Leader: All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD. Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. Prov 16: 2-3

People: Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice. How much better to get wisdom than gold, to get insight rather than silver! Prov 16:8, 16

Leader: Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control
Prov 25:28

People: The highway of the upright avoids evil; those who guard their ways preserve their lives. Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord.

Prov 16:17, 20

Leader: The hearts of the wise make their mouths prudent, and their lips promote instruction. Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.

Prov 16:23, 32

Together: For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Titus 2:11-13

Prayer for the World

Leader: Lord, we pray for God's lovingkindness to be the foundation of our hope

People: We pray for God's mercy in stopping the spread of this virus;

Leader: We pray for God's healing of those who are sick throughout the world

People: We pray for God's strength for medical personnel serving tirelessly

Leader: We pray for God's insight to be given to researchers seeking solutions

People: We pray for God's wisdom to guide and direct civic leaders, health officials, and world leaders

Leader: We pray for God's peace to guard us from fear or anxiety

People: We pray for God's provision for those whose livelihoods and income have been affected by this crisis

Leader: We pray for God's creativity to make us agents of love and compassion, that all believers would display the character of Christ

People: We pray for racial reconciliation, justice, compassionate civil dialog, understanding, and true unity

Together: Lord, we pray for healing for our nation, that Your righteousness and truth and justice would be known, and that the Holy Spirit would draw people everywhere to the saving power of Jesus.

Lord's Prayer

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your example of being perfectly controlled by the Spirit. You learned obedience through what you suffered. You stayed the course to finish the work of salvation. You chose to restrain and redirect yourself even when ridiculed and tortured unto death, so that the Father's will was accomplished. We praise and worship and thank you, Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Closing Prayer

Leader

Control us, Lord, that we may not be under the control of anything or anyone else. Control us, and teach us, O Lord, that we may learn to control our minds, our wills, our words, and our behavior under your guidance.

Control us, O Lord, that our hearts may completely surrender, that we would own no other Master, that our self-will would be perfectly conformed to your will. For through You, and You alone, does control lead to complete freedom.

In the matchless name of Jesus, Amen.