



WEEK 9 | LEADER GUIDE

SOWING SEEDS OF SELF-CONTROL

BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL...
GALATIANS 5:22-23

“The harvest” is all about what we reap and what we sow. If we want to reap spiritual blessings we must sow spiritual seed.

PART 1: SEED



The seed is a seemingly insignificant object that has tremendous potential. The seed is the essence of faith. It is trusting that God can take something small and make it into something beautiful. At New Life we want to sow seeds of self-control to experience a harvest of self-control in the future. The seeds we plant today we will enjoy tomorrow.

ἐγκράτεια (enkrateia) *Self-mastery, self-restraint, self-control, continence.*
From egkrates; self-control.

The Greek word translated as "self-control" in Galatians chapter 5 is enkrateia (eng-krat'-i-ah). It can mean self-mastery, self-restraint, self-control, or continence, which is self-restraint, especially regarding sexual desires. This word references self-control that can only be accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit within yourself. It is something that cannot be done in our own strength. Here are some examples of self-control used in the New Testament.

2 Peter 1:5-11

5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, **6** and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, **7** and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. **8** 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. **9** For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. **10** Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. **11** For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Titus 1:7-8

7 For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,**8** but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

Acts 24:24-25

24 After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. **25** And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.”

We want to sow seeds of self-control at New Life today so that we will continue to be a community of self-control for tomorrow.

PART 2: SOIL



Matthew 13:23

As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it.

For a seed to grow properly it must be planted in good soil. Let's take a few moments each week to prepare the "soil" of our hearts. Before we pray, take a moment to consider these things.

- Intentionally set your mind on the things of God.
- Acknowledge that you need God to work in your life.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to awaken your heart to receive what God wants to say.
- As a group pray this prayer of preparation together. Feel free to make it your own. It is only a guide.

Prayer of Preparation:

Father, Son, and Spirit, we have come into your presence today in need of your life giving presence. Will you, by your spirit, allow us to be aware of your work in our lives? We desire to sow spiritual seed, but we cannot do it without your help. We believe you are a good God who responds to his children in their time of need and we are thankful that you hear us. We love you, amen.

PART 3: WATER



1Corinthians 3:6

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

The only way a seed will grow is if someone cares enough to water it. This time in your circle. will consist entirely of questions centered on our partnership with God in our spiritual growth. God will bring an increase in our lives, but we must do our part as well.

- How can we water the "seed" of self-control in our lives?
- Have you seen someone do this well? What do they do?
- Are there times when you struggle with self-control? Would you like to share about it?
- How can we water the "seed" of self-control at New Life Christian Fellowship?
- Have you seen this done well in the life of the church? What does the church do?
- How does belonging to a community of faith help water self-control in our own lives?
- Why is self-control so crucial to a vibrant Christian faith?

PART 4: HARVEST



Mark 4:28-29

The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

The harvest is the end product of a seed that was properly planted and watered. During this time, your circle will take some time to look at a passage of Scripture that illuminates what a harvest looks like in the life of a believer in the church.

The definition of self-control in the dictionary is the ability to control oneself, particularly one's emotions and desires or expressions. The use of the word self-control in Galatians 5:23 stresses that self-control is accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit within us, and it is true mastery of ourselves from within. This means that the fruit of the Spirit, self-control, would be impossible without the work of God's power in our lives. If we rely completely on our own strength to control and lead us through our lives, we will come up empty and unfruitful. There is so much that can derail us from living a holy life if we are not allowing Christ to work in us.

Read Hebrews 12:11-12:

11 For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those trained by it. 12 Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.

- How does this passage relate to self-control?

An authentic relationship with Christ requires our complete transparency with Him. We tend to hide things that we know are wrong or not holy, but the Holy Spirit's work in our lives reveals these things, and we should pay attention to the Holy Spirit's guidance. God is calling us to let go of the things that hold us back and have no place in a life with Christ. As Hebrews 12 mentions, it can seem painful, but a harvest comes from the seeds of living a holy life. This is what we have been discussing the past 9 weeks.

- What are some failed ways that the world offers "self-control"?
- Tonight is our final lesson in the Harvest, Sowing Seed for a Spiritual Awakening. What have you learned, and how have you grown in these past weeks?



CLOSING PRAYER

Use this space to write down prayer request from your circle. Take time to pray for one another this week in your Circle or during the closing in the Sanctuary.

NO CIRCLES ON NOVEMBER 24