

## Self-Control and Perseverance Help Us Thrive

**Opener:** Describe a time you benefitted from self-control and/or perseverance.

### Scripture

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours. . . . <sup>3</sup>His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup>Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

<sup>5</sup>For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; <sup>6</sup>and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; <sup>7</sup>and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. 2 Peter 1:1, 3-7

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup>Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-25

### Discussion Questions

1. 2 Peter begins by recognizing that our faith is precious and goes on to say that we really can live godly lives, both because of what we've been given and through our efforts to mature in Christ. He begins his maturity charge in vs. 5 with "for this very reason." What reasons has he just given? Why do those reasons matter? 2 Peter 1:3-4
2. If God "has given us everything we need," why is it necessary for us "to make every effort?" Illustrate how these two actions work together. 2 Peter 1:3, 5
3. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit, but willpower is not. Are they synonyms, or are they different? Describe both. Where do they come from and what's their goal? Galatians 5:22-25
4. Perseverance means persisting despite difficulty or delay in reaching a goal. Have you experienced unique challenges and victories as you've learned to persevere? How have you experienced God's divine power in the process? 2 Peter 1:6
5. How have self-control and perseverance worked together to increase godliness in your life? How have they contributed to godliness, mutual affection, and loving others? 2 Peter 1:7
6. Have you experienced the increase of these elements of Christian maturity as successive (progressing from one to the other) or simultaneous (all developing at the same time) or perhaps a mixture of both? What has "making every effort" meant for you? 2 Peter 1:5-7

### Wrap Up

What we have here is spiritual maturity explained in three verses. Peter says that God has given us everything we need to escape corruption so that we can participate in God's divine nature. We do this by growing in faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection, and love. This is an intense list. But it all comes to us through a single funnel, and that funnel is the person of Jesus. Abiding in Him means that we will receive all He wants us to have and will grow into the person He wants us to be.