

CONTROL YOURSELF

Christian Character in Action Series: Lesson 4

18 March 2022

The Lord instructs us to not lose control in anything we do. The lusts of our flesh convince us to sin and commit shameful behavior without restraint. We need to keep our body under control and not allow temptations to overpower us. The Lord tells us how.

1 Cor 9:24-27 This passage speaks of the one who enters a race hoping to win. We've got to prepare for our race or we'll never win the prize. What are you doing to train and prepare for your race? Are you striving for the prize (rewards) that will last forever? Don't settle for just finishing. Go for the prize.

- Are you controlling your tongue? Have you stopped cursing, swearing, and blaspheming? It's up to you to control that. There is no good excuse to continue in that offensive practice.
- The Lord expects YOU to control your urge to drink and get high. You are expected to stop doing it altogether. God will not magically remove that desire from you as soon as you get saved. He'll help you once He sees that you sincerely want to do right.
- Are you addicted to cigarettes? How hard have you strived to get victory over that lust of your flesh? Do you want the victory?
- Do you lack control when it comes to food? Are you a glutton? You can't win the race while you're stuffing your face with food all the time.
- Pornography addict, do you **want** to have full control of that temptation? We live in a world of sexual addiction. God laid out the rules and boundaries for relationships between a man and a woman who are married. Anything that goes outside those boundaries is forbidden and harmful. God expects you to control those urges.
 - The Lord's instruction concerning these and all other hindrances to winning the prize is to **stop making excuses** and **start striving to get victory** over those sins the way an athlete would train for a race. Put some effort into it.
- God has clear guidelines regarding sinful behavior and wrong living. There is no reason to be uncertain as to whether something is right or wrong (vs 26).
 - You need to be certain that the prize is worth attaining and that no sin is worth losing that prize.
 - Stop making excuses for your sinful acts. Stop blaming others for what you do. God expects you to bring your own body under control (vs 27).
- If you won't control your own body, lusts, desires, activities, etc., then you will become a castaway (someone who is not fit to serve God anymore) (vs 27).
 - You may have a great ability to preach, teach, witness, etc., but God disqualifies you from the race because you cheated. You didn't follow the rules.

1 Cor 6:12-20 God instructs us to keep our eating habits under control (12-13). Just because there isn't a law against eating as much food as you want, doesn't mean that it would be good for you. Overeating will shorten your life and cause health issues that will hinder your ability to minister.

The body is not for fornication (vss 14). It is the temple of the Holy Ghost (vs 19). Don't even entertain the thought of fornication; flee from it (vs 18).

- Don't put yourself in situations where one thing leads to another, and another... If you flee fornication, there is no danger of losing control.
 - The reason it is necessary to flee from the sin of fornication is because there is a natural desire in a man and a woman to want to be intimate with the opposite sex (built in us by God). Therefore, it is more difficult to control the desire to fornicate than it is to control the temptation to drink, smoke, do drugs, etc.
 - Most people don't actually enjoy their first drink, smoke, etc.
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Col 3:1-8 If you're saved, your life is hid with God in Christ (vs 3), but that doesn't mean that the Lord is going to clean up your life for you. He expects you to mortify (count them as dead) the sins that your flesh lusts after.

- Fornication
 - Uncleaness (clean up your mouth, mind, heart, walk, ways)
 - Inordinate affection. Love the Lord, your husband/wife, children.
 - Evil concupiscence (unrestrained lust for weird things).
 - Covetousness, which is idolatry
 - Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth (vs 8)
 - Whatever sins you lack control of, you need to repent of it and then deal with it. Make a determined effort to stop that behavior and aim for victory.
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Rom 6:12-14 God told us not to allow sin to rule our members. He told us not to obey the lusts of our flesh. Rather, we must yield our bodies to the Lord. He won't force you; you've got to willingly give Him your hands, your feet, your eyes, your ears, your brain, etc.
