

Adding Self-Control to Knowledge / Study it for Yourself!

Self Control / Greek Words / Two main families of Words / enkrateia and sophron

- enkrateia / [Acts 24:25](#) / [Gal 5:23](#) / [2 Peter 1:6](#) / restraining of one's emotions, impulses, or desires /
 - [Acts 24:25](#) / Part of Paul's discussion on the truths of God's Word and the Gospel had things to do with self-control. That is interesting. Not the place most of us go.
 - [Gal 5:23](#) / The Fruit of the Spirit / Self-control found in a list of qualities that is the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives not our own abilities. From the list of negative things prior to this (see [Gal 5:19-21](#)) we can conjecture that the inability to control the self, the flesh, is part and parcel of life in the Flesh.
 - [2 Peter 1:6](#) / Add to faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control.
 - enkrateuomni / [1 Cor 7:9](#) / [1 Cor 9:25](#) / To exercise complete control over one's desires and actions / "to say NO to one's body"
 - [1 Cor 7:9](#) / If a person is not married or widowed it is good to remain single, but if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. Better to marry than to burn with passion.
 - [1 Cor 9:25](#) / Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Paul does not run aimlessly but he disciplines his body and keeps it under control, lest he be disqualified.
 - Discipline / gives black eye, strikes in the face, wear down / put under discipline, strict training.
 - keep in under control / enslaves, subjugates / I make it obey me
 - akrasia / [1 Cor 7:5](#) / Opposite meaning as above.
 - [1 Cor 7:5](#) / Marriage / "lack of self control" in marriage, sexually.
 - akrates / [2 Tim 3:3](#) / Opposite meaning as the first two above.
 - [2 Tim 3:3](#) / Godliness in the last days / ² For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. ⁶ For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷ always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.
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- Sophron / [1 Tim 3:2](#) / [Titus 1:8](#), [2:2](#), [2:5](#) / Different word group than above / To be in control of oneself / BDAG — prudent, thoughtful, self-controlled, the Hellenic model is avoidance of extremes and careful consideration for responsible action. Thought out, calculated.
 - [1 Tim 3:2](#) / An overseer must be... / above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷ Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.
 - [Titus 1:8](#) / Similar context, leadership must be... / self-controlled...
 - [Titus 2:2](#) / Older men are to be sober minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.
 - [Titus 2:5](#) / Older women, self controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive...
- Sophrosyne / [1 Tim 2:9](#), [1 Tim 2:15](#)
 - [1 Tim 2:9](#) / Women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self control...
 - [1 Tim 2:15](#) / continuing in life with "self-control"
- Sophroneo / [Tit 2:6](#) / [1 Peter 4:7](#)
 - [Titus 2:6](#) / Younger men, be self controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that your opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say.
 - [1 Peter 4:7](#) / The end of all things is at hand / be "self-controlled" and sober minded for the sake of your prayers. Love one another...
- sophronismos / [2 Tim 1:7](#) / This verse links the word group of the above, and shows that not only the power to bring ourselves under control, but the thoughts of keeping ourselves under control come from God's Spirit.
 - [2 Tim 1:7](#) / ** For god gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control /
- Sophronos / [Titus 2:12](#)
 - [Titus 2:12](#) / "training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age...
 - **renounce** / refuse, deny, disdain, disregard.

Self-Control

Self-control is one of the few characteristics of a godly person that are not directly attributed to God's character, although it is listed in [Galatians 5:23](#) as a [fruit](#) of the Spirit (see [Holy Spirit](#)), which shows that it comes from God. Lack of self-control is the natural tendency for fallen human beings, as we see when the newly liberated nation of Israel, left to itself while Moses meets with God on Mt. Sinai, quickly turns to idol [worship](#) (see [Idol, Idolatry](#)) and runs wild, making itself a laughingstock to its enemies ([Ex 32:25](#)). Because of this tendency, we are continually warned against losing self-control and are called to practice self-discipline ([1 Cor 7:5](#); [1 Thess 5:4–7](#); [2 Tim 3:2–4](#)).

Self-control leads to [holiness](#) or godliness ([Acts 24:25](#); [1 Thess 5:6, 8](#); [2 Tim 1:7](#); [Tit 2:12](#); [2 Pet 1:5–6](#)) and is so crucial for Christ's followers that self-discipline is a requirement for anyone who wishes to be a leader in the [church](#) or a mentor for others ([1 Tim 3:2](#); [Tit 1:8](#); [2:2, 5–6](#); see [Leadership](#)). To James, practicing self-control is like breaking in an animal: "If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal" ([Jas 3:2–3](#) NIV). Paul takes this issue so seriously that he writes, "I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" ([1 Cor 9:27](#) NIV). Again he says,

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place.... Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. ([Eph 5:3–20](#) NIV)

The contrast between self-control and lack of control is clear. Self-control is holy and pleasing to God.

[Joseph](#), of course, exemplifies self-control in the OT. Despite Potiphar's wife's constant attempts to [seduce](#) him, Joseph refuses to go to bed with her. "My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife," Joseph tells her. "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" ([Gen 39:9](#)). He knows the seriousness of the [sin](#) and exercises self-control so faithfully that he even flees from her presence without his cloak ([Gen 39:12](#)).

By contrast, the young man of [Proverbs 7](#) appears to have no concept of self-control, or of the consequences of a lack of control. As [Proverbs 7:22–23](#) states, "*All at once* he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life" (NIV; see [Trap](#)). Self-control is lost in a moment of impulse and passion, and the cost of such lack of self-control is devastating.¹

¹ Leland Ryken et al., [*Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 772–773.

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