



BREAKING THE ICE

What is your favorite Thanksgiving dish?

Are you a Thanksgiving leftover person? If so, how many days will you eat leftovers?

MAIN CONTENT

This week Pastor Kevin talked about self-control. One thing 2020 has taught us is we do not have as much control as we think.

In the message on Sunday, Pastor Kevin talked about an illustration where a CEO made a list of things he can control on one side of the paper and things he can't control on the other side of the paper. He tore the paper in half and threw away the things he could not control.

1. How much control do you feel like you have over your life? Would you say that sense of control has changed over time or does it feel the same?

Tim Keller says, "Self-control is the ability the Holy Spirit gives you to choose the important thing over the urgent thing". Dallas Willard says, "Self-control is the steady capacity to direct yourself to accomplish what you have chosen or decided to do and be, even though you don't feel like it".

2. Keeping these two definitions of self-control in mind, how much self-control do you have in your life?

True self-control comes with help from the Holy Spirit. We are human, we are bound to mess up and sin. The Holy Spirit can help guide us to live our lives like Jesus and keep us focused on what God has for us instead of things that temporarily fill us up.

Self-control starts with surrender. When we surrender to God that we are helpless without Him, He gives us the hope, strength and His Spirit to accomplish what He has for us.

3. What seemingly insignificant things in your life do you try to control? Do you feel like you know how to control these things better than God can?

It's easy for us to see other people's struggles rather than our own. Some of the things we struggle with may seem insignificant or too hard to give up. But God sees everything in all of our lives and wants to help us with them. So before we point out another person's struggles we need to start with our own.

Read James 1:14-15

4. What desires do you have in your life that can cause you to sin?

God wants to help us with those desires that cause us to stumble. We all have things that cause us to stumble. That's why we need Jesus. He has taken on our sin and made us right with God.

We all have sin but when we surrender to Christ, He rescues us from our sins. Author and Counselor Chip Dodd says, "surrender is returning to how we are created, to what we were created for, to who created us".

5. What do you need to surrender to God?

When we surrender to God we know that there is a power greater than us that move us to wholeness.

The next step in practicing self-control is to seek wisdom. Wisdom is getting God's perspective. Wisdom can come from listening to sermons, studying what the Bible says about things and seeking Godly counsel. When we seek wisdom every day, we walk in it. We tend to seek wisdom just when we are in crisis but God wants us to seek wisdom every day.

6. What does seeking wisdom look like in your life?

7. Who are some trusted, wise voices in your life?

One more step to help practice self-control is to place boundaries in your life. Boundaries can also be called guardrails, rules or suggestions that keep you on track. No one goes out intending to make bad decisions, but when we don't have boundaries they are more apt to happen.

8. What kind of boundaries do you have set in your life? If you don't, where do you think you need some?

Read 1 Peter 1:13

When we surrender to Jesus, seek wisdom and set boundaries it helps us grow in self-control. But we don't

do this alone. With Jesus this is possible. It's only with His Spirit within us can we accomplish these things.

If we want to have self-control we need to look towards the future and what Jesus promises us. One day we will be with Him. These struggles we have are temporary but our hope and destiny is with Him.

CLOSING PRAYER

God thank-you for the gifts of the Spirit. You have given us the gifts of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control as we follow you. Thank-you for the forgiveness you freely give us when we repent of trying to be in control of everything in our lives. Will you show us where we need to surrender control to you in our lives, will you help us gain wisdom through relationships and your word and set the boundaries we need in our life to follow you more closely when we are surrounded by temptation. We know these things are temporary so will you help us focus on what matters most, our life with you. In Jesus name, Amen.

ACTION STEP

Take account of what things in your life you are trying to control but failing at. Pray and give those over to God. Ask a trusted friend to help keep you accountable in prayer about these things.

If you have a wise friend ask to meet with them. Talk about the ways you can add boundaries to your life to help you follow Jesus more closely.