

(Youth Bible School 2007) by Faith Possess Virtue, Knowledge, and Temperance

by Denny Kenaston

Through faith, we must possess virtue, knowledge, and temperance in order to live a life that honors God and reflects His character.

Duration: 1:06:27

Scripture: Romans 12:1

Topics: "Temperance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a loyal and consuming dedication to God. He encourages the audience to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God, and to have their minds transformed and renewed by God's Word. The speaker also warns young people not to think they know everything, as they may find themselves ill-equipped for the challenges of life. He concludes by reminding the audience that God has answers for their lives and encourages them to engage their hearts and learn how to live according to God's will.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the free will offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. I'm very grateful for the words that we've heard already this morning.

I was grateful that I could be here to hear them. We're going to take these next three verses before we get into our lesson. Are you working on the verses? Let me see your hands.

Are you working on them? Oh, bless you. God bless you for that, young people. You know, the only reason why I'm calling on one here and there to quote them is so that all of you will continue to engage

your heart to learn.

It's just a little accountability. Ah, Nathan Grice, would you stand and quote the next three verses for us? Are you here? Good and loud so we can hear. Thank you, Nathan.

Rachel Davis, are you here? Is she here? God bless you, Rachel. That are given unto us, ye might be having escaped. God bless you, Rachel.

All right, three more verses for tomorrow. Let's pray. Oh, Father, loving Father, Abba, come help us today.

Father, all of us, we need you. We need your grace, Father. We need your spirit to rest upon us.

We need you to reveal to us your heart, your will, your desires, your word. Reveal it to us, Lord. Use it to sanctify us.

God, I commit each one of these young people into your care this morning. We ask these things in the name of your Son, Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

All right, these next two sessions, we are going to get more practical because our text does. We've been laying groundwork for two days. We've been looking at the person of Christ.

We've been seeing how this beautiful life flows out of the person and promises of the Lord Jesus Christ. But now, as in every situation in the Scriptures, once God gives a revelation of who He is and what He will do for us, then He begins to give a revelation of what His expectations are for us in light of who He is and what He'll do. Amen.

And so also in this portion of Scripture, it is that way. As I was studying and preparing, I was amazed at how much could be in one little word. I need a day for each one of these seven words, but I don't have a day for each one.

So we'll take three of them this morning. The title of the message is, By faith possess virtue, knowledge, and temperance. By faith possess virtue, knowledge, and temperance.

We're going to study in detail what these words mean and how they are applied to us in this day, 2007, U.S. of America. I also would like us to note as we begin down through this list of seven words that these words are interconnected. They build on each other.

It was not a mistake. The Holy Ghost did not make a mistake when it repeated the words the way that it did. Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance.

That's not a mistake. That's not an oversight. That's not just an extra use of words.

The Holy Ghost breathed those words in there on purpose because these words and the beautiful character of these words, it builds upon each other. And I think it's important for us to recognize that. These do not stand by themselves.

Remember, it's a beautiful panoramic display of the character of our Lord Jesus Christ. And it's very much interconnected. And you will find them interconnected as you pursue them.

You will find one strengthening you and helping you into the next. And vice versa. That's very important.

So it would probably read better like this. By faith develop virtue, and as you exercise virtue, develop knowledge. And as you exercise knowledge, develop temperance.

And by the way, young people, from this part forward for the next two days here, I'm assuming as I am giving this teaching that you are listening with an open and a clear heart. Your heart is washed in the blood. You've been born again.

You're clear. Heaven is open over you. You're moving and living and walking in the grace of God.

I'm assuming that. I'm not going to keep pointing back to that. But I want you to know you can't just in your own self, by picking up yourself by your own bootstraps, just try to do some of these things.

These things are Christ in you. But we, as we said yesterday, we must engage ourselves in order for these beautiful characteristics to become real in our own lives. Now, let's take first of all the word virtue.

In the past, I have said this word virtue means moral excellence. Not so. I cannot say that.

Now that I've spent many hours studying this word, I cannot say that. It will produce moral excellence. And if you look at it, all seven of these words could fall under the category of moral excellence.

So this word does not mean moral excellence. The quality of virtue is actually the fountain from which springs all moral excellence. In fact, it is the foundation that feeds all of these Christ-like qualities.

And you'll understand as we move along. This is a basic quality, a foundational one. It means, and I'm giving it in the Christian context first, we're dealing on the level of Christian commitment when we look at this word virtue.

We're dealing on the level of surrender. And remember, this is foundational, and these are the beginning steps in the Christian life. Which, by the way, never goes away.

But they are the beginning steps. And if you cannot take these steps, you cannot go on in your Christian life. Surrender is found in this word virtue.

We find the Scripture loving God with all of our heart. That is found in this word virtue. Where the will is completely yielded to God.

Say, Brother Denny, that's way down the road. No, that's the beginning. That's the beginning of the Christian life.

That's the beginning of a prosperous Christian life. Surrender, Christian commitment, a will that is completely yielded to God is the beginning of the Christian life. And by the way, this is not a have to surrender.

This is not a, oh no, I've got to give up something for God. I'm not talking about that. That's not the word virtue.

The word virtue is a glad surrender. The word virtue is talking about a dedication to God. A delightful, glad, and glorious, happy, joyful dedication to God.

That's what the word virtue means. A joyful, captive servant of Jesus Christ. In the original meaning of this word, and many times you'll find it this way, you have to go back to how did the Greeks use this word.

Here's how the Greeks used this word that Peter used to describe. Its original usage was loyalty and devotion to a cause or a nation. There's that other kingdom over there.

And brothers and sisters, we have to acknowledge that man in the flesh can have loyal devotion to a cause or a nation. Isn't that right? But we, having met the living God, how much more of a loyal devotion to a cause or a kingdom for us as the people of God. It was used in this way.

Out of love and devotion, a willingness to endure and give up everything. It was a fearless courage. A zeal filled with energy.

And I like this definition the best. A brave, war-like spirit. So we're talking about what's going on inside of an individual who dedicates themselves to a cause or a nation.

We're talking about what is going on inside of an individual who is willing to endure and give up anything for a cause or a nation or a kingdom. That's what virtue means. And the original usage was in the context of a soldier and thus a brave, war-like spirit.

I think of the example of Jesus Christ. Because remember, He is the embodiment of all of this character that we're looking at. I thought about Him in His young life and I titled it, Virtue in the Budding Stage.

Remember the Lord Jesus when He was twelve years old and His father and mother looked all over Jerusalem for Him and couldn't find Him and finally found Him there sitting in the temple, you know, discussing theology and asking questions with the teachers and the doctors of the law. I love that picture. Bless God.

You see, He was twelve years old and if you understand Jewish culture at all, at twelve years old you had your bar mitzvah. Bar meaning son and mitzvah, commandment. You are the son of the commandments at the age of twelve.

And by the way, it was a manly decision that was made by every Jewish boy when they were twelve years old. And so there He is and His parents find Him there and they come up, you know, and, son, we sought you sorrowfully. What are you doing? And He looks up at them and says, now here's virtue in its budding stages out of the mouth of a twelve-year-old boy.

Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? Don't you know that I'm dedicated to a cause? Don't you know who I am? Don't you know that I'm ready to lay down my life for a cause and endure whatever it is? I thought about that twelve-year-old boy. Think about it for a moment. Here He is.

He's twelve years old. He's in a twelve-year-old body. He's got a twelve-year-old voice.

And for most twelve-year-old boys, their voice hasn't changed yet. Yet He makes a statement that a man would make. He had the spirit of a man, but the voice and the body of a little boy, and said, wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? Virtue in its budding stage.

But look at virtue in full bloom. Jesus at Gethsemane, wrestling in prayer with strong crying and tears, He says to His Father, Not my will but Thine be done. Jesus, look at virtue in its full bloom as Jesus stands before Pilate and says to him, Not a bit of fear in his heart.

He says to Pilate, No man taketh my life from me. I lay it down. Do you see what I mean when I say virtue? There was no silly foolishness in that twelve-year-old boy who said, Don't you understand that I must be

about my Father's business? I believe that was one sober twelve-year-old boy that said those words.

And there on the cross, He opened not His mouth. Though He could have called ten thousand angels and changed the whole scene, He opened not His mouth. Talk about self-discipline.

He opened not His mouth. In the Christian context, the word virtue means a resolve, an unfaltering commitment to honor God and do right, and the energy that goes along with it. A resolve, an unfaltering commitment to honor God and do right with the energy that goes along with it.

It is giving my will to the honor and glory of God. It is a will that cannot be broken by adversity, nor relaxed by the fires of persecution. This brave, warlike spirit, this loyal virtue, is and was the spirit of the martyrs down through the ages for the last two thousand years.

That's how those men and women died for their Lord. There was an intense loyalty in their heart that it brought joy to their heart that they would have the blessed opportunity to lay down their lives and die just like their Lord did. That's what the word virtue means.

In the heart of this word, brothers and sisters, idols are smashed. In the heart of this word, idols are smashed. You say, brother Denny, that's big stuff.

No, that's just the beginning. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me or beside me.

I paraphrase that. Thou shalt not have any other gods beside me. God isn't saying, put me first and then you can have a bunch of little ones over here on the side.

No, thou shalt have no other gods before me or beside me. I am the Lord. In the heart of this word, idols are smashed with determination and even with joy.

Amen? Oh, how well I do remember, and I went back in the memory of my own life, I remember that evening when I took my idol and smashed it up and burned it with fire. With singing! I burned thousands of dollars of rock music before the Lord. And it wasn't a burden.

Hidden in this word virtue, we find all those strong words that Christ spoke to the people and to His disciples. The kind of words, remember, that caused them to go away? Words like, except you hate your father and mother, you cannot be my disciple. That's the spirit and the heart of this word virtue.

You must forsake all and follow me, Jesus said to the people. Deny yourself and take up the cross and follow me. And many other words just like that, He said.

In this word virtue, pure motives are found. Pure motives. For the love of God, I give myself for the glory of His name.

No other reason. For a jealous zeal, for His testimony, I sanctify myself. Did you get that word? That was the word of Jesus.

Jesus said, I sanctify myself. What? For the people. For what? So that they could be transformed for the glory of His Father's name.

There again is that virtue. I thought about David watching Goliath. Somehow I always get around to David, don't I? I like David.

But you think about it. When David was standing out there listening to that big hunk of a man standing out there blaspheming God and the armies of Israel, David wasn't standing out there on the edge thinking, Boy, I could really get famous if I just take care of this giant. He wasn't thinking those kind of thoughts.

Virtue was in that young man. There was a fierce loyalty in his heart for his God. And he saw that man blaspheming the name of his God.

And with that kind of a warlike spirit and dedication, he walked out there on the battlefield without any armor and without a sword and a little sling and five smooth stones and the God of the universe standing beside him, and he took care of the giant. That's virtue, young people. And then, young ladies, I thought about Mary breaking the alabaster box of ointment and anointing the feet of Jesus and the body of Jesus before His burial, spending everything she had, an extravagant expression of her love and loyalty to Christ.

She expended everything she owned, a life savings in value, and she just poured it out lavishly on the ground. That's virtue. That's virtue.

You say, Brother Denny, I'm so far away from that. Well, my question today is, do you want it? Is that what you want? I'm not asking you how far away you are this morning. I'm saying, is that what you want? If that's what you want, if your heart desires that, God will work it in you.

God will give it to you. But the question is, where are your idols? Where are your idols? Are there things standing between you and that beautiful piece of land called virtue? This morning, where are your loves? Is there an image of jealousy standing there between you and this kind of a dedicated loyalty to God? Do you see you can't do both of those? You can't have another love and have this kind of dedicated loyalty. It's impossible.

Maybe something is standing in the way. God will do it for you. Do you realize, know ye not, that Christ is in you? The Christ of this virtue is in you.

You only need to turn Him loose and let Him be who He is in your heart and your life. He is in you. Is there an idol there? You need to sell it.

You need to forsake it. You need to give her up. You need to give Him up.

You need to smash it. You need to burn it. You need to sell it and give the money away.

As I thought about this, you know, I thought, Yeah, you need to smash it. Then I thought, well, wait a minute. What about some of these young men, you know? Nice \$30,000 truck, you know.

Maybe that wouldn't be good stewardship to just smash it up and throw it away. But then I thought, wait a minute. Wouldn't that be a blessing if some young man grabbed a sledgehammer with the zeal of God and smashed his truck into pieces and hauled it off to a junkyard once? I said, brother, you're radical.

Well, Jesus said, pluck your eye out. And by the way, the Ephesians gathered together a pile of things worth \$360,000, 50,000 pieces of silver. Paul could have supplied the finances for his ministry the rest of his life on that much money and they burned it before the Lord.

Maybe the TV, smash it! Put your foot through the screen! And I mean, do it before the Lord. Let us pursue this fierce loyalty to God and His cause with all of our heart. Remember, these are just the basics.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, because of the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. These are just the basics, brothers and sisters. By faith, possess also knowledge.

Knowledge. Now, do you see how they build upon each other? First, we've got this loyal, consuming dedication to God. And with that kind of a heart, now it's time to find out what God says about life.

Amen? Do you see how they build upon each other? God said, I believe it's in the book of Hosea, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. In their ignorance, they are failing on every side. And young people, so will you.

Add to virtue. Knowledge. What is knowledge? Knowledge is the revelation of divine truth.

That comes to us in two parts. I want to divide it. First of all, the revelation of divine truth in the principles of the Word of God and how they influence my conduct in my everyday life.

And number two, the revelation of the character of Jesus Christ as you study His life in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. There is the knowledge that God is saying, add to virtue this kind of knowledge. Paul prayed for many of his churches that they would be filled with the knowledge of God's will.

That word filled is just like this cup right here. That they would be filled with the knowledge of His will. Not just a little here and a little there.

But filled with the knowledge of His will. Good prayer to pray with desire. With desire.

To add knowledge is to actively, diligently pursue the biblical knowledge of how to live a practical, everyday Christian life. We quoted Romans chapter 12 already, verse 1, but look at verse 2. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Do you see the two connected again? That decisive dedication, that loyal sacrifice of my life, my will, my plans and everything.

And immediately then we come to the Word of God and have our mind transformed and renewed by God's Word so that we can prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Being filled with the knowledge of His will. Oh, young people, God has answers.

God has answers for your life. And it's time for you to engage your hearts that you may learn how to live. There's a real world coming down the pipe.

Not many days hence for most of you. And contrary to your popular opinions, you don't know very much. There is a tendency in young people to think that you know a whole lot, but you don't know very much.

And I'm trying to save you from the shocking reality of finding yourself married with a husband or a wife and two or three children and bills to pay and work to be done, and all of a sudden you realize, I am not equipped. And it happens all the time. God has answers for every area of your life.

Marriage. Child training. Parents.

Relationships. Finances. Priorities.

Soul winning. Fasting. Jobs.

Church life. Leaders. Anxieties.

Enemies. Forgiveness. And the list could go on and on.

I could give a list here for an hour or just reading it, one word, one word list for a whole hour. It's all in this book right here. Hallelujah.

My, what a treasure we have. This book is one of the all things that pertain unto life and godliness that has been given unto us. Amen? And it has been given unto us.

What a treasure we have. Turn with me to Proverbs. I can tell already, I'm not going to get to cover everything.

You know, somehow I think the clocks go faster in here. I just think they do. Listen to the heart of God here in Proverbs 2. We're going to read in chapter 3 also, but we're not going to because of time.

But in Proverbs 2, verse 1 down to 10, listen to these words. God's heart to you, my son, my daughter, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom and apply thine heart. That's active, brother, sister.

Apply thine heart to understanding. Yea, if thou cryest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding. That's pretty active diligence, isn't it? Crying after knowledge.

Did you ever have devotions like that in the morning? Where you got down on your face before God? Before you open up your Bible and you begin to cry? God! Teach me how to live! You know what? If you would, you would. How to live. Yea, if thou cryest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures, look how active that is.

Look at the desire that's there. Then thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. There it is.

Add to virtue knowledge. You'll find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom.

Out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous. He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

He keepeth the paths of judgment and preserveth the way of His saints. Thenst thou understand righteousness and judgment and equity. Yea, every good path, you'll know how to live.

And that's exactly what Peter is saying. Hast thou this precious faith? Praise God! Don't stop there. There's a whole life to live.

God wants to teach you how to live, young people. And it's right here in this book. When wisdom entereth into thine heart and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, then discretion shall preserve thee and understanding shall keep thee.

Remember what we said? If ye do these things, ye shall never fall. There it is. All the way back in the Old Testament.

Ye shall never fall. Young people, life is filled with cause and effect. The obedient get the benefits and the disobedient or the ignorant, they get the results of their disobedience or their ignorance.

That's just the bottom line. Life is filled with cause and effect. If you grab those Scriptures about marriage and you take those things into your heart and you meditate upon those Scriptures there and you apply them to your own life and you allow God to reveal to you what He means about marriage, you'll be prepared for marriage.

And if you follow out those kind of principles, in your marriage, you'll have a blessed, happy marriage. I promise you that. And there are dozens and dozens and dozens of principles just like that one which I'm not going to speak about here today.

The point is, add to your virtue that loyal dedication to God. Let the zeal of that consume you to pursue this book so you can find out how to live. And that's exactly where your focus should be.

I don't care if you're 15 years old or you're 25 years old. You're in this room. That's where your focus should be.

Lord, I want to learn how to live according to this book. Would You give me knowledge? Would You give me insight into the true nature of things? Would You teach me how to live, Father? Practical ways to develop knowledge. The Bible.

The treasure. The gold. The silver.

The pearls. The rubies. I have it here in my hand.

Practical ways to develop knowledge. Read it. Listen to it.

Study it. Memorize it. Meditate upon it.

Exercise your heart in the Word of God, young people. I thought about Christ's years of preparation. Do you think He was just sitting around doing nothing waiting for the day for His Father to say, okay, son, it's time? How many think He was just sitting around waiting? Let me see your hands.

How many of you feel like He was preparing? He was preparing. He had a work to do. He had His Father's business to carry out.

He was preparing. Practical ways to develop knowledge. Sermons in church.

Family devotions at your house. Sit with men and listen to them like Jesus did. It would be okay.

Young men, it would be okay. If when the men are sitting in the living room, sitting around discussing the Scriptures, and most of the time, most of your fathers, that's what they're doing. Get rid of that dumb ball and go sit in there with those men and listen! Listen to them.

Ask questions. See what they think. Enter in.

Give your own thoughts. Same thing with you sisters. Listen to sermons while you travel.

I know men, not young men, married men, who woke up ten years too late. They go to Bible school two hours every day. One sermon on cassette on the way to work in the rush hour traffic and another sermon on cassette on the way home.

Every day! Some of these men are literally going to seminary in their car! How much more you! Read good books. Read good books. But be careful.

Don't just go into these Christian bookstores these days and look down through the shelves. You'll find psychology, self-help, the power of positive thinking, and all kinds of other liberal, humanistic teaching. Don't go for those books.

Get the old ones. Good books. Biographies.

Read biographies. There you see other people living out the Christian life most of the time at a level higher than you. And it becomes a catalyst and an enlightenment to your own heart.

And you begin to see how other people viewed their finances a hundred years ago or whatever else it may be. One hour every day. One hour every day, young people.

And I'm not budging on this. One hour. You should give an hour to this every day.

Don't let other things get in the way. Sacrifice your free time. Sacrifice your play.

Sacrifice social fellowship. But don't sacrifice this an hour a day. And I'm not making a law out of that.

I'm just saying a good space of time where you can get into the Word of God with a heart that says, God, teach me. Teach me how to live. My testimony is this.

I got born again when I was 23 years old and all of a sudden I woke up and realized there is a real life to live. And I've been frittering my life away up until now. I picked up this book and I started consuming it two or three hours every day.

Every moment free that I had. They thought I was a nut. I went to work.

Every break I was in the corner with my Bible open reading it. That guy! I went to work for UPS. I took portions of Scripture and copied them out on a piece of paper.

Stuck them on the inside wall of the trailer where I was loading boxes. And every time I'd go by, I'd read a portion of Scripture. Go back, get another box, go by and read it.

Memorizing Scripture! Bless God! Redeem the time! I'm about ten years behind! I've got to catch up! How about you? We're talking about priorities, young people. By faith, know this. If you rise up in your heart with a clear heart and say, God, I want knowledge.

I want to know how to live. God will teach you. He will teach you.

And lastly today, by faith, pursue temperance. Now, this word temperance, we hardly understand it. It's kind of fading, fading, fading into the background.

In fact, most people, if you give them the word temperance today, they'll think, oh, that means you don't drink alcohol. That's because of the temperance movement some many years ago in our land where they

tried to get rid of alcohol so that it was illegal to sell it. That's not what temperance means.

Oh, yes, it does mean not drinking alcohol. But it means much more than that. The word has evolved to mean that.

But basically it means self-control. Self-control. Bringing into subjection all of the passions of my human heart by the Spirit of the living God.

May I say it this way? Spirit-filled self-control. Remember, it's a fruit of the Spirit. It's part of what flows out of your life when you walk in the Spirit.

So, we're not talking about pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps and a new program and all those things. We're not talking about that. We're talking about pursuing a Spirit-filled self-controlled life where I rule over the passions of my human nature.

The old divines called it self-government. I like that. Self-government.

I tell me what to do. It is one thing for your parents to govern you. And you all understand that very well, how that your parents have governed you.

But as you well know, probably better than I can even describe, you are beginning to realize that you are an individual. You are your own person. You have your own thoughts.

There are things going on inside of you. All of a sudden, passions are beginning to express themselves in ways that you never knew before. And at the same time, you're coming to this age of accountability where you come face-to-face with the call of Christ upon your life.

It is no longer parents governing you. God's heart would be that you would govern yourself. And by the way, your parents are watching your every move to discern if you have entered into that place by now where you govern yourself.

Every parent watches their children to see. Can he handle this? Can he handle that? What will she do if I tell her, you make your own dress. You do as the Lord leads you.

Can she do it? Will she handle it? Will she govern herself? Will he govern himself? He's got a car now. He's got his driver's license. Will he govern himself? Every parent is watching.

And by the way, every parent knows when you're at that place. They all know it. They know it.

Here's another definition. The wise self-discipline imposed on man's natural desires for pleasure. Self-government, temperance, is the wise self-discipline imposed on man's natural desires for pleasure.

You see, we do have those natural desires in us. And they're not bad. But they must be governed.

That's all. They must be governed. We must read these Scriptures in 1 Corinthians 9 24.

Some of my favorite verses in the Bible. Paul says these words to the Corinthians, Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain the prize. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in what? All things.

Is temperate in all things. Now, they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. Shall we do less than those who are after an Olympic gold medal? I, Paul giving his testimony, I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air, but I keep under my body, and a better translation there is, I buffet my body and bring it into subjection lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

That was Paul's testimony. Probably one of the most spiritual men that walked on this earth was the Apostle Paul. And look what he said.

He also said, Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. This is Paul speaking. And Paul says, in all my spirituality, in all my anointing, in all the sufferings that I go through, I buffet my body and keep that thing, that body of mine, in subjection.

That's what Paul said. That's what temperance is all about. Keeping my body in subjection to the Spirit of God.

Here's another definition. Taking dominion over the bodily senses that cause man to fall in the garden. I like that definition.

The bodily senses that cause man to fall in the garden. Remember, Jesus who was discipline and self-government incarnate, that Jesus Christ lives in you. Let Him have His way.

For it is God that worketh in you, both the will and to do of His good pleasure. I wonder where God would take you if you would let Him. I wonder what levels of self-discipline and government God would take you to if you would let Him.

Remember the example of Jesus. Such beautiful self-government. No man takes my life from me.

I lay it down. No man. That is self-government.

What are some of the issues? There are many. I cannot cover them all. But how about gluttony? Paul said of some who were there troubling the church at Philippi, he said of them, their God is their belly.

Their God is their belly. In other words, their belly is ruling over them. God doesn't want it to be that way, young people.

Our belly is not supposed to be our God. This is a major problem among Christians in America. Gluttony.

We have world cuisines at your fingertips on every corner of the streets of the United States. Every kind of taste that your delicate little tongue could enjoy. They're all at your disposal.

Come and enjoy them all. And eat to the full. Yeah.

And let leanness settle into your soul. What about laziness? Sleep. America is sleeping away its mornings and they have no time.

Let's be honest, young people. We Americans live in a very fleshly, carnal, pleasure-filled society. And if we get real, real honest, it has gotten us more than what we want to admit.

It has gotten us. I remember the first time God began to convict me about gluttony. It was around Thanksgiving time.

I'm going to ruin your Thanksgiving meal. But it was around Thanksgiving time and God was convicting me about gluttony and I thought, it was hard for me to see it because all God's people were stuffing themselves with stuffing on Thanksgiving and then sitting there in the chair. You know how they do? It's not funny, is it? How do you think God felt about it? But it was hard for me to see it because everybody was doing it.

And I repented. Are we going to let this society dictate and control us? We're the peculiar people. We're the holy nation.

We're a different culture in the midst of another culture. But somehow this culture is getting us. We're at ease in Zion.

We think it's okay. It doesn't bother us. We can stuff ourselves and roll over and go to sleep and it doesn't bother us.

We can eat a big meal and roll over and go to sleep at night, wake up in the morning with a dull mind and it's hard for us to concentrate and have any devotional time. And we don't think anything of it. What about lust? Self-government.

I've made a covenant with mine eyes that I will not look upon a maid. Scripture talks about those in the last days having eyes full of adultery. Eyes full of adultery and cannot cease from sin.

With boys, young men, it's lust of looking. With girls, young ladies, it's lust of being looked at. And they're about the same thing.

About the same thing. Oh, we look. And we know we shouldn't look.

We look. Even though there's a line down the middle of the auditorium, we look. And we like to be looked at, don't we? It's part of our fallen nature.

And God says, I want you to bring those passions into subjection by the Spirit of God. God will help you. An old Puritan divine said it this way, Abstinence is man's rising just as intemperance was his fall.

Abstinence is man's rising just like intemperance was his fall. Consider this. Man, Christian man, I don't mean men, I mean man as a whole, Christian mankind is a spiritual being.

God's Spirit dwells in my spirit and should rule over my body and my soul. That's my flesh. I am a spiritual being with the Spirit of God inside of me.

And the Spirit of God should be in control of the passions of this body and the passions of my soul. But many are weak and carnal Christians and they're being ruled by their soul and by their body. And may I say this, I'm not sure how long you can live in a carnal state where your passions are in charge and not the Spirit of God.

I'm not sure. But if I were you, I wouldn't play around anywhere near that place. You are on dangerous ground.

Someday you're going to fall and not get up. And it has happened many times. How about the tongue? James talks about bridling the tongue.

Who bridles it? I do. And if you can't bridle your tongue, your religion is vain. It's empty.

It doesn't mean anything. No matter how many things you have right, if you can't bring this tongue into subjection, your religion is vain. Paul said in Romans 8, If ye through the Spirit do mortify, put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

The verse before he says, If you live in the flesh, you will die. But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Oh, we must grasp this.

It is a part of our inheritance. We must be willing, desirous, and able by God's grace to bring this body under control. You can have the mastery over every aspect of your lower nature.

In closing, we are talking about a whole air of self-discipline when we speak about this subject. A self-disciplined life in every area. A disciplined lifestyle.

My testimony. I am a soldier. Can you tell it? I discipline my mind.

I discipline my eyes. I discipline my attitudes. I am a soldier.

I discipline what my body wears. I discipline how it walks. I discipline how it sits.

I discipline what it eats. I am a soldier. I tell my body when to go to bed and when to get up, when to talk, and when to be quiet.

I am a soldier. Can you tell? This is one of the reasons why I have a problem with all this casual Christianity and all the clothes and everything that goes with it. You know, this casual stuff.

You know, I just have a problem with that. And I'm sorry. I'm a soldier.

Are you a soldier? You know, it's very interesting to me. I travel a lot and therefore I'm in the airports a lot. And there's lots of soldiers flying on planes these days.

Can any of you tell me how I can tell who the soldiers are? Anybody want to take a guess? Yes? No. That's right. You see, when I was a soldier, and I wish I never was, but when I was a soldier, you had to wear a uniform to travel.

But today, you don't have to wear a uniform. But you know what? I know those soldiers. I can pick them out of the crowd all over the airplane.

You know why? They're soldiers. And there's something about a soldier. There's something about the way he walks.

There's something about the way he looks. There's a soberness on his face. He's either been to Iraq and seen his body blown to pieces right before his very eyes, or he's on the way to Iraq and he doesn't know if he's coming back.

You can see a soldier. You can see it on his face. You can tell those soldiers by the way they walk.

Have you ever seen them? You can tell a soldier by the way they stand. You can tell a soldier by the way they talk. There's a determination in their eyes, a soberness on their face.

They're courteous. I've noticed that. I've talked to them on the planes.

They're soldiers. They've been trained to be that way. And mind you, young men, mind this, they were not that way when they joined the army.

They were just like the rest of this casual bunch in America today. They were just kind of flopping around through life with their baggy pants on and all the other things they do. But they became a soldier and they were trained to be a soldier.

They were taught how to act. They were taught what to say. They were taught how to sit and how not to sit, how to walk and how not to walk.

And you can tell they're soldiers without a uniform on. Oh Lord, I'm a soldier. Can you tell? I thought about Gideon's army.

Remember Gideon's army? God had a special task to do. Gideon narrowed that thing down to 10,000 soldiers and God said, no, not 10,000. That's too many.

And God told him, I want you to get all those 10,000 soldiers together, take them down to the river and watch the way they drink. And some of them came down to the river in total ignorance and undisciplinedness and just dropped down on their faces and drank water out of the river. 9,700 of them drank that way, but 300 of them walked up to the river like this.

Do you see what God was doing? Fellas, can you see it? God was looking into the character of those men and 300 of them drank like this. You know, if God was looking for soldiers today, He's not going to look to see how we drink water. You know, we just go up to the fountain and drink it.

Let me ask you this question. Maybe if God came through this place looking for soldiers, maybe He'd find some of them looking like this and some of them looking like this. You tell me, which ones is God going to choose to go fight that battle against the Midianites? You tell me.

Yeah. He's going to choose the ones that are like this. Now, is this just a law you have to go around sitting like this? No.

This is the spirit, the warlike spirit of a disciplined man or a woman. That's what it is. And it's on the inside.

It's not just some fake thing that you do. It's on the inside. Which is it going to be? Father, thank You.

Thank You, Lord, for the provisions that You've made for us. O Lord, take these words, Father, and stir us. Lord, let us go deep, like Brother Mo said last night.

Let us go deep. I pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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