

Cell Group Lesson: Self-Control and Discipline

Ice Breaker: If you could choose to have any job in the world - other than the one you have right now - what would it be, and why?

Facilitator's Comments: The Bible has a lot to say about Self-Control and Discipline. We are made up of heart, mind and soul. These different parts of our *being* - battle for the control of our actions, activities and attitudes. In this lesson, we are going to talk about the role that the Bible says "Self-Control" should play in our lives. Let's first start by reading a definition of "Self-Control":

Read

The Definition of Self-Control: *"Having control of one's emotions, desires, or actions; the act of denying yourself and controlling your impulses."* Someone once said that "Discipline is just choosing between what you want now and what you want most."

Question: What types of behaviors would a person that lacks "self-control" display?

Answer: Anger, rage, doing things that harm themselves or others, doing or saying things with no thought of the future consequences.

Question: How would you describe a Christian that is self-controlled and disciplined in their walk with God?

Answer: They are faithful and consistent in their walk with God and are not easily moved by the *emotions-of-the-moment* to do things that are contrary to the Word of God.

Question: Why do we sometimes find it hard to be self-disciplined when it comes to living for God?

Facilitator's Comments: Let's read in our 1st Commentary about what the Bible says about lacking self-control..

Read

1st Commentary:

The Bible says, in **Proverbs 25:28**, that *"Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control."*^(NIV) A Christian that doesn't have proper boundaries, limits and controls in their life, is unstable and is exposing themselves to great danger in their walk with God, because as the Bible says in **Mark 14:38** - "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."^(NKJV) The Bible says in **Galatians 5:22** - *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."*^(NIV) **If we seek to have the Spirit control our lives, one of the expressions of having God's Spirit in our hearts is having self-control.**

Facilitator's Comments: Let's read what the Bible say about self-control in the last days..

Read

2 Timothy 3:1 - But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ²People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God ^(NIV)

Question: What do you think the Bible means when it says that, in the last days, there will be people that are *"lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God?"*

Answer: There will be people who only do things that please themselves - at the expense of pleasing God.

Facilitator's Comments: Let's read 'why' we should have self-control in our lives, by first reading 1 Peter 5:8...

Read

1 Peter 5:8 - Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. (NIV)

Question: Why does this verse tell us that we should be self-controlled?

Answer: Because the devil is always roaming and seeking to gain entry into our lives, so we must be self-controlled and alert, to block all of his attempts to influence us.

Facilitator's Comments: In our 2nd Commentary, let's now read about what Paul had to say about discipline in his own life

Read

2nd Commentary:

Paul said the following in **1 Corinthians 9:25** - "*And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.* ²⁶ *Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.* ²⁷ *But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.* (NKJV) **Paul knew that even though God had done great things through him, if he didn't keep himself disciplined he could be disqualified and a castaway.**

Question: How can a person be mightily used of God, and still end up in danger of losing out with God?

Answer: Past success doesn't guarantee future success. Our walk with God is a 'daily' walk and we must stay renewed in the Spirit on a consistent basis.

Facilitator's Comments: Let's read about the various areas in our lives that require us to have self-control. Let's discuss first our 'thought life':

Read:

Our Thought life

2 Cor 10:5 - casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, NKJV

Question: Why do we need 'self-control' in our thought life?

Answer: What and how we think will determine our actions. What we think is who we are.

Facilitator's Comments: Let's read about controlling the temple that God has given to us...

Read

Our Temple:

1 Thess 4:3 - It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; 6 and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. 7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. 8 Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit. NIV

Question: Why did God put a special emphasis on us having self-control when it came to how we treat the body that God gave us?

Answer: Since we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and were made in the image of God, the Lord wants us to treat our bodies in an especially careful and respectable way and to honor God at all times in all we do.

Facilitator's Comments: Let's read, in our 3rd Commentary, about a young man that honored God by his self-control...

Read

3rd Commentary:

Joseph was being pressured to fall into immorality with Potiphar's wife. He guarded his body and spirit by not giving in to her demands, when he said, in Genesis 39:9, *"There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* **NKJV Pleasing God and not sinning against the Lord, was more important than letting down his standards and enjoying the pleasure of sin for a season.**

Question: What helps us to withstand the pressures of this world?

Facilitator's Comments: Let's talk about the role that self-control plays in dealing with anger..

Read

Prov 16:32 - *"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."* **NKJV Often our natural response is to react in anger when we feel upset about something that we feel is wrong or not fair.** Aristotle said *"I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies; the hardest victory is the victory over self."*

Question: Why do we need self-control to help us to control our temper?

Answer: We can say harmful things when we are angry and also do things that we would not normally do, and that we will regret once our anger has past.

Facilitator's Comments: The Lord also wants us to be disciplined in how we use our time. God wants us to use our time wisely...Let's read our next verse.

Read

Prov 19:15 - Laziness casts one into a deep sleep, And an idle person will suffer hunger. **NKJV**

Question: Why does God not want us to be lazy?

Answer: Everyday is a gift from God, and He wants us to use our time on this earth wisely. And He wants us to be responsible for ourselves and not just be lazy and then expect everything to come our way.

Facilitator's Comments: Let's continue... God cares about the things we look at, and want us to be disciplined in what we allow ourselves to see, as stated in Psalms 101:3...let's read the verse..

Read

Psalms 101:3 - I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me. **(NKJV)**

Question: Why does God care about 'what' we see?

Answer: Because the eyes are the window to our soul, so we need to protect what goes into our hearts and souls.

Facilitator's Comments: Let's read our 4th Commentary...

4th Commentary

A life that is disciplined and is focused on building faith and strength in the Lord should be the goal for all of us. We don't want to be like the person described in **Proverbs 5:11**, when it said: "*You don't want to end your life full of regrets, nothing but sin and bones,* ¹²*Saying, "Oh, why didn't I do what they told me? Why did I reject a disciplined life?"* ¹³*Why didn't I listen to my mentors, or take my teachers seriously?* ^(MSG) One way to not reject a disciplined life is to heed the counsel of those that care for you. Because, as it says in **Proverbs 24:6**, "*... And in a multitude of counselors there is safety.*" ^(NKJV)

Question: How does the input and opinions of those that care about you, help you in your Christian walk with God?

Answer: Getting the opinions and thoughts of others, can help you to make sure that you don't have any 'blind spots' and are able to see and think about the issues in your life, clearly. They also can pray with and for you, so that you are led by the Spirit and not by your emotions and desires, alone.

Facilitator's Comments: We must realize that we are too weak by ourselves to be self-controlled and disciplined. But thanks be to God, that we have access to His Spirit to help us do what is best for us in our Walk with the Lord. Let's finish by reading these final two scriptures:

Read

Titus 2:11 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹²It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ^(NIV) **The Grace of God is available to teach us to say "No" when we need to. Additionally, in 2 Timothy 1:6, it says "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline." ^(NIV)***

Question: In what areas in your life do you need more self-control and discipline?

Facilitator's Comments: We can also say "Thank you, Lord" that the grace of God and God's Spirit is here and available to us to give us the direction and strength to live overcoming and productive lives in Jesus Christ.

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