

2021 Men's Training Camp - Sermon I - Mr. Bower

How does God's Spirit help us as men? Here at the Men's Training Camp, we might not speak about things we would at home. One of the fruits of God's Spirit we can learn about this weekend is self-control. Galatians 5:22-23. This is the last fruit listed here. It's especially important in this day and age with all that's coming at us in these last days. It's defined as *having restraint over one's over desires and lusts. A guided conduct and pattern of behavior*. This helps us become better leaders in our families and in the Church. Of course, Satan will target us in areas that might erode our self-control.

We have certain proclivities as men. Society tries to convince us that we're all the same as our feminine counterparts. This is clearly flawed thinking. We're stronger physically, but we also have greater competitive natures and are easier targets for losing self-control. Satan has been attacking men for thousands of years. Let's not be ignorant of his devices. Here are a few:

Control Your Emotions

If our ego is stepped on by others, we can lose it! We are certainly prone to emotional outbursts, and many who have left the Church have had their feelings hurt. Let's really understand what harm losing control of our emotions can cause. Moses is one example. Exodus 2:11 - When we first get to know him, he kills a man! Exodus 32:11 - Moses asks God why He was so angry. Then he walks down into the camp with the newly carved tablets and sees for himself why—and smashes the tablets on the ground. "His anger became hot" - he was *livid*. Later, he's incensed and strikes the rock to bring water from it, saying, "Must I bring water for you?!"

Most days, Moses did very well. But were there some days that he wasn't so *hot*? Perhaps cool-tempered.

Jonathan McNair's commentary: Are we content with occasional lapses of self-control? Or are we only as godly as our worst moments?

Phil. 2:5 - Let this mind be in you which is in Christ Jesus," who never lost His temper. He did have righteous indignation occasionally, but He controlled it. "He who controls his anger is as mighty as one who takes a city."

Get on your knees and ask God to help you with your anger and emotional problems. We see where the world is going, and they will come after us eventually. They will call us bigot, racist, misogynist, etc. In the heat of the moment, can we maintain self-control? As men, we can say and DO a lot of hurtful things.

Control Your Lusts

II Samuel 11:1 - When the kings went out to battle, King David remained in Jerusalem. He rose from his bed and went to the ledge and saw a naked woman bathing. Similarly, we see pictures of half-dressed, beautiful women all the time, trying to allure us. David was responsible for not controlling his emotions in the heat of the moment. II Samuel 12:10 - The consequence was God telling him that the "sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife." We're in a world where some women don't care if you're married and are more forward. You may reply, "I'm married." They say, "So what? I'm married, too." Wow! This is the direction we're headed, where women want what they want, and they're going to get it. That pledge to be faithful for life is no longer as important.

We have to be prepared! Was Bathsheba aware of what she was doing? I mean, we all know where the governor of our town lives, right? But if we're tempted and tested, we need to be prepared to flee! Avoid even getting close to the cliff because it only takes a tiny push to fall over.

How many wives and concubines did Solomon have? In the video about pornography we watched, we saw that men can search for any number of women that "please them" with greater varieties of acts taking place. \$6-15 billion go into the porn industry, and there are 28.5 billion views per year. If a member of a marriage begins watching porn, the likelihood of divorce doubles. "It's harmless!" Really? Matthew 5:27 - "You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Spiritually, if we're hooked on porn, you're no better than Solomon. Would your wife be happy if she discovered such a habit? "Great! What a wonderful way to spend your free time!" Not even a bit. And on the public roads, there's XXX and Adult-themed stores and bars and clubs that bombard us constantly. If this is a problem, talk to the ministry for help. Don't let it take you out of the Kingdom of God. We all make mistakes.

"You did these things in secret, David." God knows what we're doing. Nothing is hidden from His eyes. Don't put yourself in situations where this becomes a problem. "Walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Hopefully we believe our wife is the most beautiful woman in the world!

Control Your Ambition/Competitive Nature

III John 9 - Diotrophes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive them. He loved the spotlight and the respect. We ought not abuse our wives in forcing them to submit to us. People learn to love the attention and the position goes to our head. The Coffee Pot Wars happen even when we don't have a high position. It doesn't take much to step on our poor little ego.

We need to understand that authority is not a club, but it's an opportunity to serve. "Act Like Men" describes a scene from *Gladiator*, in which the emperor taunts the gladiator by telling him his wife squealed like a pig when he killed her. He replied, "Your time for honoring yourself

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will soon be at an end." The things that we do as Christian men will echo how others see God and Jesus Christ. Take that seriously.

Ephesians 5:22 - It takes self-control to stand up and actually be a man! Christ is the head of the Church, and so we need to be heads of our family. We *are* the heads of the family. If a minister tells us what our role is, we ought not be afraid of our wife's opinion about it! Step up and take this role on. Pray that God helps us to fulfill our role. If our wife dresses in an inappropriate way for Church, it's not a fun conversation! But sometimes we have to do that. We have to sometimes correct our family—not in the John Wayne way of spanking our wife. Yes, it may lead to a rough couple of days. There's no doghouse, and there's no sleeping on the couch. If our wife is converted, she'll get over it and we can talk through the issues.

"Let me go talk to my wife." Yes, we need to be considerate of her opinion, but it's not up to her—it's up to us. There are times in the Bible where heeding one's wife didn't go well. Genesis 3:17 - "Adam, because you have heeded your wife in what I commanded you not to, the ground will be cursed for your sake." Genesis 16:2 - Sarai said to Abram, "Go into my maidservant and perhaps I will obtain children by her." It didn't go well! For centuries! **We are the responsible ones, whether we like it or not.** That wedding supper for the Kingdom of God will take place whether we're there or not, and similarly, we are the head of our household whether we take the reins or not.

One rules his own house well with his children in reverence and submission. If you talk to ladies in the world about submitting to their husbands, you'll likely get a very offended woman. Yet when women fall into their role and a man leads, things go a lot better. "Ladies, if you have a Bible question, go to your husband instead of the minister, then HE can go talk to the minister if he doesn't already have the information." When our wives can get out of the workforce and be at home, they are likely much happier. "You let your husband spend YOUR money??" This is the world's opinion, and it's one of division between men and women, not unity.

Don't be afraid to show emotion. Feel free to let your guard down a bit. "Maybe sometimes I don't feel like loving my wife. Is that okay?" No, it's not. If we're cheerful, it's okay to sing and dance. David wasn't seen as a lesser man. You can also pray together. It will draw you closer to each other and closer to God. We can't be afraid to show our humanity to our wives.

How do we maintain this self-control?

James 1:5 - God wants to help us *IF* we ask Him. He doesn't want to see us fail. He doesn't want to see us let down and sin and be hurt. He wants us to do the best we can do so we can rejoice with Him. Jesus Christ is the perfect pattern in these things. He never got angry, never lusted, never let His power go to His head. I Cor. 16:13-14 - "Be on the alert; stand fast in the faith; act like men; let all that you do be done with love." Develop the fruit of self-control for ourselves. We need to be able to do hard things! Gird yourselves as men and be strong, courageous against society, Satan and self. We need to be **men**.