

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
403

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be about Ed Jackson. Ed was a Tulsa fireman like my father, and a good friend of our family who died before you were even born. Unfortunately, Ed had a drinking problem. His wife Marie said *"every time Ed got a few beers under his belt he thought he could whip the whole police department"*. She lamented that their refrigerator was always long on beer and short on food. They drove an old car, lived in an old house, wore old clothes, and his drinking kept them in poverty. Then Ed contracted cancer. As I recall, it was supposed to be terminal. Then, by the grace of God, after surgery and treatment, Ed miraculously got well. One of his many surgeries left him with no partition separating his nostrils. I have never seen a nose like his before or since.

In gratitude for his healing, Ed not only gave his heart to Christ, but became an elder of the church where Granny and I attended. I was too young to remember his drinking days, so instead I remember him as a well dressed Christian driving a new car. Even though this was before air conditioning, his beautiful home featured the latest innovation to cool the house during the summer. It was a window fan that pulled air through a mist of water. With the help of the Holy Spirit Ed conquered his drinking problem and was a wonderful elder and a great example to everyone.

One of the many ways the Holy Spirit manifests Himself is in "self control". Note: **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control" (Gal. 5:22)**. Please consider that the verb in this verse is singular. The fruit of the Spirit "is" all of the above. Self control is just one manifestation of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Initially, we may consider someone with "self control" as living a restricted life style. In reality, the opposite is true. Before Ed had self control he was a slave to alcohol, poverty, social problems, arguments, etc. Self control actually liberated Ed from a life of slavery!

Please consider these Scriptures about self control: (taken from the ESV)

- **"A man without self control is like a city broken into and left without walls" (Prov. 25:28).**
- **"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and self control" (2 Tim. 1:7).**
- **"For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love." (2 Pet. 1:5-7).**
- **"Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city." (Prov. 16:32).**
- **"The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers" (1 Pet. 4:7).**
- **"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works" (Tit. 2:11-14).**

- “Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness” (Tit. 2:2).
- “Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled” (Tit. 2:6).
- “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable” (1 Cor. 9:24-25).
- “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do” (Gal. 5:16-17).
- Etc.

Jesus, of course, is the ultimate example of self control. When Peter drew his sword in the Garden Jesus told him to put it away and said: **“Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”** (Matt. 26:53) According to Wikipedia a legion consisted of 5,200 infantry and 300 cavalry. According to Scripture one angel killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in a single night (2 Ki. 18:35; 2 Chron. 32:21; Isaiah 37:36). Jesus had over 60,000 angels at his disposal. If you had that much power at your control would you allow evil men to torture and kill you for a crime you did not commit?

The same transformation that happened to Ed Jackson can also happen to you when the Holy Spirit empowers you with self control!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce