

PEEL: Self-control

Scripture used: Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

OVERVIEW

Big Idea: Pastor Dan Monroe wrapped up the nine-week series on the Fruit of the Spirit by taking a “deep dive” into self-control. Pastor Dan taught that the Holy Spirit helps us both **believe** and **follow**, and so it is the Spirit’s work in our lives to shape our character and desires so we can respond to God’s leading. This is true self-control - not just warring with our desires to modify our behavior, but to trust God in relationship and allow God to shape our desires as we choose for the things of God. Per [Matthew 22:37-40](#), the greatest commandment is to love God and love our neighbor as ourself. Thus belief goes hand-in-hand with following the Spirit in where He takes us. Importantly, we remember self-control comes from relationship with God, and not the other way around - we don’t get relationship with God because of self-control. Pastor Dan used vignettes from his own life to illustrate that, despite hits-and-misses, an unfailing Spirit gives us encouragement and hope to exercise self-control in family ties, friendship, marriage, and the workplace. Ultimately, Pastor Dan testified that self-control isn’t a duty or law that we must do because of obligation or fear of judgment; rather, it is how we express our trust in a God who loves us and wants what is best for us.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Be filled with the Spirit.** The Spirit dwells inside each believer, but we can easily ignore the presence of the Spirit. We must confidently know that God is with us through the Spirit ([John 14:16](#)) - He is our counselor, our guide, our source of wisdom. He sits next to us, asks us if we’re going too fast, or going in the right direction. The Spirit reminds us that we’ll be tempted after we’ve made a resolution.
- 2) **Listen carefully to the Spirit.** Pastor Dan shared from his own life that for many years, he was confident of his own gentleness with others, and so he didn’t listen to the Spirit in his relationships. After one incident at work where a man “pushed a button” that Pastor Dan didn’t know he had in him that made Pastor Dan ready to fight, he realized that he wasn’t as gentle as he thought he was. He realized that his stubbornness and pride came out in subtle harshness in his marriage and parenting, and he desperately needed God’s help to have the kind of relationships he desired.
- 3) **Be humble before the Spirit.** It takes humility to listen to the Spirit, whether in areas of strength or weakness. But if we recognize that God loves us and is worthy of our trust, we can humble ourselves and allow us to be directed by God’s Spirit. One aspect of humility is being willing to admit when we’ve fallen short of God’s best, and one of the powerful ways we re-align with God is through confession. Confession is often most real when we take the step of confessing to another person we trust who has God’s heart ([James 5:16](#)).
- 4) **Receive grace from the Spirit.** [Hebrews 4:14-16](#) reminds us that even though there are times we will fall short of self-control, because we are human, God’s grace is always available to us if we are willing to receive it in faith and repentance. Grace will save us when people push buttons we didn’t even know we had, and an inner weakness is revealed. The Spirit gives us the wisdom and revelation to never give up. Self-control becomes the catalyst to live more deeply in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness, and to live more fully the life that God intended for us.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Where do you struggle most with self-control? Or, like Pastor Dan, are there areas where you think you naturally have self-control, to the extent that you don’t allow God into that area of your life?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Read [John 14:15-21](#). What is the promise that Jesus makes about the Holy Spirit? As you consider all the dimensions of the gift of the Holy Spirit, what difference would it make in our lives if we truly were open to the Spirit’s leading in all the ways that Jesus intended? Does seeing the work of the Spirit in this way change our view of self-control, so we can see self-control as something that comes as a result of God’s love, rather than as a way to earn God’s love?
- 3) **DO** - Pastor Dan challenged us to consider one person in our life that challenges us, someone who is hard to love or someone whom we avoid or resist. Ask God to see this person’s presence in our lives as a gift, showing us where we need to grow in God’s heart and character as a part of our self-control. Ask God for an opportunity to express God’s love to this person this week.