

To Faith Add... Temperance

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“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control...” (2 Peter 1:5-6)

Faith must have “substance” (Heb. 11:1). Peter gives us a seven-fold description of a Christian’s character, all of them necessary to a saving faith which leads to an “entrance ... into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs. 11).

We have examined Virtue and Knowledge, so today we probe into the Greek word *ENKRATES*. The root of this word is *KRATOS*, which means “strength.” It speaks to how strong the Christian is to become. It is translated “self-control,” which points to our use of a strong will to resist sin and live righteously. We ought to be able to control our lives rather than be controlled by peer pressure, the mass media or other wicked schemes of Satan.

Solomon said, *“He that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls”* (Prov. 25:28). Paul regularly compared the Christian to a disciplined athlete who exercised a strong will-power against sin (I Cor. 9:24-27; I Tim. 4:7-8; Phil. 3:12-16). He called it *“buffeting”* his body daily. We are to *“exercise”* ourselves with godliness. This takes tremendous self-control. Our modern world practices precious little of this, want-ing everything handed to them instantly. Don’t you be one of them. Whether it is dieting, getting an education, or moving toward that job promotion we want it NOW. The same self-mastery is needed for prayer (Lk. 18:1), and Bible study (2 Tim. 2:15).

From our temper (Eph. 4:26), to our tongue (Jam. 3:1-12), to our temptations (I Cor. 6:12), we all must show God we are serious about this life-and-death battle with Satan and Sin. Temperance is my way of showing God my Faith. *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”* (Phil. 4:13).