

“Self-Control in a Wired World”
Proverbs 25:28
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Main Idea: Doing what needs to be done *when* it needs to be done requires self-control.

Key points:

1. What it means to be self-controlled.

- a. Scholar Bruce Waltke offers this literal translation of Proverbs 25:28: “A breached city, which has no wall, a person whose spirit has no restraint.”
- b. Self-control is the ability to restrain your spirit—that is your passions and appetites. It’s the ability to say “no” to yourself—to control your emotions and desires and the expression of them in your behavior.
 - i. “...he who has a *cool spirit* is a man of understanding.” (Prov. 17:27)
 - ii. “...whoever *restrains* his lips is prudent.” (Prov. 10:19)
 - iii. “If you have found honey, *eat only enough for you*, lest you have your fill of it and vomit it.” (Prov. 25:16)
 - iv. “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).
- c. Self-control not only applies to areas like lust or food but also applies to our use of time and technology.

2. The dangers of an out-of-control self.

- a. The imagery of Proverbs 25:28 is vivid and stark: A person without self-control is vulnerable, defenseless and unsafe. At any moment, you could be pillaged by your own desires or impulses and rob you of precious time for what is important.
- b. Laziness and a lack of self-control in your Christian walk can lead to spiritual poverty, a poverty of godly character and a poverty of fruitfulness in serving the Lord.
 - i. Some could rephrase the words of Proverbs 24:33-34 about the sluggard and say, “A little web surfing, a little Facebook and little folding of the hands around your smart phone and spiritual poverty will come upon you like a robber.”
- c. Our love for the Savior and our service for his kingdom will grow cold as we waste our time in a million different allowable, permissible, absolutely inconsequential pursuits.

3. Why self-control is a bigger deal for Christians

- a. This is a bigger deal for Christians because we know there is much at stake. We have a treasure in Jesus; we have the opportunity to fellowship with Him and worship the Eternal One with our entire being. It is important to keep ourselves from wasting away what has been given. Every moment has eternal significance.
- b. There is a God to whom we will give an answer for our lives, our work, our words and our faithfulness. The Bible tells us that He will both reward those who are faithful and judge those who unfaithful. To waste our time and life away on the inconsequential and the mundane is eternally costly.
 - i. “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. (Eph. 5:15-16)
- c. As Christians we have been rescued from an empty life of living for self. We must make the most use of the time...we must redeem the time because it's precious. Our life has ultimate value because we can worship and glorify God. We can obey Him, do His work and will instead of living for our appetites and ourselves. This is the heart of Christian discipleship.
 - i. “Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’” (Matt. 16:24)
- d. A lack of self-control robs us of fruitfulness. Without self-control the good works God has planned for us get crowded out. You will be robbed of the joy of seeing God work in and through you. You will miss opportunities to see his power at work; you will miss opportunities to affect eternity! The problem with lacking self-control is often not that what we're doing is so bad...it is that we're crowding out all the truly good that God wants for us.

Fellowship Starters:

1. What are the things you are tempted to do instead of what you should be doing? What do you fill your time with that crowds out activity that has eternal value?
2. Have you feasted so much at the table of the world that your hunger for the Lord (Matthew 5:6) has diminished and your first love (Revelation 2:4) has grown cold? What can you do to rekindle that love and hunger?
3. What allowable and permissible pursuits have you allowed to rob you of your service to His church and His kingdom? What would change look like?
4. What things have crowded your life that keeps you from fruitfulness (like time in God's word, prayer, fellowship, evangelism, etc.)? What steps of repentance do you need to take to begin the process of change?

5. Paul writes in Ephesians 5:15-16a “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time...” How can you cultivate wisdom in your use of time? How can you put the eternal pursuits above the trivial?