*THE PRACTICE of GODLINESS* by Jerry Bridges

**Chapter Eleven– “SELF-CONTROL” – Proverbs 25:28**

**S** elf-control is control of one’s self. It may be best defined as “*the governing of one’s desires.”*

**E** ven though self-control involves controlling our bodily appetites and desires, we must also

**L** earn and recognize the importance of exercising self-control with our thoughts and emotions.

**F** ar too often we forget that daily we are in a battle with our own sinful desires that dwell within our own hearts. ***DANGER! BE ON THE ALERT!*** Without self-control, sinful selfish desires will drag you away and entice you to sin (Jam.1:14); they will wage war against your soul so you won’t have an impact on the world for Christ (1 Pet. 2:11) and they will deceive you (Eph.4:22).

**- *“Self-control is an essential character trait of the godly person that enables him to obey the words of the Lord Jesus, “If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). It is impossible to be a follower of Jesus without giving diligent attention in our lives to the grace of self-control.”*** *(pg. 133)*

**C** hrist’s followers must come to know the biblical standards, safeguards, and solutions for

**O**  btaining the ability to exercise self-control with their thoughts, emotions and their bodies.

**N** ot one of us is exempt not only from the sinful selfish desires that rage within our hearts but

**T** ogether we daily battle with many temptations from the world that feed our selfish desires.

**R** unning to the Lord is our first step in recognizing that we need His help and assistance to

**O** rder our thoughts to *think biblically*, our emotions to *respond with balance* and our bodies to

**L** *ay aside the bonds of sin* that so easily hinders the goal that is set before us –To Be Like Jesus!

**Controlling our thoughts…** flows out of a hatred for sin and a desire to do the will of God

*God’s standards*- 2 Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:8; Proverbs 4:23; Romans 12:2

*God’s safeguards*- The Spirit of God, the Fear of God, Confession to God and Beholding God.

*God’s solution*- Pray…”Lord, restrain me from being conformed, molded and shaped by the world’s lies, rather transform my thinking by Your Spirit as I renew my mind with Your truth.”

**Controlling our emotions…** flows out of harnessing our thoughts with the desire to please God

*God’s standards*- Colossians 3:1-12; James 1:20; Galatians 5:19-21; Proverbs 16:32

*God’s safeguards*- The Spirit of God, the Fear of God, Confession to God and Blessing God.

*God’s solution*- Pray…”May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to You, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14)

**Controlling our bodies…** flows out of a holy fear of God that desires to glorify God

*God’s standards*- 1 Cor. 6:12-20; 10:31; 1 Thess. 4:3-5; Gal. 5:16-24; Job 31:1; Eph. 5:3-5 *God’s safeguards*- The Spirit of God, the Fear of God, Confession to God and Bowing to God. *God’s solution*- Pray “Father, thank You that my body is not my own but instead my body belongs to You. Thank You that the Holy Spirit who lives in me was given to me by You. Remind me every day, Lord, that I have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ and help me by Your enabling grace to glorify and honour You with my body.”

Ladies, do you desire to break the chains of self-indulgence? Are you willing to die to worshipping yourself? Are you willing to give up enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin in return for worshipping Christ and gaining pleasure in knowing Him? Who or what is mastering you today? “Are you willing to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord of your appetites and desires, of your thoughts and emotions?” (pg.144)

Are you struggling with how to honour God *with your thoughts* regarding greed, lust, envy and selfish ambition?

Are you struggling with how to honour God *with your emotions* regarding an unruly temper, resentment, bitterness or self-pity?

Are you struggling with how to honour God *with your body* regarding gluttony, laziness, sexual immorality or impurity?

***THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE, LADIES, IN THE SANCTIFYING GRACE OF THE GOSPEL! (Gal. 2:20)***

I close with some encouragement for us from Jerry Bridges, “As we grow in the grace of self-control, we will experience the liberation of those who, under the guidance and grace of the Holy Spirit, are freed from the shackles of self-indulgence and are brought into the freedom of true spiritual discipline.” (pg.145)

Looking upward and pressing onward in our pursuit of holiness and practice of godliness,

Christyn