

5 Ways Self-Control Builds Maturity

Attaining and maintaining a high level of maturity may be one of the hardest things we ever experience in our lives. Two years ago, I had no idea what real maturity in life and in Christ meant, but with a name given to me from God like Manturity, I knew the truth would soon be revealed to me.

I've recently been re-reading through most of the New Testament. This time, I'm heading through it, well, backwards; so much for self-control. Don't ask me why I chose to do it this way, but regardless, I have been able to pull out some powerful information.

As many of us know, Paul, Peter and the author of Hebrews lead the way with the teachings on the topic of maturity. Their inspiration, of course, is the life and example of Jesus. They don't really use the actual word *mature* too often, but if you have a heart to hear the many teachings, then all of that seems to come out it is the idea of maturity in our Christian life.

Without rambling too much, here are five ways self-control builds maturity in a man:

1. Our enemy is ready. Are you? First Peter 5:8 says, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." I have used this verse in the past and will continue to use it because it is true and it is powerful. Peter is giving the elders and the young men instructions on how to live their lives. Peter quickly goes over the elders training and jumps right into the training of young men.

The teaching of self-control in this verse is relevant today, because it is very obvious that there is an enemy lurking and

waiting to attack. The enemy loves to attack when you are most vulnerable—tired, angry, sick, emotional, frustrated, etc. The enemy knows where you are weak and will attack at the first signs of weakness. Stand firm!

2. Learn how to tame your tongue. Titus 2:6 says, “Similarly, encourage the young men to be self controlled.” Paul is giving Titus specific instructions on how to teach the various groups. When Paul speaks about the young men, the first thing he talks about is self-control. His more direct teaching after this verse deals with speaking with integrity, showing seriousness and soundness in speech.

Paul’s reasoning for this good speech was so that anyone who heard Titus would leave him and not condemn him—that they would have nothing bad to say about him. We must also pursue this type of sound speech as we learn and grow in our walk with Christ. This must be when we are at work, with friends, with our family and to our wives! Speak firmly!

3. Wake up! It’s time to fight. First Thessalonians 5:8 says, “Let us be self controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet.” Do you know why the breastplate was so important? The breastplate was worn to protect a soldier’s vital organs, and without it he was as good as dead.

The same can be said for us. Unless we are wearing our breastplate of righteousness, we leave ourselves open for attack and fatal injury. Guard your heart! The helmet also plays a major role in keeping a soldier safe and does the same for us by keeping the enemy out of our head. A well-built helmet of salvation must be worn to keep out the evil thoughts and the false feelings of this world. Wear your armor daily!

4. Learn to live with maturity. Second Peter 1:5-7 says, “Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self

control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love." Paul gives a wonderful example of godly living in these verses.

Self-control falls right in the middle of all of these qualities. I can agree that there is a learning curve that comes before understanding self-control, and there are apparently many things to come after self-control. Paul goes on to teach us that if we can live according to these things, we will be effective and produce great works for Christ. Make every effort and be eager, gentlemen!

5. Be self-controlled, no matter what. Philippians 1:27 says, "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." This was the only verse I chose without the actual words *self-controlled*, but I thought it brought the entire post home. Paul is writing to the people of Philippi while still in chains. His hope was that whether he was able to see them again or not, they would stand firm in their walk with Christ.

This verse does not leave any room for excuses. In all things and in all situations, gentlemen, we are to present an attitude and manner worthy of Christ. I think we all need to pray for strength on this one. It starts with prayer and consistency!

We must learn to be men that not only talk with maturity but also walk with maturity. Share how God has taught or shown you maturity in your life in the comments below.

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