

Your Surprising Secret to Stunning Self-Control

Experience told me they would balk at the assignment, so I rehearsed a pep talk that would bat away their complaints.

“Listen, guys,” I said. “I can translate this list of verbs in 33 seconds. I’m asking you to be able to do the same in less than 60 seconds. You can do this. All you need is the knowledge, which you already possess, and then a lot of practice. It’s challenging but do-able.”

After that impressive speech, my students began working on the verb study guide, and I gave an internal nod. We were going to get there together.

Later that day, I got a surprising word from the Lord. “Hey,” He said to me.

“Yes?” I said.

“You know that thing you’ve been asking Me about—that place where you keep losing control?”

“Yes.”

“Well, what you need is knowledge about the right way to act, which you already have, and then a lot of practice.”

Aaaaaaaggggggh. See what the Spirit did there? Turned my own pep talk against me.

I’m reading James 1:22 this morning, from my teacher perspective, and it’s making me cringe: “Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

Do what it says. *Do it.*

Practice. Practice again.

Again. Again.

Practice sets the real students apart from the wannabes. Practice reveals itself on tests and in the grade book. Who actually *did* the work, and who just talked a good game?

“It’s hard!” say my students.

“Do it anyway,” I say. Of course it’s hard. You don’t translate 30-plus verbs in less than 60 seconds unless you’ve put in the time.

“It’s hard!” I say to the Lord.

The Spirit throws me a look and just says, “Yup.”

End of story. {eoa}

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