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# church of Christ at Alisal

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## Self-Control

Douglas Hoff

Christianity is a religion that emphasizes self-control. Jesus said - "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24). To deny self requires subjecting one's will to that of God. This means that the disciple needs to have the attitude the Lord expressed when He said - "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). To deny self certainly requires control of one's desires.

Sadly, there are many in this world who have never learned to practice this virtue. Paul spoke of the unmarried who might not be able to exercise self-control (cf. I Cor. 7:8,9). When the apostle addressed Felix he "reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, 'Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you'" (Acts 24:25). He was right to be afraid because his life was one of wickedness and immorality. Proof of this is seen in the next verse where we learn that he was hoping Paul would offer a bribe to release him from custody. His thoughts were evil and it appears he did not desire to control himself.

Christians are commanded to develop self-control in their lives (cf. II Pet. 1:5-7). Doing such makes one able to bear fruit in the Lord. Failing in this regard makes the person vulnerable to false teachers who turn the grace of God into a license to sin (cf. II Pet. 2:18,19; Jude 4). Peter said that developing self-control is intimately connected to the knowledge of the Lord (cf. II Pet. 1:8). Thus, it should come as no surprise that self-control is included in the fruit of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22,23).

What is necessary to develop self-control in a person's life? For starters, one needs to learn to think about what he thinks about! Proverbs 4:23 teaches us - "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." Obviously, the word "heart" in this verse is not referring to the blood-pumping organ in the chest but the mind of man. What a person thinks about will determine what kind of person he is or will become (cf. Prov. 23:7). Jesus put it this way - "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matt. 12:34).

The old saying, "garbage in, garbage out" is very true. If a person wants to live a holy life with self-control, he must fill his mind with things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, and praiseworthy (cf. Phil. 4:8). Paul instructed Christians to meditate upon those things. In other words, fill your mind with the good and it will push out the bad.

Self-control is developed when a person learns to control his thinking. Far too many never reflect on their thoughts, and consequently, they fail to change for the better. They are at the mercy of the bad thoughts in their minds. The Lord taught that overt sins arise from the motives that prompted the action. For example, adultery is a sin that arises from lust in the heart (cf. Matt. 5:27,28). To prevent adultery, the lust must be removed. That is why Jesus said - "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell" (Matt. 5:29). He did not mean that a person should literally pluck out his right eye. Instead, He was teaching that one needs to control his thoughts--even if it is painful or costly to do such! The impure must be cut out and replaced with holy and righteous thoughts. This is the heart of self-control.



*The salt flats of Bonaire*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (John 1:1-5)

MEETING UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK  
Listen on AM Radio 880 KKMC in Salinas, California  
2nd Friday of each month @ 1:30 pm

Bible Classes..... 9:00 A.M.  
Assemblies..... 10:00 A.M. & 5:00 P.M.

<http://churchofchristalisal.com/>

WEDNESDAY

Bible Class, Singing, & Prayer..... 6:30 P.M.

# Welcome

Good Morning Brothers and Sisters!

## This Week's Sermon's

A.M. - Wisdom

P.M. - Nazarene

### HOW TO REBUILD A MARRIAGE



Not long ago a well-known Hollywood entertainer made the statement in an interview that he and his wife had been able to restore their marriage to its original unity and harmony because they had taken the Bible as their only marriage manual. Went to reconstruct your marriage? Start with the Bible.

Some would say that it is the flesh that gets marriage off course. Ann Landers, the most read columnist in the United States, says "knowing what is right and wrong is no match for raw flesh." Yet, Paul says that through Christ one can overcome the weakness of the flesh.

Some say that fear and guilt are what wrecks a marriage. The Bible tells us that perfect love casts out fear; forgiveness will remove guilt and guilt feelings. Faith in God is the only answer to this problem.

Again, some tell us that the lack of character is the main thing that wrecks a marriage. Well, how do you get character? The Bible tells us what character is and how to develop it.

There are those who tell us that immaturity is the greatest wrecker of homes. How are they going to grow up? Again, the Bible tells us how. We grow up by partaking of the 'sincere milk of the word and developing the habit of doing what is right to the best of our ability.

We are told that there are three things that case most marital failures immaturity, irresponsibility, and inhumanity. There is only one source of real help in solving these problems- the giver of all truth.

In order to rebuild a marriage four steps are necessary.

**First**, reaffirm the permanency of the marriage relationship. Jesus said, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." God never at any time in the history of the world desired nor indiscriminate divorce.

**Second**, reaffirm the purposes of marriage. To not understand that there are more reasons for living together than for one's own satisfaction and gratification will cause multitudes of problems. To understand these purposes, according to the Scriptures will cause one to be content in the relationship although he or she may not at all times be getting those things that appeal to natural likes and dislikes.

**Third**, accept the fact that "marriages don't fail." If our relationship has suffered it is because we have failed to fulfill our own obligations within that relationship. It is not your situation, nor your difficulties, nor your marriage partner, nor an other external factor that will make or break your marriage. It is your response to these things that will make or break your marriage.

**Fourth**, we must forgive and get out of the "past tense" and live in the present. No real relationship can be possible unless we practice forgiveness. Forgiveness means, 'giving life again. It means treating a person as if the offense had never happened. When God forgives, he forgets. We must do the same.



Yes, the Bible is the best marriage manual you can find. In fact, it has the answers to all of lives problems if only we will search for them.



### KEEP SILENT

Ed Smithson

"Believe what you will, but keep it to yourself." That is the attitude that has been expressed by many people for the last several years. As far back as our memory can recount, the idea of not "proselytizing" was encouraged by some.

Some have the idea, and it appears that some of us have bought into it, that you can believe what you want as long as you "keep it to yourself." Believe this is a new idea? Not so! In Acts 4:1 the Bible records, "And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening." (thru v.3 ESV)

"So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.'" (Acts 4:18-20 ESV)

Some think they are modern because they don't think others should persuade them they may be wrong, but the idea has been around for at least since Jesus died on the cross. Sometimes even brethren do not think we have a right to point out error, however, if we are true to our Savior, we must speak when backed up by His word.

In the words of Peter and John, "...we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

## Announcements

1. Brother Kerry will be giving the invitation this Wednesday evening.
2. Much thanks to Jordan for filling the pulpit during our absence. May God bless you for your efforts.
2. Wednesday evening class, "Christian Evidences". Be prepared - bring your notebook!

~ On the Prayer list

- Judy & Paul McCollum** - for improved health for their cold/flu.
- Beverly Perez** - healing from the stroke she suffered last week.
- Kerry Johnson** - for healing of his cough and cold.
- Bobby Glover** - to successfully teach others about Jesus while in prison.
- Michael White** - for helping others as he serves his time.
- Our country** - and President Trump and our leaders.
- All the saints** - and the knowledge and zeal to teach those who are outside the body of Christ.

Have a blessed week!