

KNIGHTS FOR CHRIST



The ARMOR *of* GOD

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

Ephesians 6:11

Bill Clinton

24 VIRTUES OF A GODLY MAN



TEMPERANCE

THE VIRTUE OF TEMPERANCE

- EVERYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE—BUT NOT EVERYTHING IS BENEFICIAL. EVERYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE—BUT NOT EVERYTHING IS CONSTRUCTIVE. NOBODY SHOULD SEEK HIS OWN GOOD, BUT THE GOOD OF OTHERS. —1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-24
- 23 BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE: AGAINST SUCH THERE IS NO LAW. GALATIANS 5:22-23

- TEMPERANCE CAN BE DEFINED AS “MODERATION IN ACTION, THOUGHT, OR FEELING; RESTRAINT.” TO A MAN OF GOD, THIS MEANS COMPLETE ABSTINENCE FROM SOME THINGS AND MODERATION IN ALL THINGS. WITHOUT THIS VIRTUE, A GODLY MAN’S LIFE AND CHARACTER WILL FAIL. WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE HAVE TO MAKE WISE DECISIONS AND USE THE FREEDOM THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL. THERE ARE WARNINGS IN THE WORD THAT WHILE WE ARE FREE, WE MUST USE THAT FREEDOM WISELY AND NOT TO DEVOUR OR HINDER THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF OTHERS.

- TEMPERANCE IS ALSO CALLED SELF-CONTROL IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT TRANSLATIONS. IN OUR STUDY TONIGHT WE WILL LEARN HOW TO APPLY TEMPERANCE TO OUR LIVES IN A WAY THAT WILL GIVE GLORY AND HONOR TO THE LORD.
- AS THE APOSTLE PAUL SAID, “EVERYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE FOR ME—BUT NOT EVERYTHING IS BENEFICIAL. EVERYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE FOR ME—BUT I WILL NOT BE MASTERED BY ANYTHING” (1 CORINTHIANS 6:12).

- HE ALSO ADMONISHED THAT WE SHOULD BE MORE FOCUSED ON BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT THAN DRINKING IN EXCESS: “AND DO NOT GET DRUNK WITH WINE, FOR THAT IS DISSIPATION, BUT BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT” (EPHESIANS 5:18).
- THE PLEASURES OF THE FLESH NO MATTER WHAT FORM THEY TAKE CAN BECOME A MAJOR DISTRACTION IN OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES. WE SHOULD FOCUS OUR HEARTS ON THE LORD OUR GOD AND THE THINGS THAT CAUSE US TO GROW IN CHRIST. IF WE LISTEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT WE CAN KNOW WHEN WE ARE CROSSING THE LINE.

- A SUPERFICIAL CONSIDERATION OF THIS MATTER OF "SELF-CONTROL" MIGHT LEAD US TO ASSUME IT IS SOMETHING I DO TO RESTRAIN MY SINFUL DESIRES. THE GREEK PHILOSOPHER PLATO BELIEVED THAT TEMPERANCE--THE CONTROL OF APPETITES AND PASSIONS--WAS POSSIBLE THROUGH AN INSTRUCTED REASON AND THE POWER OF THE WILL. THE NEW TESTAMENT, HOWEVER, TEACHES US THAT TRUE SELF-CONTROL IS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER. SEE FOR EXAMPLE, GALATIANS 5:22-23. IT IS A CONTROL FROM WITHIN. IT IS A CONTROL OF SELF, BUT BY AND THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ENABLING.

- ANOTHER MISCONCEPTION REGARDING SELF-CONTROL RELATES TO ITS MORE TRADITIONAL NAME--TEMPERANCE. THIS IDEA HAS OFTEN BEEN COMMUNICATED IN A NEGATIVE WAY. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY THERE AROSE THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT WHICH SOUGHT TO ADDRESS THE DRINK PROBLEM AND BEGAN TO ADVOCATE TOTAL ABSTINENCE. TEMPERANCE AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, HOWEVER, IS A MUCH BROADER AND MORE POSITIVE IDEA. PAUL SPEAKS OF THE ATHLETE'S NEED FOR SELF-CONTROL AND DAILY DISCIPLINE, AND REMINDS US THAT WE NEED SELF-CONTROL FOR EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN SERVICE .

- **1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27²⁴ DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT IN A RACE ALL THE RUNNERS COMPETE, BUT [ONLY] ONE RECEIVES THE PRIZE? SO RUN [YOUR RACE] THAT YOU MAY LAY HOLD [OF THE PRIZE] AND MAKE IT YOURS.²⁵ NOW EVERY ATHLETE WHO GOES INTO TRAINING CONDUCTS HIMSELF TEMPERATELY AND RESTRICTS HIMSELF IN ALL THINGS. THEY DO IT TO WIN A WREATH THAT WILL SOON WITHER, BUT WE [DO IT TO RECEIVE A CROWN OF ETERNAL BLESSEDNESS] THAT CANNOT WITHER. ²⁶ THEREFORE I DO NOT RUN UNCERTAINLY (WITHOUT DEFINITE AIM). I DO NOT BOX LIKE ONE BEATING THE AIR AND STRIKING WITHOUT AN ADVERSARY.²⁷ BUT [LIKE A BOXER] I BUFFET MY BODY [HANDLE IT ROUGHLY, DISCIPLINE IT BY HARDSHIPS] AND SUBDUE IT, FOR FEAR THAT AFTER PROCLAIMING TO OTHERS THE GOSPEL AND THINGS PERTAINING TO IT, I MYSELF SHOULD BECOME UNFIT [NOT STAND THE TEST, BE UNAPPROVED AND REJECTED AS A COUNTERFEIT].**

DEFINING SELF-CONTROL

- THERE ARE TWO OR THREE NEW TESTAMENT WORDS WHICH IDENTIFY THIS CHRISTIAN VIRTUE. OUR BIBLE TRANSLATIONS USE WORDS LIKE: TEMPERANCE, RESTRAINT, SOBRIETY, ETC. TO DESCRIBE IT. JERRY BRIDGES IN HIS HELPFUL BOOK, "THE PRACTICE OF GODLINESS," DEFINES IT AS "THE EXERCISE OF INNER STRENGTH UNDER THE DIRECTION OF SOUND JUDGMENT THAT ENABLES US TO DO, THINK AND SAY THE THINGS THAT ARE PLEASING TO GOD." THE SPIRIT CONTROLLED CHRISTIAN IS A SELF-CONTROLLED CHRISTIAN AND WILL BE A BLESSING TO THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD. ABOVE ALL ELSE HE WILL BRING GLORY TO GOD.

- ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE "LAST DAYS" IS THAT PEOPLE WILL BE "WITHOUT SELF-CONTROL" (2 TIMOTHY 3:3). IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM ALL KINDS OF IMMORALITY ARE EXCUSED. HERE IS AN AREA OF OUR LIVES WHERE WE CAN DISPLAY THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF CHRIST SO THAT "EACH THOUGHT AND EACH TEMPER" MAY BE SEEN TO BE "BENEATH HIS CONTROL." A HUMBLE, PATIENT AND GENTLE SPIRIT WILL DEMONSTRATE SELF-CONTROL.

- PRIDE, IMPATIENCE AND ANGER MUST BE PUT TO DEATH. OUR EMOTIONS AND THOUGHT LIFE MUST BE UNDER THE RULE OF CHRIST. "...CASTING DOWN IMAGINATIONS, AND EVERY HIGH THING THAT EXALTETH ITSELF AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND BRINGING INTO CAPTIVITY EVERY THOUGHT TO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST" (2 CORINTHIANS 10:5). "FINALLY, BRETHREN, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE TRUE, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE HONEST, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE JUST, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE PURE, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE LOVELY, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE OF GOOD REPORT; IF THERE BE ANY VIRTUE, AND IF THERE BE ANY PRAISE, THINK ON THESE THINGS" (PHILIPPIANS 4:8).