

# Lutheran Women in Mission

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## Fruit of the Spirit-Self-Control by Peggy Wunschel

### Opening

Sing or read together "Chief of Sinners Though I Be" (LW 285, LBW 306, TLH 342,) or "Holy Spirit, Light Divine" (All God's People Sing 120, LW 166).



Road rage. Abuse. Obesity. Drunkenness. Drug dependency. Envy. Murder. We live in an age when these abound, in a society that seems out of control. Yet our Lord says, *Be self-controlled* (1 Peter 5:1).

If you are doing this Bible study in a group, choose one person to slowly read **Galatians 5:22-23**, while the rest close their eyes. Listening to these verses on the fruit of the Spirit may give us a "warm fuzzy," a picture of Jesus during His walk on earth and we want that for ourselves!

It has been said that love and self-control are the bookends that hold all the other "fruit" in place. Do you agree? Why?

What is the very first word in verse 22?

Whenever God uses a "but" or a "therefore," a transition is taking place, and we need to see what God was talking about before. Read **Galatians 5:19-21**. Compare this passage with **Ephesians 4:29-31** and **5:3-4**. What do they have in common?

How do these "acts of the sinful nature" relate to self-control?

Take a few moments, privately and prayerfully, to individually review the "acts" listed in these three Scriptures. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any areas of your life that are not governed by the fruit of self-control. List them here (where no one else will see):

Now that we are back to reality and the "warm fuzzy" is slipping away, let's think about our predicament. The battlefield is our mind. Our actions are direct reactions to our thoughts, so we must discipline our mind. But how? What do the following verses teach us?

- **1 Peter 5:8-9**
- **1 Peter 1:13-16**
- **Romans 12:1-2**

How does God transform us and enable us to have self-control?

- **1 Corinthians 2:16b** - Notice the verb tense!
- **Ephesians 6:17, 18**
- **2 Timothy 1:7, 14**

What does Christ's response to temptation (**Matthew 4:1-11**) teach us about self-control?

Why is self-control important for Christians? (**Titus 2:5b**)

Read **Colossians 3:1-10**. These verses give us rules for holy living as new persons in Christ. How do these apply to self-control?

Reread verses 3, 9 and 10a. We *have died* and are hidden with Christ in God! We *have taken off* our old self and practices and *have put* on the new self. Past tense! Notice verse 10b. The verb is present tense: *is being renewed*. We haven't reached perfection, but we are on our way every time we take captive our thoughts (2 Corinthians 10:5) and make them obedient to Jesus. One thought at a time!

Read **Colossians 3:12**. With what are we to clothe ourselves?

How do we clothe ourselves every day? We purposely go to the closet, pick something out and put it on. We have yet to go to the closet and have an outfit jump off the hanger and on to our body! In the same way, God is telling us to purposely go to His Word for direction and by the power of the Holy Spirit purposely be full of the His fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness **and self-control!**

**Close**

Pray together this prayer based on Titus 2:5 and Colossians 3:16-17: Dear Lord, help us to be self-controlled and pure so that no one will speak evil of the Word of God because of us. And help us to be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly as we teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as we sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in our hearts to God. And whatever we do, whether in word or deed, may we do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Amen.

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