

Haste Makes Waste

Scripture Reading — Genesis 4:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:5-7

The Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. — 2 Timothy 1:7

Who doesn't feel something for Lamech's unrestrained desire for justice? In the heat of the moment, the desire to avenge a wrong seems right. But experience argues that it will usually be wiser to "Cool it!" and give yourself time to reflect on how you should react.

Self-control, or temperance, bridles our desires and channels them for our own good and the good of our neighbor. The spirit of self-control is a gift of God that brings health to mind and body and rest to the soul. Self-control saves us from being enslaved to our impulsive emotions.

Self-control is not for cowards, Paul tells Timothy, for it takes superhuman strength to deny ourselves. Such strength is available by surrendering to the Spirit of power and to the love God bestows on his disciples through Jesus Christ. God's power and love begin a life-long fast to our self-centered, out-of-control desires, to temper our souls with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

For all his bravado, Lamech was a weakling because he yielded to his passion for violence: he would avenge himself 77 times, he said, for a neighbor's wrong. Jesus calls us, however, to forgive a person again and again, so often that we couldn't really keep track (see Matthew 18:21-22). And surrendering to his gift of self-control will give us his strength to do that.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for the strength to surrender my wants to your will. But I know I don't always show self-control. Help me to be strong, in your name. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Self-Control](#), [Life](#), [Emotions](#), [Trials & Challenges](#), [Personal Growth](#), [Choices](#)

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