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As Much as Depends on You

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It is a hard fact of life but, I cannot control the actions of another person. I cannot control their thoughts, words or behavior. That is extremely frustrating when you are misunderstood, mistreated, slandered or treated unfairly. The fact still remains, I cannot control the actions of another person.

This principle is stated in what Paul said to the brethren in the congregation in Rome. He said "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." Romans 12:18 "As much as depends on you" reveals that the only person that you can control in a situation where peace is disrupted is YOU.

Because I am to be Christ-like, I must do everything within my power to live peaceably with a fellow human being

This means that I must be the one who controls my anger – James 1:20

"for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."

I must learn not to correct a scoffer because he will hate me – Proverbs 9:8

"Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you."

I must be the one who resists not an evil person but turn my cheek to be slapped again. – Matthew 6:39

"But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also."

I must be the one who possesses the strength of meekness – Matthew 5:5

"Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth."

I must be the one who does not seek vengeance when peace is disrupted. – Hebrews 10:30

"For we know Him who said, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay says the Lord."

We should recognize rather quickly with these few examples that, how I respond when peace is disrupted has a strong bearing on how the situation will unfold.

i.e. "A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger." Proverbs 15:1

The challenge before all of us is the amount of effort I am willing to put forth in a time of strife. It is easy to seek an eye for an eye and hard to turn your cheek or go an extra mile. It is easy to strike out in vengeance and hard to turn it over to God. It is easy to let loose of our might and hard to demonstrate the strength of meekness.

"As much as depends on you" is all that you can do but, I must do what depends on me as much as I can.

Self Control

- by Bill Hall

What is the value of self-control? Self-control is that which enables us to hold our tongues when we are tempted to viciously put someone in his place once and for all; or when we know a juicy bit of gossip that would be entertaining to the group and would turn us into the "life of the party"; or when an occasion almost demands that we betray a confidence that must not be betrayed under any circumstances.

Self-control is that which enables us to control our passions when another is provoking us to anger; that keeps the clinched fists in the pockets when the agitator is only half our size; that keeps the lips sealed when another is railing and swearing at us. Self-control is that which enables us to be like our Lord "who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (I Peter 2:23).

Self-control is that which enables us to maintain purity of heart and to thrust out evil thoughts before they can take root; that enables us to place the best possible construction on another person's actions when unproven rumors could easily destroy our confidence in him; that helps us to maintain a cheerful disposition when everything around us has turned sour. Self-control is that which enables us to love the unlovable and to hate that which the world loves.

Self-control is that which enables us to rule our appetites; to say "no" when our lusts would lead us to sin or when that which is harmful to our health is placed before us. Self-control is that which enables the smoker to put down his cigarettes and the alcoholic to put down his drink and never return to it. Self-control is that which enables us to rule rather than to be enslaved.

The Bible does not glorify the indifferent and impassive. It is not our goal to be uncaring. To be like Paul, we must be able to have our spirit stirred within us when we are surrounded by evil (Acts 17:16). To be like our Lord, we must sometimes feel anger when surrounded by hypocritical self-righteousness (Mark 3:5); we must even react with occasional outbursts of goodness on occasions, as when the Lord cleansed the temple (John 2:13-17). But, all such outbursts must be tempered with self-control, that in our anger we "do not sin" (Ephesians 4:26).

God does not view our uncontrolled actions with amusement. Our temper tantrums and harsh, unbridled words are soul threatening, a potential bar to the abundant entrance into the Lord's everlasting kingdom (II Peter 1:5-11). We must not minimize the danger. We must not surrender to this evil.

What is the value of self-control? It is one of the qualities that enable us to go to heaven. The possessor of it is rich indeed.