

Icebreaker: A lack of self-control shows itself by indulging in guilty pleasures. What is a funny guilty pleasure you have (such as bingeing on a favorite food or TV show)?

Read 2 Peter 1:1-8 and Discuss:

1. Discuss your understanding of what self-control is or is not.
2. Below is a list of the character qualities found in 2 Peter 1:5-7. Brainstorm with your group some practical ways you can increase these qualities in your life.

Faith
Goodness
Knowledge
Self-Control
Endurance
Godliness
Mutual Affection
Love

3. How might self-control (and the other qualities listed above) benefit us in being a good example or witness for Jesus to our families, neighbors, friends, and co-workers?

Activity: Practice Accountability - Break into groups of two. Pick one area of your life where you'd like to see growth and share with your partner. What practical steps will you take during this week to grow? Have that person hold you accountable this week to practice what you need in order to grow.

4. As Christians we need to celebrate when we take positive steps in our faith journey. Have you experienced steps of spiritual growth or development recently that you can share with your group so that they can celebrate with you?

Prayer

Share your prayer requests with one another and also remember those from our church family:

- > Prayers of healing for Kim Cochrane and Madison McKinnon.
- > Prayers of comfort for Pam and Jim Merton and Christie Vitiello and their families in the death of Pam's mother and Christie's grandmother.

Reminders for your group:

> Get your group together and join us for the Messy Mission Run on May 13 at 9 am. Proceeds benefit ZPC's high school trip to Mexico.

Leader's Notes:

[Question 1] One definition: Self-control is the quality that allows you to stop yourself from doing things you want to do but that might not be in your best interest. Self-control is not just trying harder or applying more willpower not to sin. It is practicing spiritual disciplines in order to have God help you to control your own choices, words, and actions.

[Question 2] The verses in 2 Peter highlight these qualities as supporting our faith, but what does that look like practically? Some ways might include: faith—pray, worship, participate in a mentoring relationship; goodness—putting “good things” into our bodies and minds; knowledge—study; etc. Many practices may work for more than one quality.

[Question 3] People notice when we change behavior for the better, or when we live openly with these character qualities. When we practice self-control we will most likely be less angry, less reactionary, and choose our words more carefully than when we don't have self-control. When we have self-control, we will likely be more patient, more kind, more caring and thoughtful of others and how our words and actions affect them. By being more self-controlled, combined with goodness, knowledge, and love, we can be examples for Christ.

[Activity] Ideally, you would break into pairs for this activity. We think this will help stretch you and your group. If you have a smaller group, you could ask this question within the whole group, but people may share less than they would one on one. To grow in faith and in life, it is healthy to practice accountability. Things you might grow in could be anything from physical fitness (goal might be to exercise 3 times this week) to grow in prayer life (goal might be to set aside 15 full minutes to be quiet and pray each day this week). After you share one on one, you could provide accountability by agreeing to text, email, or call each other twice in the next 7 days to ask how are you doing with this goal.

[Question 5] It's important to celebrate when we accomplish something for Christ. One example might be: Have you served somewhere individually or together with others? You might also look back at the list of character qualities listed in 2 Peter chapter 1. An example in that list might be spending 15 minutes studying the Bible each day for the next week to gain knowledge. You could celebrate your study to gain knowledge.