
CBC WEEKLY RESOURCES



- I. [Sermon Recap](#)
- II. [Study Guide](#)
- III. [Devotional Material](#)
- IV. [Small Group Resources](#)

[03/08 2026]

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC 28741

I. SERMON RECAP

Pastor Gary returned to our Established series on the Fruit of the Spirit by focusing on the last two expressions in Galatians 5:22-23: meekness and self-control. He began by honestly naming how common our struggle with control is, especially when our past includes trauma, abandonment, shame, or deep insecurity. Many controlling behaviors are learned coping mechanisms to keep chaos away and to avoid being hurt again. But control is ultimately an illusion: the more we try to control people and circumstances, the more out of control we actually become.

Against this backdrop, Pastor Gary showed how meekness is power under control. In Jesus, omnipotent power is restrained and expressed through tenderness, patience, and empathy so that we can relate to Him and receive restoration. Meekness in us is our flesh, personality, and history placed under the Spirit's control. Self-control (temperance) is not gritting our teeth in willpower; it is the Spirit mastering our desires, appetites, and habits so that Christ, not our circumstances or addictions, governs our behavior.

The call this week is very practical: acknowledge areas of control, confess and repent, and then “park” on this one issue with God for an extended season (90-120 days), saturating it with Scripture, prayer, journaling, and honest reflection. We are invited to pray courageously, “Lord, master me. Take from me anything... and anyone... who keeps me from You. Grow in me love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control.” May you be encouraged to know that your past, your wiring, and your personality do not limit the Spirit's work. In Christ, meekness and self-control are available to you, and as you yield to Him, He can break generational patterns and lead you into freedom and peace.

II. STUDY GUIDE

Key Points

Control often grows out of hurt and fear.

Control is an illusion.

Meekness is power under control.

Self-control (temperance) is Spirit-empowered regulation.

Identity in Christ dismantles the need to control.

The Fruit of the Spirit is not negotiable.

Transformation usually requires focused, sustained attention.

Deep heart issues like control aren't changed overnight.

Stillness before God exposes what controls us.

Our culture keeps us constantly busy, entertained, and stimulated.

Who or what governs your behavior?

Ask not only for a Savior but for a Lord and Master.

Key Scripture (NIV)

(Sermon primary text + explicitly quoted verses)

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love joy peace forbearance kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness and self-control Against such things there is no law

1 Timothy 6:10-11 (KJV was quoted; here in NIV)

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil Some people eager for money have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs But you man of God flee from all this and pursue righteousness godliness faith love endurance and gentleness

Ephesians 5:18-20 (NIV)

Do not get drunk on wine which leads to debauchery Instead be filled with the Spirit speaking to one another with psalms hymns and songs from the Spirit Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Romans 8:13 (NIV)

For if you live according to the flesh you will die but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body you will live

1 Corinthians 9:27 (NIV)

No I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others I myself will not be disqualified for the prize

Psalm 51:11-12 (NIV) (alluded to)

Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me

Psalm 46:10 (NIV) (“Be still”)

He says Be still and know that I am God I will be exalted among the nations I will be exalted in the earth

Psalm 23:2 (NIV) (“He makes me lie down... still waters”)

He makes me lie down in green pastures he leads me beside quiet waters

1 John 4:18 (NIV) (“perfect love casts out fear”)

There is no fear in love But perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment The one who fears is not made perfect in love

Proverbs 25:16 (NIV) (“if you find honey...”)

If you find honey eat just enough too much of it and you will vomit

Other Relevant Verses

(Not directly quoted, but strongly tied to the sermon’s themes. Short note on connection.)

Matthew 11:28-30 - Jesus’ gentleness and humility of heart exemplify divine meekness and offer rest to the weary and burdened.

Matthew 5:5 - “Blessed are the meek...” affirms that meekness is not weakness but the path to inheriting the earth.

Titus 2:11-12 - Shows grace as the power that teaches us to say “no” to ungodliness and live self-controlled lives.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - Expounds identity in Christ as a new creation; past does not limit the Spirit’s transforming work.

Colossians 3:1-4 - Calls us to set our minds on things above, not on earthly “intoxicants,” reordering what captivates us.

James 1:19-20 - Speaks to anger and control; quick to listen, slow to speak and to become angry aligns with meekness.

Philippians 4:6-7 - Addresses anxiety that often underlies control, leading us to prayer and God’s peace.

Romans 12:1-2 - Urges presenting our bodies as living sacrifices and being transformed by renewing our minds, central to long-term change.

John 15:4-5 - Abiding in Christ as the only way to bear lasting fruit (including meekness and self-control).

Galatians 2:20 - Highlights a life crucified with Christ, with Christ living in us, crucial for surrendering control.

III. DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

Day 1 - "Who Is Really in Control?"

Question: Where do you most feel the need to control people or circumstances, and what fear is hiding underneath that need?

Reading: Galatians 5:22-23, 1 John 4:18

Devotional:

The Spirit's fruit list ends with gentleness (meekness) and self-control, but Pastor Gary reminded us that these two are really about control: Who or what is governing your life? Many of us learned to control because we were hurt. If your world once felt chaotic: abuse, neglect, betrayal. Then tight control can feel like safety. Relationships are managed, conversations steered, environments arranged to prevent surprises.

But notice what is missing from the fruit of the Spirit: fear. John tells us that perfect love drives out fear. When the Spirit assures you that you are fully loved, deeply known, and eternally secure in Christ, fear loses its grip. And when fear loses its grip, the frantic need to control can begin to loosen as well. Meekness and self-control do not begin with stronger willpower; they begin with deeper confidence in God's love and sovereignty.

Application:

Name your control zone.

Quietly, before God, identify one area where you tend to control: your spouse, kids, schedule, work, ministry, image, or finances. Be specific. Ask what you fear. Ask the Spirit, "What am I afraid will happen if I don't control this?" Write down what comes to mind: abandonment, failure, exposure, loss of comfort. Invite perfect love in.

Take those fears to God. Ask Him to show you, from His Word, how deeply you are loved and secure in Christ. (You might read Romans 8:31-39 or Ephesians 1 later this week.)

Day 2 - "Meekness: Power Under Control"

Question: How has your strength (personality, background, gifting) sometimes become a weakness in relationships, and how might the Spirit bring it under His control?

Reading: Matthew 11:28-30, Galatians 5:22-23

Devotional:

Jesus describes Himself as "gentle and humble in heart," even while He is Lord of heaven and earth. This is meekness: all power, fully submitted to the Father's will, expressed in

tenderness toward the weary and burdened. Pastor Gary talked about Simon the Zealot, a former “spiritual domestic terrorist” with a military mindset, whom Jesus called as a disciple. Jesus did not excuse Simon’s harshness because of his background. Instead, He brought that bold, disciplined, strategic mind under the Spirit’s control.

The same is true for us. Your analytical mind, strong will, leadership drive, or emotional sensitivity can be powerful gifts. Taken to an extreme, they can also become tools of control or harm. Meekness does not erase your personality; it reorients it. Under the Spirit’s guidance, your strength becomes a servant of love instead of a weapon of self-protection.

Application:

Identify a strength. What are you “good” at that can sometimes hurt others? Directness? Planning? Emotions? Efficiency? Trace the pattern. Think of a recent situation where that strength slipped into control, criticism, or domination. What happened? How did others feel? Offer your strength to God.

Ask the Spirit to take that trait and use it for His purposes.

Day 3 - “Intoxicated or Filled?”

Question:

What “controlled substances” (not only chemical, but digital, emotional, or relational) tend to control your thoughts, time, or emotions?

Reading: Ephesians 5:18-20, Proverbs 25:16

Devotional:

Paul contrasts being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit. Pastor Gary reminded us that our culture offers countless “kinds of wine”. Not just alcohol, but screens, social media, workaholism, entertainment, drama, shopping, and even ministry busyness. Whatever we repeatedly turn to for comfort, escape, or identity can quietly start to control us. Proverbs 25:16 warns that even good things (honey) can become sickening when over-consumed.

Spiritual self-control begins with an honest inventory. Not everything you enjoy is sinful, but nothing should have the right to master you. The question is not, “Is this allowed?” but “Is this controlling me? Is it dulling my hunger for God? Is it shaping my emotions more than the Spirit does?” When we reduce or remove these intoxicants, we free capacity to be filled with the Spirit. This results in worship, gratitude, and mutual encouragement.

Application:

Audit your time and attention. For one day, note where your time goes: phone, TV, gaming, news, hobbies, food, social media, etc. Be honest. Ask diagnostic questions. Do I feel restless or anxious without this? Do I run to this before I run to prayer or Scripture? Does this leave me closer to God and others, or number and more isolated?

Choose a fast.

Pick one potential “intoxicant” to fast from or sharply limit for the next 7 days:

Example: 30 minutes of social media instead of 3 hours. No screens after 9 pm. No snacking after dinner. Fill the freed space.

Replace that time with something that “intoxicates” you with Jesus: worship music, Scripture reading, journaling, a walk while talking with God.

Day 4 - “Be Still and Be Mastered”**Question:**

When was the last time you were truly still before God long enough to notice what is going on in your heart and habits?

Reading: Psalm 46:10, Psalm 23:2, Psalm 51:11-12

Devotional:

“Be still and know that I am God.” Pastor Gary described our culture like a mountain fog. We move so fast, surrounded by so much noise, that we cannot see what is really going on. Continual motion keeps us from facing the ways we are out of control. The Lord, in love, sometimes “makes” us lie down in green pastures and leads us beside still waters so that He can restore our souls.

Psalm 51 reveals David’s desperate cry for God not to take His Spirit, but instead to restore the joy of salvation and grant a willing spirit. This is the heart posture we need regarding control, meekness, and self-control: honest confession, deep desire for the Spirit’s presence, and a willingness to be mastered by God rather than by our habits. Stillness is not inactivity; it is an active yielding of our inner life to God’s examination and leadership.\

Application:

Schedule stillness. Set aside at least 15-20 minutes today. No screens, no music, no multitasking. Just you and God. Read Psalm 46:10 slowly. Then pray through Psalm 51:11-12, asking God to restore the joy of your salvation and to renew a right spirit within you. Listen and notice.

Challenge:

Make this stillness a daily pattern for the next 7 days—even if only 10 minutes. Over time you may discover that stillness is where God gently but firmly remasters your life and reorders your loves.

Day 5 - “One Thing at a Time”

Question: What is one area of control you are willing to focus on with the Lord over the next 90-120 days?

Reading: Romans 8:13, 1 Corinthians 9:27, John 15:4-5

Devotional:

Pastor Gary urged us not to scatter our efforts over many issues but to “park” on one area, like control, for three to four months. Scripture agrees that transformation usually comes through ongoing cooperation with the Spirit. Romans 8:13 speaks of continually putting to death the misdeeds of the body by the Spirit. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 9:27, talks about disciplining his body and making it his slave so that he is not disqualified. This is not self-loathing but Spirit-empowered self-mastery.

The key, Jesus says, is abiding: “Apart from Me you can do nothing.” Long-term change is not a self-improvement project but a relational journey. As you remain in Christ through regular prayer, Scripture, and honest obedience, His life in you produces fruit you could never manufacture: meekness, patience, self-control. The focus on one issue for a season helps you cooperate with Him in a concrete, measurable way.

Encouragement:

You are not stuck. In Christ, you are not defined by where you started: your past, your wiring, or your family patterns. As you abide in Him and cooperate with His Spirit, He can rewrite your story and even your generational legacy.

IV. SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

Opening

Welcome everyone; briefly acknowledge we're continuing in the Established series, focusing on meekness and self-control as responses to a controlling world.

Invite someone to open the time by asking the Lord to:

Make hearts soft and honest.

Help each person see where control, fear, or habits might be ruling their life.

Grow in the group the fruit of love, meekness, and self-control.

Sermon Recap Theme

This week's message highlighted that much of our control is born out of hurt and fear, but the Holy Spirit offers a better way: meekness (power under control) and Spirit-empowered self-control. Our identity in Christ removes the need to grasp for validation, and stillness before God lets Him master us rather than our circumstances or addictions.

Key highlights to mention:

Control often begins as a coping mechanism for trauma or insecurity, but becomes toxic and generational.

Meekness is not weakness; it is strength and power yielded to God's will and used to bless others.

We are all "intoxicated" by something; self-control is letting the Spirit, not our appetites, direct our lives.

Transformation usually requires focusing on one area with God over a season of time.

The prayer "Master me" is central to moving from self-rule to Christ's lordship.

Icebreaker Question

Allow 5-15 minutes for everyone to participate:

Icebreaker:

"When you were a child, what was one thing you really wanted to be 'in charge' of (at home, in school, in games)? How did that show up, and how do you see some of that in yourself today?"

Scripture Exploration

Passage 1: Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

Discussion Prompts:

Which fruit of the Spirit do you most associate with control issues, and why?

How do meekness and self-control relate to the other fruits (love, joy, peace, etc.)?

Pastor Gary suggested the first six fruits “govern” the last two. How might love, for instance, shape your self-control?

Where do you see evidence of these fruits already growing in your life?

Passage 2: Ephesians 5:18-20 (NIV)

Discussion Prompts:

What are some modern “wines” (intoxicants) that can control believers today?

The passage contrasts being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit. How would you describe the difference in outcomes between those two “fillings”?

Notice the results of being filled with the Spirit: speaking in psalms/hymns, singing, giving thanks. How might those practices help loosen the grip of our controlling habits?

Practically, what could it look like to be more filled with the Spirit in your weekly rhythms?

Passage 3: Romans 8:13; 1 Corinthians 9:27 (NIV)

(Read both together.)

Discussion Prompts:

What is the difference between harsh self-punishment and the healthy self-discipline these verses describe?

Romans 8:13 says we put to death the misdeeds of the body “by the Spirit.” How does that change the way you think about self-control?

In 1 Corinthians 9:27, why does Paul care so much about not being “disqualified”? What might disqualification look like in our context?

Where do you sense God inviting you into healthier boundaries or discipline, not to shame you, but to free you?

Larger Takeaway Prompts (All Three Passages):

Putting these texts together, how would you define biblical self-control in your own words?

How does knowing your identity in Christ (secure, loved, chosen) change the way you approach control and self-discipline?

As a community, how can we help one another move from control driven by fear to meekness and self-control driven by the Spirit?

Application: Practical Steps

Invite each group member to consider and share (if comfortable) one specific application:

Personal:

Identify one “intoxicant” or control habit (screen use, outbursts of anger, micromanaging, people-pleasing, etc.) that you will address with God over the next 90 days.

Choose one daily practice to cooperate with the Spirit in that area (e.g., a brief daily prayer of surrender, a verse on your phone lock screen, a simple fast, a nightly review: “Where did I try to control today?”).

Community:

Pair up with a “growth partner” in the group for the next month:

Share your one area of control.

Check in weekly (text, call, or in person).

Ask how the other is doing, and cautiously offer ideas for how they might pray, such as asking for meekness, courage to yield control, and joy in obedience.

As a group, discuss:

Are there ways our group culture itself could be less controlling and more Spirit-led (e.g., who talks, who leads, flexibility in plans)?

Encourage people to choose realistic, concrete steps rather than vague intentions.

Closing

Share Prayer Needs:

Invite each person to briefly name one area where they need God’s help in meekness or self-control.

Encourage group members to remember confidentiality and to respond with grace, not advice, unless asked.

Closing Prayer:

Ask one or two group members to close by:

Thanking God for His gentleness and patience with us.

Asking the Spirit to bear His fruit in each life, especially meekness and self-control.

Asking for courage to yield areas of control and for healing of past wounds that fuel controlling behavior.

(Leaders can gently suggest themes to pray about but encourage prayers to be Spirit-led, not recited from a script.)

Leader Notes

Fostering Openness:

Model vulnerability first. Briefly share a personal area where you have struggled with control and how God is working in you.

Normalize the struggle: remind the group that many controlling patterns grow out of hurt and fear, not “just being a bad person.”

Watch for signs of shame. If someone shares something heavy, affirm their courage and gently point to God’s grace and the Spirit’s power to change.

Managing Time and Voices:

Keep the icebreaker moving so there is adequate time for Scripture and deeper sharing.

Be mindful of dominant talkers. Affirm their contributions but intentionally invite quieter members: “I’d love to hear from someone who hasn’t shared yet.”

If the group goes very deep on one passage, feel free to summarize or shorten the later sections. Depth is better than rushing.

Handling Sensitive Topics (Trauma, Abuse, Addiction):

If traumatic experiences or abuse arise, avoid probing questions in the group. Thank the person for trusting the group and suggest following up privately with Pastor Joel. If they aren’t comfortable doing that themselves, privately ask their permission to share with him yourself so he can advise on how to proceed.

If clearly destructive or abusive control patterns are mentioned (e.g., in marriages, parenting), respond with compassion and seriousness. This must be reported.

Encouraging Next Steps:

Suggest that group members keep a small journal or note on their phone for their 90-day “one thing” journey.

Periodically check in as a group over the coming weeks: “How are you doing in that one area we talked about?”

Remind the group often that change is a process, not an event, and that the Holy Spirit is faithful to complete what He begins.

May the Lord gently master our hearts this week, teaching us His ways and forming in us the beautiful fruit of meekness and self-control.