

Overview

Just this past week (January 8) the United States government released new dietary rules concerning sugar intake. They are urging the American population to decrease their sugar intake on a daily basis by 20%. In the article it states: "If the U.S. government has its way, Americans would cut their consumption of sugar and corn syrup by more than 2 million tons a year." Later on in the article it states that few Americans are expected to follow the guidelines even including health advocates. Why? It takes more than reading a new guideline to implement a life change. It requires self-control.

The Apostle Peter makes a list of characteristics in 2 Peter 1:3-7 that needs to be supplemented into every believers' faith. In this list he mentions self-control. Peter begins this list in verse 3 by telling all believers to "make every effort to add to their faith." Believer's are often tempted to blame God for their own lack of self-control. They pray that God will take away their desire to spend frivolously and it doesn't happen. They pray that God will take away their desire for sugar and it doesn't happen. They might pray that God takes away a drug or alcohol addiction and it doesn't happen. They pray that God will take away lust or other sinful desires and it doesn't happen. It is not that God doesn't sometimes miraculously take away desires or help people end harmful habits. It is that He expects believers to make every effort.

Supplementing your faith with self-control is not a passive activity. It will require effort on your part. You cannot just sit back and expect self-control to immediately become a part of your life. The good news is that in 2 Peter 1:3 it states: "God's divine power has given you everything you need for a godly life." God's power, the Holy Spirit, has given you everything you need including the ability to add self-control to your faith, but it requires effort on your part.

Bible Study: 2 Peter 1:3-7

1. How do you define self-control? Does self-control have a positive or negative connotation? Why?
2. In what ways has self-control grown in an area of your life? Work, relationships, habits?
3. Read 2 Peter 1:3. Do you feel like God has given you everything you need for a godly life? What are some reasons why people may think that God's doesn't help enough to live a godly life?
4. Read 2 Peter 1:6. Believers are called to add perseverance to self-control. Why is it so easy to give up and go back to an old habit?
5. The sermon on January 3 was about contentment. In what ways are self-control and contentment related?
6. What does self-control look like in the area of your finances? What is usually going on when it is difficult to maintain financial self-control?

7. For 2016, what area of your life do you see the biggest need for adding self-control?
How do you plan on making every effort in this area? What ways can the group help?