

WISDOM ON A LEASH: THE WAR FOR SELF-CONTROL

Another Study in Proverbs
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SOME THOUGHTS BY WISE MEN:

Aristotle: “I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies; for the hardest victory is the victory over self.”

Thomas à Kempis: “No conflict is so severe as his who labors to subdue himself.”

C.S. Lewis mused:

"No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good."



From the word “strength” meaning “to hold oneself in”

**The Biblical idea is: the inner strength to
My body is a good servant but a
manage emotions, appetites, and actions
Miserable Master!!!
rather than being ruled by them.**

THE OUTLINE

**The
Dangers of
Lacking it**

**The
Problem
With It**

**The
Solution
For It**



1. The Dangers of Lacking it:

PROVERBS 25:28: *LIKE A CITY THAT IS BROKEN INTO AND WITHOUT WALLS IS A
MAN WHO HAS NO CONTROL OVER HIS SPIRIT*



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Proverbs 5:22: *"The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin."*

When sin is normalized, its addictive and destructive power is significantly underestimated

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IN SUMMARY: THE DANGERS OF LACKING SELF- CONTROL

- It can enslave us
- We become wide open targets for Satan and our flesh to attack us
- It can tarnish the Name of our Lord and Savior and destroy our testimony of God's grace.

**WHAT ARE YOUR
THOUGHTS?**

2. The Problem With It:

PROVERBS 29:11: *A FOOL GIVES FULL VENT TO HIS SPIRIT, BUT A WISE MAN QUIETLY HOLDS IT BACK*

Concupiscence: Desire that is out of control, an infection, a disorder of sorts

An Inventory of Cravings

Uncontrolled lust: Proverbs 11:6: *“The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the treacherous are taken captive by their lust.”*

Uncontrolled drinking or substance abuse: Proverbs 23:29-30: *“Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? ³⁰ Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine...in the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper.”*

Uncontrolled anger: Proverbs 14:29 (NIV): *“Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.”*

Uncontrolled eating: Proverbs 25:16: *“If you have found honey, eat only enough for you, lest you have your fill of it and vomit it.”*

Uncontrolled need for entertainment: Proverbs 21:17a: *"Whoever loves pleasure will become poor..."*

Uncontrolled mouth: Proverbs 18:6: *The lips of fools bring them strife, and their mouths invite a beating*

What would you say is a biblical definition of virtue?

A life of virtue is an unending war with evil inclinations that arise from within ourselves and are pounded at us by the Evil One

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There is a subtle chemistry in each of us that
corrupts grace into self-sufficiency

We enjoy His goodness and then we twist it into self-assured

Summarizing:

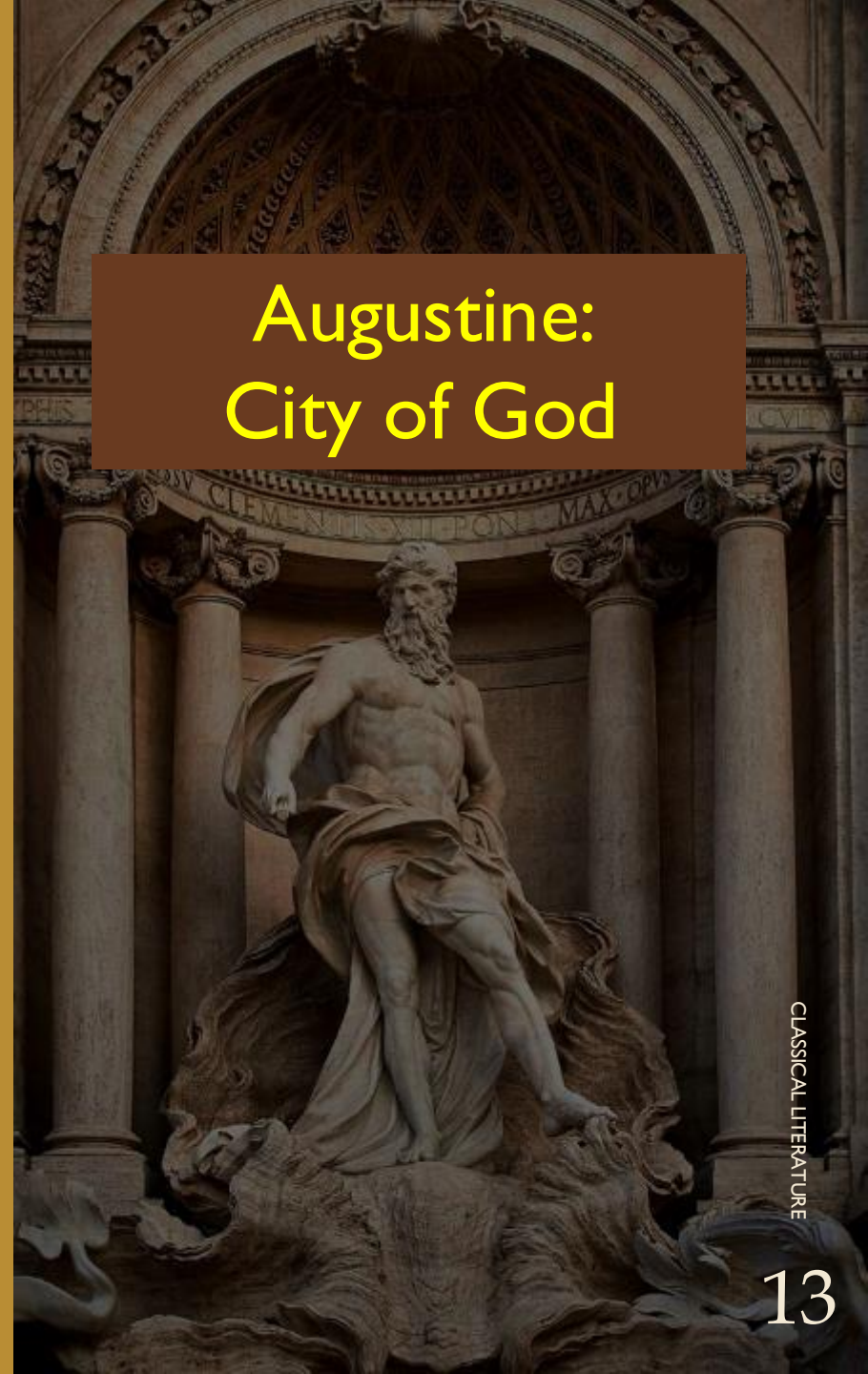
**Self-Control is a never-ending-this-side-of-heaven WAR
that rages in everyone of us**

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A FURTHER THOUGHT BY A WISE MAN:

**It is obvious to the most casual
observer that the battle rages
and the battle is far from
finished in all of us**

**Augustine:
City of God**



3. The Solution For it:

Prov. 4:4-9: *When I was a son with my father, tender and precious to my mother,⁴ he taught me and said, “Your heart must hold on to my words. Keep my commands and live.⁵ Get wisdom, get understanding; don’t forget or turn away from the words from my mouth.⁶ Don’t abandon wisdom, and she will watch over you; love her, and she will guard you.⁷ Wisdom is supreme—so get wisdom. And whatever else you get, get understanding.⁸ Cherish her, and she will exalt you; if you embrace her, she will honor you.⁹ She will place a garland of favor on your head; she will give you a crown of beauty.”*

PROVERBS 9:10

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight*

FEAR OF THE LORD

It is an inward condition of delight in the magnitude of who He is

It means you have an awe-filled reverence as you behold his

It is a sense of association with the Lord that makes you concerned

about displeasing or offending Him.

It should inform our thoughts, words, and actions

Psalm 16:6 "By the holiness of the Lord my enemies are afraid"

THREE KINDS OF EVIL

SIN IS A COMPLEX OCTOPUS-LIKE MONSTER
THAT
RULES IN OUR UNGODLY HABITS

FEAR OF THE LORD

(PART DEUX)

The Fear of the Lord is a major weapon against these sins because it will not allow us to turn our backs on our sinning and give us a conviction of the Holy Spirit longing to be in right relationship with Him

The Fear of the Lord will bring us to repentance and dependence

We, in our own strength, are incapable of self-control that will eliminate the habitual patterns of sin in our lives. This is not a matter of sheer will-power!

Proverbs 3:1-2, *"My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments"*

What does it mean to "not forget" God's teaching, and how can we ensure we remember every day?

Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. In all your ways KNOW Him and He will make your paths straight" (CSB)

What does trusting in the Lord "with all your heart" and not leaning on "your own understanding" look like in practice with respect to self-control?

Augustine continued to instruct us: “For the less a man has God in his thoughts, the less is his soul subject to God...”

**Galatians 5:22-23: The fruit of the Spirit
is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and
Self-Control**

FINAL MESSAGE

NEVER GIVE UP!!!!

FAIL?

CONFESS YOUR FAILURE

GRACE IS GREATER THAN OUR SIN

GET UP AND

PRESS ON IN DEPENDENCE