



SERIES: A Season of Hope

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

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Scripture: Proverbs 25:28, Proverbs 16:32

TITLE: The Self-Control Dilemma

Do you have a fence at your home? At the home we just moved from, we had no fence in our backyard. Now on one hand this was great, because our kids could go from one yard to the other, and the neighbors could travel from one yard to the other, without any type of hindrance or barrier. But I'm going to tell you, the moment that our neighbor's dog got out to go to the bathroom, I wished I would have had the fence. You see, the dog had no self-control as to where it went to do its business, so that barrier provided great control for my life.

The reality is, we all benefit from having barriers and self-control. Listen to how Proverbs describes a person without self-control:

“A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls. (Proverbs 25:28, ESV)

You see, a person without self-control is exactly like my backyard when the invading dog approached. It was just like the city that had been broken into, because it had no walls to protect it.

A lot of us today do not operate with proper boundaries and restraints. We lack self-control and life seems to pee all over us. But you see, the problem really wasn't with the dog. The problem was with *me*. I didn't have the proper barriers in place to protect my property and my things.

The same is true for us today when we lack self-control. So, the Netflix series probably isn't the real issue – the problem is we lack control, so we binge watch the series, and kill our weekend. The alcohol isn't really the problem – the problem is we don't have one beer; we drink a 12 pack in a night. The problem isn't really with the supersized value meal – the problem is we choose to eat it. The problem really isn't with the credit card– the problem is we don't respect our financial limitations.

What's the solution? Listen to what [Proverbs 16:32 \(NLT\)](#) says:

“Better to be patient than powerful;
better to have self-control than to conquer a city.”

According to Proverbs, we need to be patient -- to be intentional -- to have boundaries -- to have self-control.

I get it. I struggle with these impulses as well. The writer of Proverbs says “it's better to have self-control than to conquer a city”. In other words, you know what? We'd all like to conquer the city and be King. We all like to have the biggest house, even if we can't afford it. We'd all like to be able to throw down a whole pizza, without having to pay for it on the scale, or search our pockets for Tums. We would all like to coast all weekend, but we can't do that without a cost.

Wherever it is in your life that you are struggling with self-control, you're not alone. We all struggle with it. But we know that there is benefit to boundaries. We know that there is a benefit to having limitations. It benefits our pocketbook. It benefits our waistline. It simply benefits our lives. But most importantly, it glorifies God.

Even God has boundaries, and so should we.

Today my challenge to you is to ask yourself a very simple question: Will what I'm about to do or say take me closer to my goal of honoring God? Of accomplishing my financial goal? Of becoming healthier? Of Becoming a better spouse or parent? Then ask God for help to make the right decision.

If you ask yourself this question, and ask God for help in accomplishing it, you'll be on track to accomplishing your goals, and defeating your self-control dilemma.