

God Is The Divine Ruler Over All The Nations

Second Chronicles 20:6 "O Lord, God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In Your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand You." Again, here is Scriptural evidence that God is ruler over all the nations. It doesn't matter that the world's rulers know this or not. That's irrelevant. The fact is that "In God's hand are power and might and none is able to withstand Him. God has all power and is all mighty so no one can stand up to Him or make Him change His mind or His plans."

Zechariah 4:6 "This is the Word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts."

Zerubbabel was discouraged and thought that he could rebuild the walls of Jerusalem so God reminded him that it is not by human mind, strength, or intellect but by God's Spirit. If the world were sovereignly governed by the human will, mind, and strength, then total anarchy would result but thankfully, God is in control of all that happens, and so much so that not even a tiny sparrow falls to the ground without God's knowing it or sovereignly allowing it (Matthew 10:29).

Learning Self Control Is A Process

True worship is to give up our lives for God, that is to live for Him alone. God calls us to lie in obedience to him. That doesn't involve relinquishing control, but rather letting God's plans and purposes shape the things we do. Our minds aren't switched off, but rather transformed and renewed by God, and so we become aware of the new way God wants us to live. This takes self control and action. True faith is not meandering aimlessly and seeing where "God" would have us drift. Instead true faith is seeing the path God wants us to take, with its dangers and hardships and joys and toil, and deciding to follow that path to please our heavenly father. **The Bible speaks very highly, not of a lack of control, but of the great worth of self control.** (2 Peter 1:6, Galatians 5:23) In the end Christian living is about changing your focus - rather than living for the world, using all your energies to achieve the things you want to achieve, you live for God, having your mind and focus changed day by day so that you (more and more) use all your energies to achieve the things He wants to achieve. As this process of the "**renewing of the mind**" continues, **so what God wants slowly becomes what you want as well. So becoming a Christian means that we no longer use the control we can exert to promote our own agenda, but God's agenda: praising Him, sharing His gospel and loving both our brother and our neighbor.** (Hebrews 13:15, 1 Peter 3:15, Mark 12:29-31)



"I wish I had more self-control!" How many times have you heard someone say that—or said it yourself? Whether it's sticking with a diet and exercise program or knowing when to hold your tongue, most people feel they come up short in the self-control department.



Even the Bible is outspoken on its importance. "Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control" (Proverbs 25:28). So what is self-control? The phrase seems to imply a hefty dose of sheer willpower. And there is, indeed, work involved. Peter writes, "Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness,

mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love" (2 Peter 1:5-7). Yet Scripture also tells us that self-control is a gift. "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline," we learn in 2 Timothy 1:7. And "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace... gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). So how much self is there in self-control? What's up to us, and what's up to God?

Becoming A Good Student



"For the grace of God...teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age" (Titus 2:11-13). Since the grace of God is our Instructor, it is imperative that we do well as students. To learn takes attentiveness and humility.

We have to trust that our Teacher knows more than we do. We need to accept that perhaps the lessons aren't going to be entertaining, relaxing or humorous. They may not satisfy our obvious desires, but, rather, lead our hearts toward deeper ones. Becoming a good student in the school of self-control requires listening with the intention of learning what's being taught. With the Psalmist we can pray, "Teach me Your way, Lord, that I may rely on Your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your Name" (Psalm 86:11).

Desiring God's Will More Than Your Own

What does a person with good self-control look like? Often it's easier to come up with a list of people who clearly lack self-discipline. We all know someone whose struggles with "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Self-control grows when we pay attention to "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable" (Philippians 4:8).

Take a bit of time each day to meditate on these things. A large part of self-control is about removing our focus on who we are now and refocusing our attention on who God wants us to become. "Lead us not into temptation," we pray, as Jesus instructed. Those words come after we've said, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done" (Matthew 6:9-13). The order of the requests matters, because self-control depends in large part on how much we put God in control of our lives. The more we desire God's will, the easier it is to choose it. No matter how hard we try, there will still be times when, like Paul, we lament that, "I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do" (Romans 7:18-19). We will stumble and fall, and we will get up and refocus our eyes on the prize. We will resolve to "put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:12). Then we will pray to the Holy Spirit to renew the gift of self-control within us. And He will.

What is Sovereignty?

Sovereignty can be defined as having supreme authority, control, and power over all that has happened, is happening, and will happen in the future in all times across all history. Christians define it as the ruler of the universe, God, having the right, the authority, and the power to govern all that happens and what has, is, or will

happen being in accordance to His divine will. He has the right to achieve His purposes and has the power to bring about circumstances that dictate whatever He wills to come to pass. He has complete control of everything and there is nothing that is done that is not done by or allowed through His will. This is expressed by Paul in Romans 8:28 as he writes that "We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose." For those who are God's chosen, they are "those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified" (Romans 8:29-30).



His sovereignty includes those who have "been predestined according to the purpose of Him Who works all things according to the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:11). That is because He is "Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come" (Ephesians 1:21). "Knowing this we ought to "Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you" (Romans 11:22).

Trusting God When We Do Not Understand

Psalm 115:3 "Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases." There is no reason to question the authority and sovereignty of God just because we don't understand what is happening or what did happen because "Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?" (Romans 9:21) He is free to choose whom to save, He has every right to do what He purposes and all that He does is according to what pleases Him. Don't we do the same thing?

The Lord Orders Our Footsteps

Proverbs 16:9 "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps." What this verse is saying is that humans might think that their plans are of their own accord, but it is actually "The Lord [Who] establishes his steps." Even our bad choices are used for God's purpose in His sovereignty. Genesis 50:20 "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." Joseph's brothers at first tried to kill him, they sold him into slavery but what was done with evil intent, God used for good. That aligns with what the previous verse said (Proverbs 16:9) and with God's sovereignty, even over bad things that happen. Romans 8:28 "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose." Joseph kept his faith and trust in God and remained in self control through out his trials. God had huge plans for Joseph and because of his obedience to God, God elevated him to second in command of all of Egypt. God was able to use Joseph to save his family and all of Egypt.

