

Self-Control Matters

Scripture used: [Matthew 4:1-4 \(NLT\)](#) and [Luke 4:14-15 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Today, Pastor Hurmon continued with the sermon series Character Matters with the sermon titled “Self-Control Matters” with an emphasis on prayer and fasting. Last week, Pastor Hurmon provided us with this definition: Character is who I am on the inside.

KEY POINTS

1. **Self-control defined:** the steadfast capacity to regulate one’s thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, resisting short-term temptations in order to meet long-term objectives.
2. **How can we strengthen our self-control?** One of the ways we do this is in seasons of prayer and fasting.
3. **PF 40:** Starting on Wednesday Feb 21 through March 31, Easter we are going to participate as a community in 40 days of prayer and fasting. The world is becoming more challenging and scary, but we are made for this season. In order to engage in this season, we need to align our plans with God’s. Why should we participate?
 - a. **Jesus did it.** He retreated into the wilderness, isolated for 40 days to pray and fast. He was exposed and vulnerable.
 - b. **A spiritual and emotional reset.** Prayer and fasting can be a new beginning with God.
 - c. **A spiritual training.** We can use this time to practice our self-control through our faith. Prayer and fasting provides a space to practice. We can do this by yielding to the Holy Spirit and listening to the Holy Spirit. In [1 Corinthians 9:27 \(NLT\)](#) Paul wrote about his own spiritual training which he compared to being an athlete in training.
4. **Practice fasting:** What do you love in your life and habitual is a part of your life that you can give up to make room for God?
5. **Practice self-consecration:** Create holy space to think about our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. One way this can be done is through journaling.
6. **Practice putting limits on yourself:** We can practice how to say “No!” to ourselves. It takes 66 days to make a habit but the first stage happens in 40 days. Keep saying “No!” so you can limit yourself.
7. **Practice saying “Yes” to God** - even when it is difficult. By saying yes to God and no to ourselves, we can grow spiritually and grow our faith.
8. **Practice developing spiritual grit** - staying faithful even when it is hard. In [Luke 22:42 \(NLT\)](#). Jesus asked God to take away the cup of suffering, but He wanted God’s will to be done. Ultimately, we have to place God’s will before our own desires even when it is hard.
9. **NBCC Value #4:** *We give up things that we love for things that we love even more.* Jesus did this for us, and for the next 40 days we can practice doing the same thing for Him.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - As we enter into a season of prayer and fasting, sit with God and ask Him what He would like you to fast from. What is something you love that if you gave up, you could create space for God? Pastor Hurmon will be giving up sleeping longer in the mornings so he can get up early and pray. What might God be asking of you?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider how this season might strengthen your self-control. In what areas of your life have you lacked self-control that you would like God to develop? How might strengthening your self-control help you be God’s light in your household and in your community?
- 3) **DO** -Sign up for [PF 40](#), dedicate a space and schedule a time to daily pray and be with God, and utilize the daily emails Pastor Hurmon sends out to grow spiritually during this season.