> *“And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.”*
> — 1 Corinthians 9:25

When we receive salvation, it doesn’t end with separating ourselves from open sins such as fornication, theft, corruption, abortion, or indecent dressing. The Christian life also requires us to live a life of self-control — restraining ourselves even from things that seem harmless but can hinder our faith and fruitfulness.

There are many things we can do that are not sinful in themselves, yet they drain our spiritual strength and occupy our time until we become unfruitful in the Lord.

EXAMPLES OF LACK OF RESTRAINT

Your worldly friend may invite you to a birthday party. That may not be sin, but before you accept, ask yourself — *what will this*

add to my spiritual life? Perhaps the only gain will be laughter and entertainment, but spiritually you will lose more than you gain.

Or maybe you enjoy watching certain dramas or TV shows. You might think, “There’s no harm in it.” Yet soon your mind becomes enslaved by them. Your joy is tied to how the episode ends, and your thoughts are constantly there — that’s bondage of the mind.

Some people befriend everyone around them, even the ungodly, and call everyone “my friend.” But not everyone should be part of your inner circle. You can greet your neighbors and live peacefully, but you don’t need to join them in every conversation or hangout.

You may have over 50 WhatsApp groups — from kindergarten friends to neighborhood chats, jokes, and sports groups — yet you only belong to *one* Bible study group. Ask yourself, what do all these groups add to your spiritual life? The Lord Jesus said that *“the seed that fell among thorns was choked by the cares of this life”* (Luke 8:14). When your mind is filled with worldly noise, the Word of God in you cannot grow.

A CALL TO DISCIPLINE

The Apostle Paul compared the Christian life to a race that requires strict discipline:

> *“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.*
> *And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things...*
> *Therefore I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”*
> — 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

Just like athletes avoid distractions to win a temporary medal, we must exercise even greater restraint to obtain a crown that never fades.

Not everything pleasant should be tried. Learn to say *no* to certain invitations, programs, and friendships so you can have more time to pray, meditate on God’s Word, and grow spiritually.

Otherwise, your time will always feel “too short,” and your spiritual life will remain stagnant.

HOW TO REGAIN YOUR TIME

Start by reducing unnecessary distractions.
Choose only a few close friends who help you grow spiritually.
Leave worldly entertainment behind — movies, shows, and social media groups that feed the flesh and not the spirit.

Ask yourself: does that old school WhatsApp group from 15 years ago help your walk with God today?
If not, leave it. Before the age of social media, you lived in peace — why not now?

Also, avoid unnecessary attachments with worldly people. Be a good neighbor, yes, but don’t join their ungodly gatherings. Do not fear losing human support, for “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man can do to me.” (*Hebrews 13:6*)

When you begin to separate yourself from these distractions, you will gain precious time — time to pray, study Scripture, and

worship. As you build this discipline, you will notice a deep peace in your heart, and God will begin to reveal Himself to you in powerful ways.

Your spiritual growth will become rapid, and you will bear fruit for God. But if you continue to live carelessly and without restraint, months and years will pass and you will remain spiritually immature — vulnerable to the enemy's deception.

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Therefore, beloved, exercise self-control in all things.
Cut off what weakens your spirit and invest your time in what draws you closer to God.

> *"He who loves discipline loves knowledge,*
> *but he who hates correction is stupid."*
> — Proverbs 12:1

Share this message with others so they too may learn to live wisely and receive the imperishable crown

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