

Temperance

#0740

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—March 22, 1959

We will start with the fifth chapter of Galatians and the 22nd verse:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” Galatians 5:22–23.

In other words, all these traits are in harmony with law. They are not against law, therefore law is not against them.

Now the particular fruit that we are looking at is the fruit of temperance. If you wanted to grow apples, what kind of tree would you plant? If you wanted strawberries, you would put out strawberry plants. Temperance is the fruit born on what tree? The fruit of the Spirit, yes. So the tree is the Spirit. If we have the Spirit of God these fruits will be manifest in our lives. Without the Spirit of God, no one can be truly temperate in all things. Let us notice in 1 Corinthians the ninth chapter Paul’s statement on the matter of temperance. Notice to how much temperance is to extend:

“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate...”

In how much?

“...in all things...” 1 Corinthians 9:25.

Often when we think of temperance, we think of abstinence from whiskey and beer. Certainly, it includes that. No one who drinks alcoholic liquors is a temperate man. But Paul says that every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in, what? All things.

Temperance, of course, means absolute abstinence from everything that is hurtful and moderation in the use of that which is good.

I would like to study with you this morning the two great philosophies that underlie temperance on the one hand and intemperance on the other. No one can practice real temperance unless he has self-control. In some of the modern translations, where we have “temperance” the word “self-control” is used. Notice how Paul puts it:

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection:
lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I
myself should be a castaway” 1 Corinthians 9:27.

“But I keep under my body.” Where was Paul’s body? Where did he say it was? Under. I appreciate it if you would all answer, even if you get the wrong answer. We’ll soon get that fixed up. Let’s read this together:

“But I keep *under* my body, and bring it into subjection:
lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I
myself should be a castaway” 1 Corinthians 9:27.

Now, where was Paul’s body? It was under. Well, where was Paul then? He was on top, wasn’t he? That’s right. He was in control of his appetites and passions. He had the ability to say yes or no.

I was talking to a group of students a few weeks ago and asked them if they would rather have an automobile with a motor and no brakes or an automobile with breaks and no motor.

They thought awhile, and finally, someone said, “Neither.”

I think that’s a good answer. Don’t you?

No matter how much *motor* power we have, unless there is *brake* power, we don’t want to get into the car, do we? And no matter how much desire and initiative and ambition there is in human life unless there is the power of control and *self*-control, we should not venture forth on any endeavor, for we will only involve ourselves in problems, and eventually in disaster. “Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.”

This matter of self-control, particularly in this world of sin, involves saying “no” many times in many places on many subjects. When Daniel went down to Babylon as a captive at the age of eighteen, having already learned the lesson of temperance and self-control, he was ready to meet the test. You remember that the first chapter of Daniel tells us that he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with what? The portion of the king’s meat, or the wine which the king drank. He was successful, and God honored him.

Now, you notice that in Daniel’s mind, temperance included food as well as drink. Turn to Daniel the first chapter and notice that. Daniel thought it important enough to press the matter, and the Lord blessed him. Remember that the man who was in charge of them felt that it would have been unwise to have granted them such a simple diet as they purposed.

But Daniel suggested a little test:

“Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse...”

That's vegetable food.

"...to eat, and water to drink" Daniel 1:12.

Then he said, "look at us and see if we're all sick and weak and no good looking. And see if we get along all right on this." And you remember the result:

"And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat" Daniel 12:15.

They got along all right. That was an interesting dietary experiment performed not on guinea pigs but upon some young students. God blessed their temperance, their self-control.

As I study this matter of temperance, I'm impressed with the fact that most of us start too late and too far down. Up the side of that mountain, there are many steep places. You know that if a rock starts rolling, the further down the mountain, you try to stop it, the more difficult it would be. Yet, it might not seem to do any damage until it hits someone at the bottom of the mountain.

Someone might say, "All we have to do is build a wall along the cliffs at the foot of the mountain. Then what happens above will not make any difference."

But the difficulty is that a rock rolling down the hill might either break through that glass wall or jump over it. It could happen.

In this country, what was called "the noble experiment of prohibition" was tried a few generations ago. We believe in temperance. We believe in prohibition. We believe in every barrier set up against the liquor traffic. By the commands of God, we are committed to use our influence in every effort, whether legislative or otherwise, to hold back that terrible tide of liquor traffic. But having said all that, dear friends, we must recognize that one of the great reasons prohibition failed was that there was little educational work carried on and was, was what educational work was carried on was largely concerned in warning people against the perils of the last cliff down the side of the mountain—the last precipice, which jumping over one is hurled into the ocean of alcoholic liquor—drunkenness.

This morning I want to study those barriers up the side of the mountain that God has erected. The Master has told us through the Spirit of Prophecy, and there is scientific evidence, of course, that confirm it, that every indulgence of appetite is a step toward drunkenness. Notice how the Savior suggests this. And He's speaking to this last generation. The ones who will welcome His coming:

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" Luke 21:34.

That is, the day of God—the coming of Jesus. Many will be surprised because their minds have become dull. Their consciences are not active. What's the matter? They are overcharged with three that Jesus speaks of. What are they? Surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life.

What is surfeiting? Overeating—intemperance in eating; intemperance in the amount of food; intemperance in the variety; intemperance in the richness of food. All this is included in surfeiting.

I'd like to go to the root of all that. What is the root of all that?

“Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness” Ecclesiastes 10:17.

There are two reasons to eat. It's not talking here about drinking alcohol, although it might be included. He is talking doing, what? Eating. Some people, he indicated eat for what? For drunkenness. But others eat for strength. Which do *you* eat for?

One might say, “How could a person eat for drunkenness?”

In the sense that they eat in order to get the same *effect* that drunkenness brings. Or, it may be understood in the sense of eating for the same *reason* that one drinks. What is that? Merely to please the senses; merely to tickle the taste buds. Any individual who indulges in appetites and passions merely for the sake of sensation has already started rolling down that mountain. He may have certain barriers of self-respect or desire for the respect of others that seem to stop him partway down, but he has already left the highlands of self-control.

God did not give us our senses—the taste buds, the olfactory nerves, and the other sense organ—He did not give them to be our masters. He did not give those that they might tell us what to do. No. He did not give us our impulses that they might run our lives. “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.” “I keep...” where? “...under my body.” And my body is the seat of all those impulses.

Here are some princes that eat for drunkenness. What does that mean? That means they eat because it tastes good, and that's all. They eat to get that sense of carnal satisfaction. Anyone who does that will tend more and more to richer and luxurious foods, to eat more than he needs, and eat more frequently than he needs, just to get the sensation.

Concerning those who are blessed, Solomon says they eat, when? In due season. Well then, is there a time to eat? Is there a time not to eat? Eating between meals is a species of intemperance. Overeating is a species of intemperance.

“Often intemperance begins in the home. By the use of rich, unhealthful food the digestive organs are weakened,

and a desire is created for food that is still more stimulating. Thus the appetite is educated to crave continually something stronger. The demand for stimulants becomes more frequent and more difficult to resist... One step in the wrong direction prepares the way for another. Many who would not be guilty of placing on their table wine or liquor of any kind will load their table with food which creates such a thirst for drink that to resist the temptation is almost impossible...

“We bid all temperance workers Godspeed; but we invite them to look more deeply into the cause of the evil they war against, and to be sure that they are consistent in reform” *Ministry of Healing*, pages 334–335.

If we are to deal with intemperance properly, we must get at the root of it. We found that temperance is the fruit born on what tree? The Spirit of God. And intemperance is a fruit born on the root of selfishness, which is the opposite of the Spirit of God.

I was impressed recently noticing a contrast between two of the greatest characters of history—two lives that demonstrate these two great philosophies—these two great principles. Nero, the emperor of Rome, who died at the early age of thirty-two. He was a terribly intemperate man. Debauched. He had gratified every carnal desire and had lived his life merely to glorify himself. His feasts were gluttonous orgies. He had gone so far in trying to satisfy his carnal propensities that he took pleasure in the sufferings of human beings. He would take the Christians, dip them in pitch, have them tied up on poles in his gardens, and burn them at night as torches to light his garden while these scenes of drunkenness and revelry were going on. He was the judge when Paul was summoned to Rome at his last trial. Paul was falsely accused of setting fire to Rome, which of course, Paul had nothing to do with. Nero himself had done it. But they were looking for a scapegoat. Paul was selected.

Paul was put in prison, and the time came when Paul was brought out to face that cruel monster on the throne. I want to read you a very sublime description of this scene, and I want you to notice, Paul is the one who said, “But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection.” He was a temperate man. The reason he was a temperate man is that the Spirit of God was operating in his heart and life. He was temperate because he loved God and his fellow men. He had no time to waste himself in indulgence. He had no effort to waste in self-pleasing. All his energies were devoted to the service of God and in helping others.

Nero, on the other hand, is one whose every thought was one of self-pleasing—pampering himself. And he conceived every wicked and abominable method of trying to satisfy the cravings of the flesh. As those two men met, it was indeed a contrast. From this little book from the Lord’s messenger called, *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, I want to read from page 311:

“Paul before Nero, how striking the contrast. The very height of earthly power, authority, and wealth, as well as the lowest depths of crime and iniquity, had been reached by the haughty monarch before whom the man of God answered for his faith. In his power and greatness, Nero stood unrivaled, unapproached. There were none to question his authority, none to resist his will. The kings of the earth laid their crowns at his feet. The most powerful armies marched at his command. The ensigns of his navies upon the seas betokened victory. His statue was set up in the halls of justice, and the decrees of senators and the decisions of judges were but the echo of his will. Millions of subjects bowed in obedience to his mandates. The name of Nero made the world tremble. To incur his displeasure was to lose property, liberty, and life. His crown was more to be dreaded than the pestilence. Yet while surrounded by all the outward semblance of earthly pomp and greatness, adored and revered as a god in human form, he possessed the heart of a demon.”

There was intemperance gone to seed, my friends, self-pleasing. Now watch:

“Paul, the aged prisoner, without money, without friends, without counsel, had been brought forth from a dungeon to be tried for his life. He had lived a life of poverty, self-denial, and suffering. With a sensitive nature that thirsted for love and sympathy, he had braved misrepresentation, reproach, hatred, and abuse. Shrinking with nervous dread from pain and peril, he had fearlessly endured both. He had been like his Master, a homeless wanderer on the earth. He had lived and suffered for the truth’s sake, seeking to relieve the burdens of humanity and to exemplify in his life the life of Christ.

“Paul and Nero, face-to-face. The youthful monarch bearing upon his sin-stamped countenance the shameful record of the passions that reigned within. The aged prisoner’s calm and benignant face, telling of a heart at peace with God and man.”

Now watch!

“The result of opposite systems of training and education stood that day contrasted. The life of unbounded self-indulgence and the life of utter self-sacrifice.”

What was it that Nero was a personification of? Self-indulgence. And Paul, what? Self-sacrifice.

“Here were the representatives of two religions—Christianity and paganism. The representatives of two theories of life—the simplicity of self-denying endurance, ready to give up life itself, if need be, for the good of others, and the luxury of all absorbing selfishness that counts nothing too valuable to sacrifice for a momentary gratification” *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, page 311.

Think of it? Why, Nero would kill anybody just to gratify a whim of the moment. Paul would sacrifice his own life to save his worst enemy. Ah friends, this matter of temperance is far beyond the question of whether we drink whiskey or not. That’s just one manifestation of it. That’s just one branch on the great tree of indulgence. Every time we gratify self-indulgence, we are taking a step in the road of intemperance. Every time we deny self for the good of others, we are taking a step away from intemperance in the road of self-control.

I was impressed with that picture of those two great men. One great as the world views greatness—great in sin and worldly power. But oh, friends, a demon, a beast, below a beast. But Paul, a man of great mind, great attainments, who had willingly sacrificed everything in order that others might know the blessing that comes through loving ministry. That’s the experience I want. Don’t you? That’s the experience we can have if we are willing to deny self.

Now, I want to come back to Daniel’s experience for a moment. Will you please turn to Daniel the first chapter? What were the two things Daniel objected to when he got to the dining room? Wine and meat, that’s right.

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank” Daniel 1:8.

I suppose all understand why Daniel objected to the wine. It had alcohol in it. But why did he object to the meat? Well, let me tell you why, friends, because in meat there are certain waste products which act in a stimulating way upon the body and prepare it for further steps of self-indulgence.

You remember that when God created man in the beginning, that He gave him his bill of fare as recorded in Genesis the first chapter. That bill of fare, that menu included the fruits and nuts that grow on trees and the seeds and grains that grow on various grasses and plants. The seeds with the fleshly or fatty portions surrounding them were given to our first parents as their diet. Vegetables were added in the third chapter—the leaves and stalks and stems. But all of these were from the vegetable kingdom.

And you will remember, as the first five chapters of Genesis show, that for hundreds and hundreds of years as men of God lived on that diet, they obtained a life of over nine hundred years on the average.

You will remember that finally, the flood came, brought by the wickedness of sinners who lived before the Flood who were not willing to follow God’s plan. We

know that one of the things that led them into that wickedness was intemperance. They began to slaughter animals and eat them. That made them bloodthirsty, and they began to kill one another just for pleasure and for spite because of this selfish—terribly selfish disposition that was engendered.

When the flood came and all the green things were destroyed, we find that God gave the children of Noah permission to eat the flesh of certain kinds and with certain restrictions. What was it about the flesh that God told them that they mustn't eat? The blood and the fat.

When God led the children of Israel out of Egypt, He repeated the instruction, making it more explicit. They were absolutely forbidden to eat any blood or any fat. But of course, the heathen nations paid no attention to this. The people down in Babylon paid no attention to it. Daniel would have been eating not only unclean flesh (in the sense that certain animals that weren't to be eaten), but even the clean animals were to be used would doubtless have been filled with blood. The blood contains the tissue wastes of the animal organism. Let me illustrate it this way, all the while, our blood is being sent through the body by the force of the heart—it is circulating by the force of that great pump, the heart—pumping it all through the body.

Now, the blood is an interesting combination. It's not only a great food system. It's a great sewage system. It's like a river that's carrying both food and waste. It carries food from the stomach and intestines and the liver out to all parts of the body. Then it picks up the waste products. It picks up the carbon dioxide and carries it to the lungs, where it's breathed out. It picks up other waste products: urea, uric acid, creatinine, and other waste products and carries them to the kidneys, where they are eliminated in the urine.

Let us think for a moment. Carbon Dioxide is breathed out every moment. Where is it before it is breathed out? It's in the blood. Where was it before it was in the blood? Out there. Now this urea and uric acid which is excreted in the urine; where was it before it was excreted by the kidneys? In the blood. Where was it before then? Out in the tissues. You can see then that when an animal is killed and the blood is in there, all those waste products that would have been in the kidneys in a few minutes if life had continued are in the blood and the tissues. That is the thing that people eat and seem to enjoy—all those waste products. In fact, those extractives, those waste products, are some the thing that gives meat its distinct flavor.

If those who eat meat, and try to quote the Bible as giving permission to eat meat, would eat meat as the Bible permitted it, seeing to it that there was no blood left in it, there wouldn't be very much meat eaten, friends. I think that's one of the things that God had in mind when He told them to see that that blood was all drained away. There would not be near the tendency to fill up with meat were it not for these waste products which give meat its distinctive flavor. Those burden the body. In other words, the man who's a meat-eater, his kidneys have to work double. They have to take care of his own waste and the animal's waste.

What a thought! A man's kidneys working for the cow or pig, carrying out the tissue wastes. I think that thought, when it is considered, will help people to realize why God said, "No blood, no blood."

Daniel knew this. He got down to Babylon, and as he looked over the table, he said to himself, "No, I am not going to drink the king's wine, and I am not going to eat the king's meat." He connected the two in his thinking. Although only 18, he had been taught of God. He knew what the original diet given to Adam was. He knew what the permission given to Noah was. He wanted the best diet. He got it. There in a heathen country, a slave, he got the best diet because he was determined and anxious about it. He looked upon the king's table not as an opportunity for self-indulgence but as a test of his principles. I want to read you something interesting here from the book *Temperance*:

"It is unnatural to have a craving for flesh meat. It was not thus in the beginning. The appetite for meat has been made and educated by man. Our Creator has furnished us in vegetables, fruits, and grains all the elements necessary to health and strength. Flesh meats composed no part of the food of Adam and Eve before their fall. If fruits, vegetables, and grains are not sufficient to meet the wants of man, then the Creator made a mistake in providing for Adam" *Temperance*, page 160.

Isn't that a good way to answer that? Now watch. You remember that when God led the children of Israel out of Egypt, He was getting them ready for Canaan. We are getting ready for the heavenly Canaan as they were getting ready for the earthly Canaan. Did God make some reforms in their diet program? Did He change what they were used to in Egypt? What kind of program did He give them? It was a simple program. What was most of their diet out there in the wilderness? Manna. Where did that come from? Heaven. Was it a vegetarian program? Yes.

Why did God do that? Did He do it because there was no way to provide flesh for them? Did He prove He could provide flesh for them? Yes. How did He prove that? He sent quail. When they murmured—well, first He did it without their murmuring just to show them that He could give them flesh. The first time He gave them manna, He gave them flesh too. To prove to them that He could give them one just as easily as He could the other. He quit sending quail and gave them just what? Manna. What happened by and by? What'd they do? They murmured and complained. Finally, God gave them what again? Quail. What happened? They got sick, and many died. For 40 years, from time to time, there was murmuring and complaint.

Just as modern Israel, many have not appreciated the glorious program of health reform and diet that God has given His people. Some did, and some do today.

Now, I want you to see what this has to do with temperance:

“God did not withhold meat from the Hebrews in the wilderness simply to show His authority, but for their good that they might preserve physical and moral strength. He knew that the use of animal food strengthens the animal passions and enfeebles the intellect. He knew that the gratification of the appetites of the Hebrews for flesh meat would weaken their moral powers, and induce such an irritable disposition that the vast army would become insubordinate; that they would lose the high sense of their moral obligations, and refuse to be controlled by the wise laws of Jehovah” *Ibid.*

Think of it. Satan knew this. He knew that if that *great* group of two million people would start eating flesh, it would make them, what? Rebellious and insubordinate.

“Violence and rebellion would exist among them making it impossible for them to be a pure and happy people in the land of Canaan” *Ibid.*

Oh, Satan knew that. He was continually suggesting to them, “Oh, think what a good time you used to have down in Egypt.”

Yet, what were they in Egypt? Slaves. Slaves in body to the Egyptians, and slaves to their appetites. Yes. But they remembered it with greedy interest. They said,

“We sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the *ful*” Exodus 16:3.

In other words: “we had *what* we wanted, and we had *all* we wanted. We would rather be slaves in Egypt and have what we want to eat. Then be free men out here feeding on the manna of heaven.”

Think of it. Are there people like that today? Oh, the world is full of them., friends, the world is full of them! There is many a man and woman who will miss Heaven rather than give up tobacco. Miss Heaven rather than give up whiskey or beer. Miss Heaven rather than give up tea and coffee, which creates the appetite for tobacco and alcohol. And there is many a person who is wedded to these articles of diet that stimulate the blood—irritate and fever the blood, and through it the body and the mind.

God is calling His people to strict temperance. God is calling His people to a simple diet which will tend to make more gentle and quiet and peaceful the disposition, instead of restless and irritated.

God knew what was best for the children of Israel. Does He know what’s best for us today? I thank God, He does.

Well, this I say is temperance Sabbath. I trust that God will bless us with an understanding of these great principles of temperance. Let us remember that it includes not merely what we eat, but when we eat and how much, and the *reason*. That's the great thing that I want you to see. Intemperance begins when we start down the road of self-pleasing on any subject. Temperance has its root in love. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, and so forth on down to temperance. Love is the great *all*-embracing attribute. Temperance is one of the manifestations of love. If we really love God, we will want to please Him. If we really love others, we will want to preserve our energies in the best condition that we may do service for God and humanity.

So selfishness on one hand and love on the other stand revealed as the underlying things in this matter of intemperance and temperance.

It was at the cross that love and selfishness stood face to face. You remember that it was on the cross that Jesus gave the supreme exhibition of love and self-control. And do you remember that right there on the cross, a most wonderful example of strict temperance was given? As they were nailing Jesus to the cross, they offered Him a stupefying potion which was given to criminals as they were nailed to the cross. But Jesus, it says, refused that. He would allow nothing to becloud His mind. He wanted His mind to be clear, that He might not be overcome by any of Satan's temptations. That was supreme self-control, wasn't it, friends?

On the other hand, we think of the terrible cruelty that was manifested there by Satan and his angels and by human beings. And we see selfishness gone to seed.

May we bow our heads?

Dear Savior, at Thy cross, we would view love and selfishness, self-sacrificing interest in others and self-indulgence. We pray that Thou would help us to so view these two great opposites that we shall be led to embrace one and flee from the other. Solemnize our hearts, and teach us the joy of loving self-denial. May we in this service have our hearts blessed with the determination to be like Jesus rather than like Satan; to be like Paul rather than like Nero; to be like Daniel rather than like the indulgent Israelites. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

[Elder Frazee makes some closing comments during a testimony service and offers another closing prayer.]

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