



by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

The New Testament frequently refers to the virtue of “self-control.”

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.” (Titus 2:11)

The word that is translated *self-control* is the Greek word *sophron*. A *sophron* state of mind is what will enable us to live a life that is self-controlled in our behavior, but it starts with a mindset, a *sound mind*. It’s a *sophron* state of mind that enables us to curb our fleshly desires. A *sophron* state of mind will result in our practicing self-control in every area of our lives—our tongue, our behavior, our habits.

If we don’t have a *sophron* mind, a sound mind, a self-controlled mind, then eventually we’ll find ourselves saying things we thought we would never say, acting in ways we thought we would never act.

According to Scripture, being *sophron* is the fruit of being rooted in sound doctrine (e.g., Titus 2:1–4). First, we have to think correctly about God’s Word: who He is, what the gospel is, what it looks like, and how it works. If we have sound doctrine, that will result in sound thinking and sound living.

One Bible dictionary says about the word *sophron*:

"This is a person that has developed the ability to govern or discipline himself, his mind, his passions, his affections, and his behavior."

The following characteristics illustrate the difference between a woman who is *sophron* and a woman who does not exhibit sound thinking. Take time to prayerfully consider these qualities and ask the Lord to show you where you need more of a *sophron* mind.

A woman who *does not* have sound thinking:

- is impulsive
- lacks discretion
- follows worldly philosophies
- is driven by her flesh
- lacks follow-through
- is self-centered
- is discontented
- has emotions controlled by circumstances
- seeks to escape from pressure and problems
- is easily provoked
- falls apart in a crisis
- easily loses hope
- says whatever she thinks without thinking first
- is highly opinionated
- speaks roughly with profane or crass talk
- is overly concerned about what other people think
- has unpredictable behavior
- is morally careless
- procrastinates
- is given to extremes
- is a pleasure seeker
- is easily distracted
- yields easily to temptation
- struggles to develop consistent life disciplines
- enjoys mindless entertainment
- looks for the easy way out
- thinks about the short-term rather than the long-term
- is demanding
- fritters away time
- makes decisions based on what is easiest

A woman who *does* have sound thinking:

- is restrained in:
 - her thoughts
 - her tongue
 - her eating
 - her spending
 - her reactions
- is calm under pressure
- is purposeful in the use of her time
- is a good steward
- is morally chaste
- has a well-ordered life
- show good judgment
- doesn't "lose it" under pressure
- responds in faith versus fear
- guards her heart and mind
- evaluates what she reads or hears in light of Scripture
- is mentally disciplined
- resists temptation
- shows delayed gratification
- demonstrates others-centered living
- is diligent and faithful in her responsibilities
- is intentional
- is modest in dress and behavior
- hopes in God
- gives thanks in all things
- makes wise, biblical decisions
- prays
- demonstrates the Spirit controlling her flesh