Self-control
We have now come to that third triad, (faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) of virtues listed in the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit, and here we find self-control. Self-control is similar to those virtues we have already looked at in the fact that it is both an attribute of God and also a fruit of the Spirit within us.

Galatians 5:22-23 - 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. NASB

Self-control is that self-discipline or self-restraint which is temperate under temptation and emotional duress or excitement (Acts 24:25, 1 Cor 7:5, 9:25-27, 2 Pet 1:6). It is often translated as temperance, meaning restraint in regard to one’s emotions and indulgences beyond moderation. It is seen as an important virtue in both Old and New Testaments.

Proverbs 25:28 - 28 Like a city that is broken into and without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit. NASB

Proverbs 16:32 - 32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty. And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city. NASB

2 Peter 1:5-7 - 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. NASB

In fact, Paul related self-control to the repentance from sin required in a faithful response to the Gospel.

Acts 24:25 - 25 And as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, “Go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you.” NASB

Paul was telling Felix that he must control his desires and passions in order to please God, and not to sinfully indulge being moderation. He needed to repent of that kind of lifestyle in order to live rightly before God. And so Paul called Him to the repentance which is self-control. See in this the essential virtue of self-control is required to live and walk in repentance. As an attribute of God self-control is a marvelous virtue. God always has control of His emotions and faculties regardless of things that happen in the world. Since God is omnipotent and all-wise, He is ever and always composed and at peace, unruffled and never stirred to an uncontrolled response. He is an immovable Rock in a turbulent world so that Scripture says we can put our trust in God who is a Rock and a refuge.

Psalm 62:2 - 2 He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken. NASB

Psalm 18:2 - 2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. NASB

Isaiah 26:3-4 - 3 "The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in Thee. 4 "Trust in the Lord forever, For in God the Lord, we have an everlasting Rock. NASB

Being the self-existent Creator of all things, God is not moved to improper passions for things around Him, rather everything has been created to manifest the glory and excellence of His own nature as God. He is never moved by passions that are non-virtuous or evil. God’s passions ever and always consistently righteous and He is always moved and guided by virtue because that is His very nature. Therefore He is always under control of everything in His world, and guiding it according to the counsel of His own will. Therefore, we can put our faith and trust in God to find peace in the turbulence of the world around us, and comfort when we lack, for God promises to meet all of our needs. Surely those who trust in the Lord will not be shaken, or moved to uncontrollable emotions, and we can only find our contentment in God.
alone. We have been created with the capacity to enjoy the world around us and in that enjoyment to glorify God and give Him thanks.

1 Timothy 4:4-5 - 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; 5 for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. NASB

Therefore we must be careful not to derive our ultimate satisfaction and contentment from things in the world, for these will only leave us empty. Only God can fill that powerful longing for satisfaction that He has placed in the human heart, and to search for the fulfillment of our passions and desires apart from God is no less than sinful idolatry. Therefore, we are called to enjoy the world around us, being careful to exercise self-control, and to govern ourselves in a way that is proper and godly. Self-control is exercised to restrain oneself from indulging beyond a reasonable level in regard to eating and drinking, and to govern oneself in regard to one words and actions in the course of everyday life. Being a fruit of the Holy Spirit, self-control is a God given gift that helps us to live in a tempered and governed way that honors God in our common everyday relation to people and the desires and passions that we have in relation to the world around us. Self-control is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 1:7 - 7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. NASB

The Christian does not let his or her passions and desires run wild and headlong into sin, but governs themselves in a way that glorifies God, exercising restraint so as not to indulge to point of sin. Unlike the heathen world around us who indulge their desires and passions to the point of sinful excess, Christians are to exercise self-control. Self-control does NOT act in licentiousness, sensuality, self-indulgence, and it is NOT unruly, lawless, improper, audacious or wild. Rather it lives under the control and domination of the Holy Spirit. When one pursues their sexual desires beyond restraint, it becomes lustful thoughts. When one pursues their desire for food beyond reasonable restraint it becomes gluttony, and when one pursues their passion for alcohol beyond reasonable enjoyment it becomes drunkenness at the point when they lose any degree of self-control. If someone does not restrain their anger, it becomes an outburst, or their excitement in regard to things pleasing to the senses, it can result in the sinful and immoderate treatment of others around them, or improper expressions of emotion. Self-control is a key virtue in the Christian life that displays a humble trust in God in relation to people and things around us. Self-control can often be seen by contrast in the things that the Apostles warned us against. Rather than be covetous lovers of money and things in the material world around us we are to live content with what we have. The Christian must be careful not to burn with passion for certain kinds of things in the world beyond our reach or not rightfully ours.

Hebrews 13:5 - 5 Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," NASB

Rather than reviling when curbed by a parent, boss or another authority, we live in submission to God given authority. Rather than live in vengeance and un-forgiveness toward others who have offended us, we are to forgive and be reconciled. Rather than run off in immoderate indulgence in the world of materialism around us, we are to be contented with adequate means.

2 Timothy 3:1-4 - 3 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; NASB

See in these things how we glorify God in the Christian virtue which is self-control.

1 Corinthians 9:25-27 - 25 And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified. NASB