

## ***Who is in Control?***

If we look at all the trouble around us in the world, and analyze what is at the core of it all, we quickly come to one basic cause. A desire to control. All the wars, the political & financial problems, all the foreign problems and all the domestic problems are caused by individuals trying to control other individuals, things or circumstances.

Have you noticed whenever someone is given or gets power they inevitably use that power to control others, no matter how good their original intentions were? Look at all the dictators we have ever had in the world. (And those who are not dictators aren't much better.) What was usually the premise on which they got into power? Were they not taking away control from someone else so the people could be FREE? They usually became as controlling, or even more so, themselves. This control is ultimately driven by selfishness, but the problem manifests itself in the desire to control others.

How can we overcome the problem of trying to control? Only in God do we find the answer. No one else has a solution. Do we as human beings have the right to control one another? No. God has never given us the right to control. God is the only one who has the right to control. The interesting thing about God is that even though He has the right to control, since He is our creator and sustainer, He refuses to do so without our consent.

God has given us the power of choice and He will never control us without our giving Him permission to do so. He also allows us to change our minds at any time as to who we want in control.

On the other hand we have Satan. He will take control of everything he can by whatever means he can. He will never wait for our consent. He is the one who is actually in control of us when we try to control. That is the driving force behind him. He wants to be in control of everything and whatever he can't control he does his best to destroy. And when we allow him to control us we respond in the same way he does.

Think about it, isn't this what has been happening all down through history from the first day that man decided to listen to Satan? Since Lucifer's fall, he has done his utmost to control everything and everyone. He couldn't control Abel so he used his brother Cain, who allowed himself to be controlled by Satan, to kill Abel. (Genesis 4:1-12) King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon found that he was unable to control Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego so he decided to destroy them, but couldn't because they had given the control of their lives to God, and God chose to protect them. (Daniel 3:1-30) Daniel had a similar experience with the presidents and princes of the Medes and Persians. They found that they were unable to control him so they devised a way in which they thought that they could destroy him. Daniel had also given control of his life to God, and it was the presidents and princes who ended up being destroyed. (Daniel 6:1-28)

Are we who profess Christianity immune to this? Do we occasionally try to control? Yes, and it gets us into trouble, too! Only God has the right to control. The only right we have is to choose who will control us, not who we will control. If we are not happy with what someone is doing, we are to pray that God will work with the individual and in His time and way change the situation. We can then encourage that person to do what is right, but we are never to try to control him or the situation ourselves. Whenever we try to control a situation ourselves, all we do is cause rebellion and more problems.

Let's look at some of the problems we run into when we try to control others.

If you try to control someone's behavior what does that demand of you?

1. You can never allow that person out of your sight. If you do, they may do something you don't want them to do while you are absent.
2. You have to know everything they are going to say, or they may say something you don't want them to say. This means that you have to be able to read their thoughts. This is impossible. When it comes down to it, we are only fooling ourselves if we think we can control others anyway, so why even try.

You may say, "but what about our children? Aren't we to control them?" Yes and No. We are to control them, for a short time. But at the same time we are to be controlled by God's Spirit ourselves, or we will only produce

rebellion in them. As soon as a child is able to comprehend who God is, we are to teach them that they are ultimately responsible to God, not us, for their actions, since there is no way we can keep track of everything they do anyway. And most importantly, it is the thoughts and feelings they need to ask God to control. We are to guide them, teach them, and discipline them for the wrongs they commit, as we become aware of them, educating them along the way. Most importantly, though, the godly parent will turn them over to the control of God. It is true, it seems easier to legislate than to educate, but it is impossible for us to keep track of everything our children do, to say nothing about what they are thinking.

This brings me to a story that I once heard. A private in the army had no use for his superior officer and one day he went up to him and asked him if he would get into trouble if he were to call him an SOB. The officer said, "yes, I could have you court-martialed." Then the private asked him if he could get into trouble for thinking that he was an SOB. The officer then said, "we have no jurisdiction or control over what one thinks. How can we? We can't read minds." Then the private faced the officer and said, "I 'think' you are an SOB" and walked away. I apologize for the language, but it definitely illustrates the point. Ultimately, we can't control anyone. Educating may take longer but the results will also last longer. Eternally!

It is the thoughts and feelings combined that make up the moral character, and it is only character that we can take to heaven. So if we can't control someone's thoughts and feelings, can we, in reality, ever control them? The only one who can control thoughts and feelings is God or Satan. Is God able to see everything we do? Is He able to read our thoughts and feelings? Who is going to be the judge as to whether or not we are worthy of heaven? God. Would it do any good for us to go to God and plead the case of anyone? No. Do we and our children understand this? If we don't, we'll find our children doing whatever Satan tempts them to do as soon as they are out of our control. This is very evident in the lives of children as well as adults today, even those who have gone to "good Christian schools". Controlling a young person or anyone else, doesn't make them a good person, even though they may conform to the rules while they are being controlled. As soon as they are no longer being controlled by their parents or teachers they are like a ship without a rudder. Just listen to the daily news. This world is **out of control**, because **man** is trying to **be in control**.

Who is in control? Most people would say, "I AM!" Anyone who thinks that he is in control is actually out of control. They are instead being controlled by Satan. Only those who have turned the control of their lives over to God are truly in control. But you say, "how can that be?" If God is in control how can I be in control? Because you have the power of choice, and God will never take control of you without your permission, so you still have the ultimate control. You are not controlled by God except as you give control to God. You may say, "if I don't give God control, am I not in control?" No! There are only two masters in this world, and one of them is, not you. They are God and Satan. Either you allow God to control you, or Satan will control you. Satan will do everything in his power to take away your free choice. You do what he wants or he will do everything he can to destroy you. He will even physically control you even if it is against your will.

The highest form of control is when we say, If you really love me you will do.... when we know very well that they don't want to do it. When a husband or wife does this to their spouse it is devastating to their relationship. When a young man does it to his girlfriend it is devastating to their relationship. Where can one turn when confronted with this kind of control? If you refuse to do what the other individual wants, you are saying that you don't love them, ending the relationship. If you do what they are demanding, even though you don't want to, it will cause resentment and all the damaging feelings that come along with it, ending the relationship.

Only God has the right to demand this of us. Why? He created us and Jesus bought us with His life. He is the ruler of the universe and He will never ask us to do anything that is not for our best. Also when He asks us to prove our love for Him by doing what He asks us to do He never forces us. He still gives us freedom not to choose Him. But it does destroy our relationship with Him, though it is not God who ends the relationship, it is us.

**"The Spirit of God should have perfect control of us, influencing us in all our actions.** If we have a right hold on Heaven, a right hold of the power that is from above, we shall feel the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God upon our hearts." 2T 356

When we allow God to control us, He fills us with His **omnipotent power**. “As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings.” COL.333. Isn’t that incredible!? Then anything He asks us to do He will give us all the power we need to do it. It is always us that is doing it, but we will be doing it through His power. God never forces anyone to do anything. If we choose not to carry out, through His power, what he asks us to do, it won’t get done. “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” John 8:36 To turn the control of our lives over to God is the ultimate freedom!

“It is only when brought under full control of the Spirit of God that the talents of an individual are rendered useful to the fullest extent.” 4T 427

David also understood this concept. “My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word. I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.” Psalms 119 25-27 “Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. Establish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.” Psalms 119:33-40

“The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place. The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end.” DA 324

“He who fully purposes in his heart to do the will of God, at whatever self-denial or self-sacrifice, will certainly know the truth through his own experience. Those who will obey God's commandments, and not deviate from the precepts of Heaven, will enter into life. To will to do the will of God, is to yield the whole mind and affections to the control of God. Such a one will know of the doctrine, not be in questioning and doubt, not be halting between two opinions; for he will be willing to submit all to God, realizing that he has purchased all. It is when we give ourselves to Christ, to do his will, that we realize the truth of the saying of David, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." It is then that reason and conscience are fully in harmony with the will of God, and there is no collision between the truth of God and the soul.” RH.1896-07-07

“Any man, be he minister or layman, who seeks to compel or control the reason of any other man, becomes an agent of Satan, to do his work, and in the sight of the heavenly universe he bears the mark of Cain.” MS 29, 1911. 1BC 1087.3

## Who is in Control of Your Life?

I pray that if God isn't, through His Spirit, that you'll give Him permission to be in control right now. Ask Him to give you the desire and strength to stay controlled by Him and keep from controlling others. You will need to give control back to God every time Satan regains control of you through his temptations. Satan will constantly try to regain control of you. But the more we allow God through the Holy Spirit to be in control, the easier it will be to let Him remain in control. This is the work of a lifetime. I look forward to Christ's return when He'll free us, eternally, from the terrible power of Satan, forever!

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:" Phil. 2:5

"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." John 5:30

"Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." John 8:28

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5

Jesus was continually under the control of God. He did only what His Father told him to, and then, only through the Father's power. In this same way, we are to do God's will. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:" 1 Peter 2:21

"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." What kind of fruit? The kind of fruit that is produced when God abides in me, the fruit of the Spirit. Let's read Galatians 5:22, 23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Whose fruit are they? They are the fruit of the Spirit. We can't produce them, it is He that produces them in us. In fact, the only way we can ever have the fruit of the Spirit is to completely turn the control of our lives over to the Spirit and allow Him to abide in us. Then He will produce them in us. We need to remember we are powerless to produce them ourselves, they can only be present in our life if He is abiding in us and controlling us. When God's seed (Holy Spirit) is in you, you can then live the kind of life that John described in 1 John 3: 3-11.

"God proves His people in this world. This is the fitting-up place to appear in His presence. Here, in this world, **in these last days, persons will show what power affects their hearts and controls their actions.**" 1T 188

"In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Rom. 14:12, 5. In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven do not come to the earth to rule, and to exact homage, but as messengers of mercy, to co-operate with men in uplifting humanity." DA 550

May our goal be to let Christ control us fully and pray that others see the Holy Spirit's fruit in our lives.

**"To will to do the will of God is to yield the whole mind and affections to the control of God."**

RH 1896-07-07