



Control # 3

Hello everyone. Welcome to “Notes from the Presence.” Today is the third article on the subject of control and we will continue on with the global and political arena. This sphere includes countries, governments, ethnic groups, and the political systems of our world; from the smallest civil positions to the highest ranking positions on earth. We will then turn our thoughts to the teachings of Jesus and Paul on the notion of control and leadership.

Have you ever noticed how countries try to control other countries? We need look no further to find the principal reason for war in our world. Ethnic groups try to control other ethnic groups, governments try to dominate other governments, and political parties try to gain control over the thinking of entire populations of people. Under the Biblical model, governments were never instituted as a means of control. They were instituted for the safety of the citizens and also to provide an environment where people could be released into freedom and destiny; however, our world is infinitely obsessed with control. In the political arena of our world, countless millions have been oppressed, imprisoned, tortured, sent to war, ethnically cleansed, and slaughtered due to one sovereignly governed group of people trying to take dominion over another. Most of the time, they are trying to control the way their fellow beings on this planet think. We are blinded by the ideal that our thought patterns are the only viable ones and we try to force others to think like we do. This leads to conflict, fighting, bloodshed, and devastation. It has also led to severe poverty in many places on this planet, with many innocent people paying the price for those who want to dominate and control others.

At this time, I would like to mention one additional area of fallout. I don't know quite where it fits in the scenarios I am describing; however, because there is such worldwide awareness right now of such things as "sex trafficking," I will place this sphere of control under our global category. Most sexual issues are rooted in nothing other than

control. Here I am referring to issues of prostitution, rape, incest, and almost any other destructive behavior surrounding human sexuality.

All of these things have gained entrance into our world because we are trying to control one another. Once again, let me stress, we were never given dominion over our fellow human beings on this planet. When we try to dominate other people, destruction, devastation, and dysfunction ensues.

If there is one common thread in all the things we have been talking about for the past weeks, it is the element of "leadership." You see, in order for a world as populated and diverse as ours to work, there must be a comprehensive system of leadership in place. In fact, if there were only two people on this planet, it would still require some sort of leadership structure. However, we get into trouble when we start to inject our God given dominion mandate into this sphere. In other words, we use our leadership mantle as a platform to dominate and control those around or under us. I would like to point out one thing. The ultimate hater and deceiver of our human race, Satan himself, is nothing more than a selfish and fiendish control freak. The poetic statement, "I would rather be the king of hell than a servant in paradise" fits him to a T.

Biblical leadership, on the other hand, has nothing to do with trying to control those around us. Instead, it is all about being a servant. Jesus makes some poignant statements in this regard.

Matthew 20:25-28 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Jesus was the ultimate leader. He also exercised stunning authority; however, nowhere do we see Him trying to dominate other human beings. Instead, He modeled for us a lifestyle that released others into their destiny. He was never threatened or intimidated by thought that was contrary to His. In fact, one time He told His disciples to leave a group of people alone that were casting out demons in His name without adhering to His doctrines by saying, "for he who is not against us is on our side." (Luke 9:50) We have much to learn from these teachings of our Master. The apostle Paul also mirrored this sentiment.

Philippians 1:15-18 Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: the former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing

to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

Notice the lack of "control talk" in these words. In order to make a bold statement like this, the now aged and imprisoned apostle must have had full confidence in the ability of the gospel to change lives regardless of its origins. He also must have had his self-esteem deeply rooted and grounded in a very big God! This is a God who is more than capable of taking care of thought patterns that run contrary to those we so cherish. Jesus was also never threatened by questions that seemed unrealistic. When James and John asked Him if they could sit on His right and left side, He didn't deride them. He instead answered them in such a way that they were still able to maintain their dignity and self-worth. (Matthew 20:20-23) Actually, it has always amazed me how these two disciples felt comfortable enough to ask such a question of the Son of God. It speaks to me of an environment so devoid of control that the disciples were released to dream up even the most ludicrous of ideas and present them to Jesus without fear.

Servant leadership is a leadership style completely outside the realm of control. Jesus states that greatness is not found in control and lording it over someone, but in serving; a profound thought that will take a thousand lifetimes for us to grasp. We are infinitely obsessed with the notion of controlling others around us, however, the Kingdom of God always works to the opposite of the world. I personally, will never ask someone whom I have been given care over to do anything I am not willing to do. I will either "roll up my sleeves," or "get on my knees" if need be, and do it right alongside them. I maintain that we never graduate beyond this reality no matter how grand we think our position is.

In our next article, we will continue to talk about Kingdom servant leadership and how it differs from the model we are so used to seeing in the world.

Thanks for reading. Jesus is real – and His mercy endures forever!