



#### Control # 4

Hello everyone. Welcome to “Notes from the Presence.” Today we are going to continue talking about Jesus and how He modelled a lifestyle of servant leadership with a complete lack of control. We will then talk a bit about self-control.

I recently attended a function where there was a circle of church leaders talking about how they were going to teach a group of young interns how to become servants. They were discussing the fact that when they were young, their leaders had made them clean toilets and do other humbling tasks around the church. They then began to laugh, stating how glad they were that those days were in the distant past for them. To these leaders, this was a "phase" or a "rite of passage" they had to pass through in order for them to get where they were today. They were now going to take their interns and put them through the same humbling initiation process they had been through when they were young. As I listened, my heart became broken and a poignant thought came to mind: "It's not about how many toilets you have cleaned in the past, it is about how many toilets you have cleaned lately." At the pinnacle of His earthly ministry, just hours before He was glorified on the Cross; Jesus took a basin of water and a towel, modelled what it was like to be a servant leader, and washed His disciples dusty, crusty, corn ridden feet. I needn't remind you, this was not a room full of male "foot models." These were men's men, fishermen, hard workers. These were guys that spent *hours* each day walking from place to place in sandals as their primary mode of transportation. In that day and age, it was a job akin to cleaning the dirtiest of toilets. This mindset as taught by Jesus keeps us rooted and grounded in love rather than control.

Here is a list of words and phrases that, in my estimation, are the earmark of Kingdom servant leadership - a leadership style far above and beyond the grip of exercising control over other people: protection, working alongside, mentoring without the agenda of future benefit, releasing, calling out destiny, being un-threatened by (and open to) thought that is different from our own, celebrating diversity with more than just words,

striving to bring others up to our level, not reacting with insecurity when these same persons surpass our level, doing menial and humbling tasks in secret rather than to be noticed, rest, trust, and maintaining an environment where people are free to present the most ludicrous of dreams with no fear of retribution.

To end today's article, I would like to discuss one person it is actually recommended we do gain control over.

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **self-control**. Against such there is no law.* (emphasis mine)

1 Peter 1:5-7 *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge **self-control**, to **self-control** perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.* (1 Peter 1:5-7 emphasis mine)

Here we can see that there is someone we need to get control of. It is none other than our self. This scenario reminds me of Jesus' exhortation to not judge others.

Matthew 7:1-2 *Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.*

We as humans need to spend a lot more time learning the art of self-control, and forget the notion of trying to control others. The subject of self-control is a vast one; spanning many theological paths of thought. However, I would like to say that there are two ways you can learn self-control. The first is through human effort and discipline. This is a lifelong journey of ups and downs, victory and defeat, sorrow, and self-abasement. If you try to learn self-control by doing it on your own strength, it will result in you leading a very unhappy life. You will never quite measure up, and the struggle will be endless. There are certain key things that each person struggles to gain control over in his or her life. To one person it might be a struggle to gain control over an anger problem; to another, it might represent a struggle to gain control over a sexual addiction of some kind. In either case, we are wise to not try to gain control over these issues through self-discipline or turning our eyes on our self. Thankfully, there is a second way to gain control over things that seem out of control in our lives. Through the help of the Spirit of God we have been given methods of transformation that are simply marvellous. They include such things as worship, communion with God, and beholding His glory as we look into the mirror of our heart. This is a subject far too vast to grasp in a few short paragraphs. In my book, "[The Grace Tree](#)," I spent an entire chapter discussing the

secrets to grace transformation. Needless to say, the key lies in turning our eyes on Jesus, and yielding to an effortless "grace transformation."

In our next article, we will begin to talk about the notion that God wants to control us. We are going to discuss such thoughts as His "will" among other things.

Thanks for reading. Jesus is real and He is the ultimate servant leader.