



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment

September 12, 2021 Lesson 9

As we continue our series today with the **"7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment"** we will be focusing primarily on Control, or lack thereof!. You will remember from last week, we covered Not recognizing and using Your God Given Spiritual Gifts.

Each of these characteristics can and will totally destroy your Christian Spirit and God's ability to work through you for a Victorious, Peaceful and Content Christian Life:

1. Perfectionism
2. Comparisons
3. Pride
4. Selfishness (Your relationship with God and what serves as its basis)
5. Competiveness With Wrongly Placed Motives
6. Not Recognizing and Using Your God Given Spiritual Gifts
7. **Control**

As we step through each of these deadly characteristics to our Spiritual conditions, we need to remind ourselves that this whole series is about each of us **Freeing our Heart, Mind, Body and Soul!**

A. Introduction to Control and Our Ability to Determine

Most times, being a child of God and follower of Jesus is hard. Handing over burdens, laying them down at the feet of the cross, and fully putting trust in the Lord during times of uncertainty can be very difficult.

Listen to this very carefully and see if this sounds like you or in your talk with God:

I know I am an admitted control freak. It is very unnerving for me to admit to anyone or my God that I cannot control or have answers for seemingly everything in my life. I simply can't stand uncertainty or probability, it make me very nervous or anxious! I need to have a plan, I need each step defined, I need to be checking the boxes as I go, I need to be in control all along the way! I just cannot deal with ambiguity, it creates a lot of stress that I have trouble dealing with. My life has to be under control and in no way seeming to be spiraling without direction, even as I am trying hard to pursue the path of my God for my life. Sometimes I find myself like Jacob, arguing and wrestling with the Lord. I just want and need to know the master plan! I want to understand why certain stages of life hurt so much, or why I didn't get a "yes" on what I really wanted, I just need to know! How am I supposed to control this if I do not know?

If we are feeling out of place, burdened, uncertain about our future, unsure about where to turn, then God has us exactly where He wants. You are not out of place, because walking with the Lord means that you are always in place to walking towards where the Lord hopes you'll be. He is near to you. The author of life and creator of the universe is near, He loves you, and He hears you.

As control freaks, hopefully we have spent a lot of time in prayer and scripture about God's will for our life. The Lord's faithfulness in His promises for the goodness He desires for my future and my life will astound you if we only listen and follow instead of trying to always lead our self trying to be in control.

B. Bible Scriptures for the Control Freak

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

- When control is given up to God, only good things will come to us. Even when something seems devastating, it will come together for good.

Jeremiah 29:11 - *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

- The Lord's plans for each of us are filled with goodness, happiness, and hope.
- Under His will and dominion, nothing is impossible. Goodness, hope, and joy will come to those who believe in Him.

Hebrews 10:36 - *You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.*

- Perseverance can seem impossible in the face of uncertainty. But God's promises are bold, and they are beautiful. Enduring this life of trials and persevering through seasons of difficulty will result in the greatest reward of all: abundant and everlasting life, alongside our creator.

Joshua 1:9 - *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

- God is always by our side and He promises to never leave our side. We have no reason to be afraid of what may come because He is always with us.

Matthew 6:34 - *Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

- God sees no need for us to worry about what will happen the next day because He already knows what's going to happen. He will provide for us as we need it, so we only need to live for today.

Isaiah 41:10 - *Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

- God promises to help us in times of good and in times of bad. He will hold us up because we are devoid of the power to hold ourselves up.
- We are worrisome creatures by nature, but Jesus wants us to be strengthened, upheld, uplifted, and sustained through Him alone. When we cannot stand, He will be the strength. When we cannot walk, He will carry us. Regardless of the desert you're walking through or the storm you're eyeing down, He is always behind you. He hems you in, behind and before

Psalms 115:3 - *Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.*

- And He is pleased when He is loving His children. God is in control of all things in heaven and on earth, and He makes sure to do what is best for us.

Ephesians 1:11 - *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.*

- All aspects of our lives have been planned out piece by piece, all according to the Lord's will, His perfect plan. It all leads to our glorification in Heaven, which we inherited when Christ sacrificed Himself on the Cross.

Philippians 4:6 - *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

- Trying to control everything clearly gets stressful after a while, but if we ask God to take control and release us from our anxieties, He will answer.

Jeremiah 32:27 - *Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?*

- There is nothing the Lord cannot handle.

Psalms 22:4 - *In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.*

- The Bible is full of accounts in which the Lord delivered His people from evil out of pure love. What leads you to believe you don't deserve the same? Because you do.

Proverbs 25:28 - *A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.*

Proverbs 16:9 - *The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.*

- Although we can make plans and create our "perfect" life scenarios, the Lord is ultimately holding the reins. His answers and His ways, however, are greater than anything we could ever fathom. Sometimes it simply takes patience to watch His works and goodness take root.

1 Corinthians 9:25 - *Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.*

1 Corinthians 9:27 - *But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

Matthew 6:34 - *Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

Isaiah 55:8-11 - *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*

- His ways are forever higher, greater, and stronger than ours. To fathom a world where His plans are the reality for our lives means giving it all over to Him...the good, the bad, and the ugly, along with every in-between. He will make beauty from the ashes.

Proverbs 21:1 - *The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.*

Proverbs 19:21 - *Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.*

Summary Comments

If we really honest with ourselves, we firmly believe that we are in charge of our life. If we could just do everything our way, then everything would go right! God's scriptures clearly show who is really in control and in the grand scheme of things how little we actually control. We had a whole series several years ago that I taught titled "Personal Choice Within God's Sovereignty", so we do have decisions and choices to make in our lives with consequences and outcomes. No one is denying that in this series, but when we allow ourselves to be overcome or dominated by this "drive to control", it will overtake and begin to dominate our life. At that point, the reality is that while we may feel as if we are "getting a real handle and control of our life", we are really spiraling out of control as we move away from humble submission of our behavior and actions to God. This is the exact situation we are trying to prevent. Self-inflicted stress, worry and concern all being created by us "trying to control"! Really! Who do we think we are anyway!

While it is a hard concept to understand and even harder to accept; the Lord wants us to know that His plan is a perfect one, even when it doesn't seem that way. Everything we do and live out in our life was known to

God before the beginning of time. The Lord knows all - past, present and future and He only wants the absolute best for His children. God wants us to give it all up to Him, so that He can have the glory He deserves. And that glory will radiate through you, so that others may see the happiness that is possible in Him. When we let Him have control, life will become an even more beautiful journey. All we have to do is humble ourselves, relax and serve our God.

C. Group Questions

1. What is the core issue of a control freak that drives this behavior? What is the inner condition of the heart?
2. What is it about ambiguity or uncertainty that makes control freaks get so unnerved or anxious?
3. In Proverbs 16:19, does this scripture tell us to not plan, think and execute a good well thought out plan? Does this scripture tell us that we do not have a responsibility to be a strong hard working Christian planning for the future? Then what is it really saying?
4. Read Matthew 6:35 again, since this series is about freeing our mind, body and soul to increase our relationship with God, why is this such an important truth for those that are control freaks?
5. How would Isaiah 55:8-11 make us feel better about “relaxing or releasing” our perceived control?