

Control

Control is attempting to exercise influence over circumstances, environments, events, or people to reach a preferred outcome.

Stability, order, and predictability are basic human needs. It is human nature to try to control the parts of life that feel unstable. If we can't create that sense of stability in one area of life, we may try to regain it by exerting control over something else.

A controlling person believes that he or she can manage life (and others' lives) better than anyone else—even God. Some root causes of control include misunderstanding God's nature and character, fears, anxiety, past trauma, pride, selfishness, and idolizing a personal goal or position. Less often, controlling behavior may be a result of mental health issues like obsessive-compulsive or narcissistic personality disorders (these should only be diagnosed by professionals).

The truth is that we have little long-term control over anything. We don't control when we get sick or die, whether a tornado will hit our house, if markets move up or down, when we lose a loved one, or whether the person we love will respond by loving us in return. The Bible says that we won't find peace and stability by trying to reorder the world to align with our wills, but by aligning our wills and lives with a good, all-powerful, all-knowing God. He sees us, loves us, has good plans for us, and is in control.

Biblical Insights

God is the One in control. Though we may have illusions of being in control, we are not.

- "Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightening for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses." (Psalm 135:6-7)
- "...Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might, He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding, he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him." (Daniel 2:20)

Control Assessment

If you wonder whether you struggle with control, honestly answer the following questions:

- 1 Is it hard for you to relax until things are in order at home or work?
- 2 Do you feel the need to direct or correct peers, friends, or co-workers?
- 3 Would you prefer to do an important task yourself rather than delegate it?
- 4 When a situation seems chaotic, are you the one who steps in to take charge?
- 5 Do you persistently try to get your way?
- 6 Is it very difficult for you to have a good attitude and enjoy an experience with others if plans or events don't go your way?
- 7 Would others say that you struggle to hear and respond well to constructive criticism?
- 8 Is it hard for you to see your part in a conflict?
- 9 Do you rarely admit to yourself or others when you are wrong?
- 10 Do you feel like others don't give you enough credit for your efforts?

God knows and cares about the intimate details of our lives. God created us entirely out of love and longs to know us deeply. He wants us to experience his best.

- "O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways...For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psalm 139:1-3,13)

Jesus, our example to follow, always trusted and did the Father's will regardless of circumstance, whether it was waiting to announce he was the Messiah or going to the cross to be crucified.

- "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me." (John 6:38)
- "And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name." (Philippians 2:8-9)

We will always find the greatest peace and joy in God and in living his purpose for our lives. You were created for a divine purpose, and nothing short of that will fulfill you.

- "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)
- "...I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:11-13)

You can trust God's character and plans but need Christ's strength to do his will. God's plans for our lives may not be what we planned, but they are for our good. You will need to depend on Christ to experience all that God has for you.

- "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Psalm 16:11)
- "Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand." (Proverbs 19:21)
- "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Next Steps

- If you answered yes to 4 or more of the questions in the Control Assessment, be honest with yourself about your need for healing from control. (Proverbs 28:13)
- Ask Christ to heal you (Romans 10:13). There is hope for healing in Christ.
- Explore the root cause of your struggle. Spend time in God's word and ask him to reveal what is ruling your heart and mind. (Psalm 139:23-24)
- When tempted to take control in any situation, pray. Ask God to remind you that he is in control, he is good, and he cares about you. (Proverbs 3:5-6; Romans 8:31-39)
- Find a Bible-teaching church and begin to establish relationships with healthy Christians who can help you find healing, freedom, and security through a relationship with Jesus.
- Find a safe place that is Christ-centered, like a re:generation group, to address your struggle with control and identify the underlying issues. (Galatians 6:2)

God loves you. If you haven't experienced freedom in Christ, visit regenerationrecovery.org/freedom.

Additional Resources:

- Find testimonies, articles, and other helpful resources at regenerationrecovery.org/control