

DRIPS

DEALING WITH OUR RELATIONAL IRRITATIONS: POISED TO SERVE DRIPPING #4: THE CONTROL FREAK

I. Introduction: Exercising control. Is it a good thing or a bad thing?

- A. Definition: "To exercise authority or dominating influence over, to direct, to regulate." (The American Heritage Dictionary)
- B. Feeling in control is a vital part of mental and personal health. And losing control does have a negative effect on our ability to function.
- C. Once again, the issue is when and how the control is exercised. Self control is the key. See Prov. 16:32 and 25:28.
- D. The problem for some then is: "It seems easier to be God than to love God, easier to control people than to love people." (Henri Nouwen)

II. The Top Ten Qualities of a "Control Freak"

- A. Obnoxious (From the Latin word "noxious" which means hurtful)

"Selfish persons are incapable of loving others, but they are not capable of loving themselves either." (Erich Fromm)

Biblical example: Jacob (Gen. 27)
- B. Tenacious Another word for this characteristic is STUBBORN. The control freak code: "Don't ever, ever, ever give in."

Biblical example: Paul (Acts 15:36-41)
- C. Invasive These folks have little respect for the privacy of others. They NEED to know what is going on in everyone else's life.

Biblical examples: Job's "friends" (Job 4)
- D. Obsessive They focus on one particular thing and lose sight of other issues at hand.

Biblical example: Rebekah (Gen. 27:13)
- E. Perfectionist They demand perfection of themselves and everyone around them.

Biblical example: Martha (Luke 10:40)

- F. **Critical** They believe that their criticisms will somehow make something or someone better. They can't keep their critical comments in check.
Biblical example: Job's friend Eliphaz (Job 22:5-11)
- G. **Irritable** The folks are cranky, touchy, testy, a pain to be with. They have almost no ability to "go with the flow."
Biblical example: Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. 4:2-3)
- H. **Demanding** Often to get their way, the control freak will resort to insisting and/or coercing others to do things their way.
Biblical example: Herod (Matt. 2:8)
- I. **Rigid** Think of the "Soup Nazi" on Seinfeld. The interesting thing is that the episode was based on a real-life situation!
- J. **Closeminded** These folks are not interested in discussion. Their mind is made up and there is no changing it.
Biblical example: Jonah (his attitude about the Ninevites)
"The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water and breeds reptiles of the mind."
(William Blake)

[Adapted from material found in "The Control Freak" by Les Parrott]

III. The heart of every control freak is riddled with anxiety and fear.

The solution:

- A. Spend some time and effort in order to figure out what exactly you are afraid of. (My kids won't turn out right, my husband will discover I'm not perfect...)
- B. Don't focus on the fear. Focus on positive things.

Phil. 4:8 "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

1. Ignore the past

Isa. 43:18-19 ""Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

2. Don't fuss about the future

Matt 6:34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

3. Stay in the present

Isa. 41:10 “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

C. Remember God is in control

1. He will provide whatever you need

Matt 6:26-33

2. He will protect whatever you love

Ps. 91:4 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”

IV. The antidote for being a control freak...cast your cares onto Christ.

1 Pet. 5:7 “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. “

Ps. 34:4 “I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”

Discussion Questions:

1. On a 1 to 10 (10 being an “über” control freak) where do you land on the scale? What areas of your life does it affect the most?
2. Which of the 10 qualities we listed do you struggle with most?
3. Can you identify a fear that might be driving your need to be in control? What can you do about it?
4. Do you see any of these tendencies in the lives of your children? How can you help them?