

The Love of Christ Constrains Me

Texts : II Cor. 5: 14-15 , John 15: 8-15 , I John 4: 16-21

S#1.

Introduction :

A. Have you ever been controlled by another person ?

S#2.

1. We've all had people who exercise control over us. (*Parents, teachers, employer*)
2. And, we've all experienced manipulative people who seek to control us.

B. However, some controls are good and necessary.

1. Parents must control children.
 - a. The youth must be kept safe .. especially from themselves. (**Prov.22: 15**)
 - b. Parents teach their children the concept of authority. (*teachers, police, God*)
2. Teachers must maintain control of the classroom and require respect for authority.
3. Government must exercise enough control to maintain civility in society.
 - a. Police must control crime and restrain violent people.
 - b. Control is necessary to protect the weak from the strong and from the wicked.
5. But ultimately, .. people must control their own desires and actions.

C. There are also negative kinds of controls.

1. Some people try to manipulate other people. (*users .. people are objects for use*)
2. Our government and our leaders seek ever more control over people's lives.
3. **Teenagers view all control as oppression** – need it the most & resent it most.
* Parents must know when to release control, some try to control married children.

With this lesson we are going to take a look at what controls our lives. #3.

I. There are many ways to control a person.

S#4.

A. Physical constraints are the most obvious.

S#5.

1. Historically, slaves were chained. *Galley slaves chained to oars sink w/ ship.*
2. Antisocial people are imprisoned.
- *3. Today weak people allow their desires to imprison them.
 - a. They desire things so they go into debt to obtain them.
 - b. They spend so much time pursuing things they lose relationships.
 - c. They live for pleasure and physical gratification and end up pregnant.

B. Now days, it's popular to chemically constrain behavior.**S#6.**

1. Hyperactive children are given drugs.
2. Anxiety ? Frustrated ? People attempt to use drugs to alter their unfulfilled lives.

C. Social pressure is a powerful constraint on many people.**S#7.**

1. Children learn at an early age that certain behaviors bring predictable responses.
(*Parents use praise to potty-training children*)
2. The strongest force in a teenager is the desire for acceptance by peers.
3. Social pressure affects all ages ... people instinctively want to fit in.
 - a. It's important be selective about what environment you place yourself.
(*School , work , recreation*)
 - b. Peer pressure often leads Christians to sin so we gravitate toward each other.

D. Fear is one of the oldest methods of controlling people.**S#8.**

1. Powerful motivator, but does not tend to last long. (*If I'm late they'll leave me.*)
 - a. Tell children stories about monsters in the wood or snakes in the tall grass.
 - b. Children who behave out of fear of punishment will misbehave when away.
2. Likewise, "hellfire and brimstone" preaching won't keep people faithful.
3. Fear requires stronger and more frequent doses.

E. The strongest motivator is love; it binds stronger than chains of steel.**S#9.**

1. There is no limit to what a person will do for love.
2. Love is a completely self-induced and self-regulated constraint.

II. God uses many kinds of motivators / constraints to influence His children. #10.**A. God uses fear of judgment to cause people to obey Him.****S#11.**

1. Judgment is real. There is a day in which all men will be judged.
Acts 17: 31 – **because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."** **S#12.**
2. One can't even die to escape judgment ; both the living or dead, all will be judged
John 5:28-29 – **Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice. 29 and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.** **S#13.**

3. The wicked and those outside Christ are warned they will suffer eternal separation

II Thes. 1: 7-9 ... when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with **S#14.**
His mighty angels in flaming fire, **8** dealing out retribution to
those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the
gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** These will pay the penalty of
eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and
from the glory of His power,

B. God also motivates us by offering a reward for faithfulness. S#15.

1. Be faithful you will get an eternal reward. (*Faithful is not sinless.*)

II Tim. 4: 7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, **S#16.**
I have kept the faith; **8** in the future there is laid up for me
the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous
Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me,
but also to all who have loved His appearing.

2. He warns us not to stray away and lose our reward.

II John 8 – Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have **S#17.**
accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.
cf – **Heb. 2: 1-3** ... Drift way

3. We don't earn the crown, just be faithful and we will get it, i.e., HEAVEN **S#18.**

Rev. 2:10 – Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life.

C. God designed the church to constrain Christians with social pressure. S#19.

1. There is a reason God requires that we maintain a strong bond of fellowship.

John 13: 34-35 – A new commandment I give to you, that you love one **S#20.**
another, even as I have loved you, that you also love
one another. **35** By this all men will know that you are
My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

2. He requires that we come together regularly to motivate one another. (*pressure*)

Heb 10:23-25 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without **S#21.**
wavering, for He who promised is faithful; **24** and let us consider
how to stimulate (*motivate, provoke, incite*) one another to love
and good deeds, **25** not forsaking our own assembling together,
as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and
all the more as you see the day drawing near. (**59 x one another**)

3. And we're expressly commanded to apply social pressure to maintain faithfulness.

Rom 16:17 – Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause **S#22.**
dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which
you learned, and turn away from them.

cf – **Tit. 3: 10** ... **Factionous man .. REJECT**

D. God does not use physical force of any kind (*Medieval Inquisition*) S#23.

1. God wants our love and love cannot be forced. (*Muslims force adherence*)
2. God's love for us would not allow Him to force us. (*The Old Blues Laws*)
- *3. God doesn't use immediate physical punishment for disobedience. (*sickness*)
The theory of retribution is wrong.! If you burn a candle to an idol, God doesn't #24.
strike you dead. Conversely, you will not become rich if you resist temptation.

III. God's preferred control mechanisms is love. "love of Christ controls us" S#25.**A. Bygone era, preachers tried to scare people into conformity. S#26.**

1. They did not teach wrong; they just emphasized the negative consequences.
2. It's entirely appropriate to warn people about the horrors of Hell.
3. Fear is the easiest motivator, but the results from fear are short-term.

B. Love is the strongest of all motivators. S#27.

1. There's no limit to what people will do for love.
2. People will do things for love they would not do for money.
3. Men are motivated to face death out of love for family or love for country.
4. Historically, love has been the most frequent motivation for murder. (*drugs*)

C. Love can never be forced and God wants love, not just compliance.

1. It must be 100% voluntary.
2. Attempts to force love will always backfire.
3. Any action motivated by love is self-induced.

D. Love motivates voluntary change.

ill – *Guys work out because muscles impress girls ... normal psychological response.*

1. Guys change their whole life for love.
 - a. He starts taking a shower and may even clean his apartment.
 - b. Girls motivate guys to gets a steady job, to dress better, act differently, talk diff
2. By nature guys are self-centered and tend to use girls to build their ego etc., but love cause them to begin to look for ways to make the girl happy.
 - a. Lust motivates manipulation.
 - b. Love seeks the happiness / pleasure of another ... not self

*** Love acts with no ulterior motive ... it is other oriented S#28.**

*** God wants us to voluntarily change our lives because we love Him #29.**

F. One who loves another will be faithful because he wants to be.**S#30.**

1. No one has to tell you to be true to the one you love.
2. One who is loved doesn't have to :
 - a. Monitor the activity of the other to insure faithfulness. (*Jealousy is illogical*)
 - b. Keep up defense against being hurt by the one who loves them.
3. One who is loved doesn't have to worry about the other.
 - a. To doubt the other is to doubt love.
 - b. **I John 4: 18** – **There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.**

S#31.

*** We are faithful to our mates because we love them, not fear them. Likewise, we are faithful to Christ because we love Him.**

IV. We know we love Christ / God when we want to change our lives.**S#32.**

A. All of these principles we are discussing apply directly to the Christian.

B. When one falls in love with God / Christ his life voluntarily changes.

S#33.

1. No one has to tell one who loves God / Christ / church to be faithful, HE WILL.
2. He refrains from anything that causes God unhappiness or displeasure. "*grieve not*"
3. He eliminates habits and associations that displease God or reflect badly on Him.

C. The one who loves God voluntarily seeks ways to make Him happy.

1. He doesn't wait to be told what to do ... **he looks for ways to impress God.**
2. He searches God's word to find ways to please Him. *Not feeling bound by duty.*

S#34.

D. The one who loves God spends time with Him ... seeks opportunity to be with.

1. By nature, people avoid those that they dislike and draw near to those they love.
2. As a result, those who love God enjoy being around others who also love God.
3. They avoid those who dislike the Lord and those who offend Him.

CONCLUSION :

A. God instructs us to periodically examine ourselves.

II Cor 13: 5 – **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith;**

1. Thus, I admonish each one of us to examine ourselves. *What controls my life?*

II Cor. 5: 14-15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded **S#35.**
 this, that one died for all, therefore all died; **15** and He died
 for all, so that they who live might no longer live for
 themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

- a. *Does the love of Christ really constrain us ?*
- b. *Do we live for Him or do we live for ourselves ?*

2. We can't examine anyone else, even our spouses.

- B. Love is not just words. (*It's a commitment that changes one's life.*) **S#36.**

I John 3:18 – Let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth

- * Cf. - **James 2: 14f** ... Love must be lived in the same way faith must be lived.

- C. What changes has our love for God brought about in us? **S#37.**

1. Does it effect the way we **live**?
2. Does it effect the places we **go**?
3. Has it changed the things we **do**?
4. Did it cause us to steer away from some **associates**?
5. Does it determine how we spend our **money**?
6. Has it changes the way we use our **time**?

- D. Are we excited to tell other people about our relationship? **S#38.**

1. If not we must ask ourselves, "*Am I really in love with God ?*"
2. *We're going to be introducing some projects that will test our love.*

INVITATION :

- A. The first step in establishing a relationship with Christ is for one to acknowledge his faith in Jesus and commit himself to follow Him.
- B. Then you must solemnize the relationship in baptism.
- C. Once the relationship is established one must live faithful to his commitment.
- D. What kind of relationship do you have with God ? **S#39.**

S#40. .. Communion slide.

Lesson Text :

II Corinthians 5: 14-15

14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; **15** and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

John 15: 8-15

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. **9** Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. **10** If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. **11** These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

12 This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. **14** You are My friends if you do what I command you."

I John 4: 16-21

A We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. **17** By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. **18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. **19** We love, because He first loved us. **20** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. **21** And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.