



# Freedom!

## From Hurts, Hang-Ups, and Habits

\*Notes from this study adapted from “Life’s Healing Choices” by John Baker  
Leader Notes

### Session 3- Control

*“Blessed Are The Meek...” -Matthew 5:5*

#### I. Who’s In Control?

In session one, we talked about the reality that we are all limited, broken, and imperfect individuals. In session two, we talked about the pain that many of us walk in. Today, we are talking about control. Although there are circumstances beyond us, the reason we experience much of our pain is because we are giving the controls of our lives over to limited, broken, and imperfect individuals.

Who and what influences your thoughts or how you feel? Who and what influences your actions? Honestly rank these “influencers”. \_\_\_\_\_

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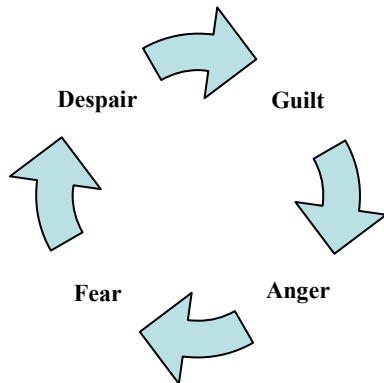
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Can you think of a time when you saw the negative or positive consequences of a person giving control of their lives over to another person or thing? \_\_\_\_\_

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Many times, when we try to control our lives, we end up in a “Cycle of Despair”.



God invites us to step out of our cycles of despair and rhythms of life that are not only tiring, but just not working for us and for those around us.

*“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me- watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace... Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”- Matthew 11:28-30*

The gift of Jesus’ leadership, guidance, and control is available to us today, but many of us have a hard time handing our lives over to Him.

## **II. Barriers to Our Surrender**

### **1) Pride**

Pride often keeps us from *admitting* we need God’s help or the help of others.

Pride often keeps us from *wanting* God’s help even when we see our needs.

Pride enables us to remain the “god” and controller of our lives.

Pride leaves us lonely, vulnerable, anxious, and out of touch with reality.

*“A self-sufficient fool falls flat on his face.”- Proverbs 10:8*

*“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”- Matthew 5:5*

## 2) **Guilt**

Many times, we acknowledge our need for help, but feel too ashamed or not “good enough” to ask God for help.

*“Problems far too big for me to solve are piled higher than my head. Meanwhile my sins, too many to count, have all caught up with me, and I am ashamed to look up.”- Psalm 40:12*

Have you ever felt too ashamed or just not worthy enough to look up? Have you ever felt like you’ve asked God for forgiveness and help too many times already? Remember, there is no sin or circumstance that God will not forgive and help us with when we come to him in true repentance and need. Jesus went to the cross to set us free from the burden of guilt.

## 3) **Fear**

If we are honest with ourselves, many of us are afraid of what we might have to give up if we surrender the care and control of our lives over to Christ.

### ❖ **Sometimes we’re afraid to trust God.**

Yes, we acknowledge our need, but we’re just not sure if we can fully trust God with our needs. The reality is that many of us only turn to God as our last resort, only when all our other options have not panned out. The problem with this is that there always seem to be another option that seems more tangible and worth trying.

### ❖ **Sometimes we’re afraid of losing control.**

The truth of the matter is that whether we want to admit it or not, we are all controlled by something or someone at all times. Many of us are controlled by our upbringing, other people’s opinions, or hurts we have experienced in our past. The question isn’t if, but who or what. Choose wisely who you will entrust your life to.

### ❖ **Sometimes we’re afraid of becoming a religious fanatic.**

Many of us are afraid that if we turn our lives over to the care and control of God that he will turn us into religious nuts. We not only do not like people like that, but have been hurt by them as well. That’s the last thing we want to become. Remember, don’t let the actions of others keep you from the God that is good.

**“When you give up everything to God’s control. God takes what you give Him, He cleans it up, and He turns it around. He adds new meaning, new purpose, new significance, and new vitality to your life, and He gives it back to you in a whole new way.”**

What are you afraid of letting go? Is it a relationship, an ambition, a habit, a lifestyle, or a possession? What might you gain in place of what you give up?

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*“How does a man benefit if he gains the whole world and loses his soul in the process? For is anything worth more than his soul?”-Mark 8:36-37*

#### **4) Doubt**

Have you ever thought, “I want to believe, but my faith is too small”?

It is clear from Scripture, Jesus invites us to come to him with whatever amount of faith we have. It’s not necessarily how much faith we have that matters, it is how much of it we are willing to actually put into practice.

A man named Jairus prayed, “Lord, I have a lot of doubts. I want to believe; help me with my unbelief.” Jesus said, “That’s good enough.”

Which “barrier of surrender” catches your attention today? Why?  
Which barrier may be a root reason that you have a hard time surrendering all of your life to God’s control? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **III. Meekness: Unleashing God’s Will for Our Lives**

**“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”- Matthew 5:5**

Surrendering to God’s care and control is a call to true meekness. What does it mean to be “meek”? Many people equate meekness with weakness, but nothing could be further from the truth.

“The Greek word for *meekness* actually means ‘strength under control.’ The Greek word is used to describe a wild stallion that is tamed and taught to be ridden. That stallion still has all its strength, but now its strength is under control, ready for its master’s use.”

“Meekness is surrender; it is submitting; it is agreeing to do what God wants done in your life.” Meekness is staying strong to follow God’s way when it would be easier to follow the current and trends around us.

The similarity of these two verses gives us insight to what it means to be “meek”.

**“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”- Matthew 5:5**

**“Seek first his kingdom, and all... will be given to you as well.”- Matthew 6:33**

In light of this definition and understanding of “meekness”, what strength(s) do you see necessary for someone to be truly “meek”? \_\_\_\_\_

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#### **IV. Meekness In Action**

It’s one thing to say that we submit to God’s control and care over our lives, but how do we live that out in our daily lives? John Baker talks about four things that we surrender to, or put ourselves under the control of, when we walk in meekness.

##### **1) Accept God’s Son As Your Savior and Lord**

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”- John 3:16*

This famous passage acknowledges the pathway to true life. What does it mean to believe in Jesus? “It means committing as much of your life and will to Christ as you can, at this moment.” Believing in Jesus is entrusting our past (forgiveness), present (guidance), and future (hope) to him.

##### **2) Accept God’s Word As Your Standard**

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the faith and correcting error, for resetting the direction of a person’s life and training them in good living.”- 2 Timothy 3:16*

Because of the human elements involved, many people question the validity of the Bible the same way they questioned the validity of Jesus when he walked among us. As Jesus was God in human flesh, the Bible is God’s revelation of his infinite truth, guidance, and presence written and put together through human hands.

### 3) Accept God's Will As Your Purpose

*"God, I want to do what you want. Your teachings are in my heart."- Psalm 40:8*

As a stallion doesn't simply drag himself to go where the master guides, but charges with passion; we are called to not only submit to God's will, but to charge after it with all our hearts.

"As you grow with God, His will becomes your strategy for life."

### 4) Accept God's Power As Your Strength

*"I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power."- Philippians 4:13*

"No longer do you have to rely on your own energy. God gives you His power to be all He wants you to be." If He calls, He will equip.

What are some practical ways you can live out these ways of "acceptance"? What are some practical barriers that stop you from living these out? \_\_\_\_\_

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## V. Application

"Being willing means changing our definition of *willpower*. Our willpower needs to become the *willingness to accept God's power*."

### Write about it.

- What are some key issues that you are dealing with in your life lately?
- What insights do you gain about yourself as you reflect on the different "barriers to surrender"?
- What insights or feelings come up as you reflect on what it means to be truly meek? What is appealing or not appealing about being truly meek?
- What are your personal challenges to "accepting" God's control and care in your life through His Son, Word, will, and/or power?
- Are you ready to entrust your life to the control and care of God? What are some key ways you can consistently live out this commitment?

**Share about it.**

Share with someone nonjudgmental, trustworthy, and willing to help you.

*“As iron sharpens iron, so people can improve each other.”-Proverbs 27:17*

*“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!.. Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”- Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12*

**Pray about it**

Ask God to come and take control and care of your life.

*Dear God, in this moment of clarity, I acknowledge that what I and others have been doing with the controls of my life has not been working. Please take control and care of my life.*

*Lord, the barriers of pride, guilt, fear, and doubt make it hard for me to live out my commitment to surrender to you on a daily basis. Please help me. Please give me the strength, courage, and trust in You to be meek in the midst of trials and temptations. This is so hard, and that is why I ask for Your help.*

*I know there are times when I may do things or say things that will make it hard for me to accept myself, let alone see how You could ever accept me. In those times, and at all times, help me to accept the truth that You sent Your Son, Jesus, to die for my sins so I can be forgiven. Help me to also accept Your Word, will, and power to not only guide me, but ultimately help me live according to Your life-giving ways.*

*For Your glory and for Your perfect will for my life and the world, I now surrender the control and care of my life to You. In Your loving and able name, Amen.*