

1. Intro
 - a. What does your life revolve around? What do you worship?
 - b. All of us worship something → What you talk, think, dream about, work towards
 - c. The Bible calls these things idols → normally picture Indiana Jones
 - i. Anything that you give “worth” to over God (worth-ship = worship)
 - d. Without idols we’d be perfect. → Our hearts are bent towards idolatry
 - e. Idol Factory - *“The human heart is an idol factory... Every one of us from our mothers womb is an expert in inventing idols”* - John Calvin
 - f. Today: the idol of Control
2. *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil], neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, **she took** of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:1-6 ESV)*
 - a. Adam and Eve were created to serve God → to love and worship God
 - b. God, “Don’t eat of the tree of knowledge” → Satan tempted them
 - i. “You can’t really trust God. He’s so restrictive. He’s so bossy. He’s so absorbed with his own agenda. You need to trust me and take matters into your own hands. You need to take control so that you can ensure your own happiness.” - Darrin Patrick paraphrasing Satan
 - ii. Come to think of it...if you were like God you wouldn’t need God
 - c. So Eve takes matters into her own hands
 - i. Their well-being and happiness couldn’t be trusted in God’s hands
 - ii. Take matters into their own hands, to take control from God
 - d. This is where it all begins - the source of all that is wrong in the world
 - i. Typically this is called the Fall, but there is nothing accidental about it
 1. They didn’t catch sin like it was some sickness
 - e. They made a fundamental choice of idolatry → to give something worth over God
 - i. Elevated Satan, themselves, their taste buds, the lust of their eyes, pride of wisdom, their spouse over God
 - ii. It all goes back to idolatry → Trusting in God vs. trying to be God
 - f. At the core, the root of all sin is idolatry
 - i. With Idolatry we have surface idols and source idols
 1. Surface idols, the fruit → Source idols, the root
 - a. You will bear fruit dependent on the root
 2. Each week is about a source idol, w/ examples from surface idols
 - ii. We see all four source idols here: control, approval, comfort, power

- iii. Control manifested in Adam and Eve trying to control the situation
- iv. The irony is that God is really the only one who can be in control
 - 1. The tree of knowledge never would enable humans to be like God
 - a. ex: “free” will
 - 2. We didn’t gain control, by usurping God’s authority we lost control
- g. All goes back to one question: **Will you trust in God or will you try to be God?**

3. Control idolatry: in your relationships

- a. How it relates to control: Since we are inherently selfish, we desire to control other people and to manipulate them so that they are more in line with our will
- b. What it looks like in real life:
 - i. Controlling your spouse:
 - 1. *Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” (Genesis 3:16 ESV)*
 - 2. expectations of how they should act (how YOU would act)
 - 3. manipulating through everything from fighting, to abuse, to financial restraints, to sex, to nagging, to clandestine behind-their-back actions (easier to ask forgiveness than permission)
 - ii. Controlling your kids
 - 1. **“Successful parenting is about rightful, God-ordained loss of control.” - Paul Tripp**
 - 2. Finding the balance of that control is where we run into problems
 - 3. Pick their hobby, their job, their major, their friends, their spouse
 - 4. We want to control our kids to protect them, but it’s an illusion
 - 5. You can’t really control their future, their decisions, etc
 - 6. You can equip them in faith, and then let go of control
 - 7. And that is hard for us
 - 8. B/c we idolatrously think WE can control the situation
 - iii. This same type of stuff can be said for co-workers, employees, friends, church peeps. → We by default try and control people for our purposes
 - 1. Example: Smoozer who uses people to get ahead
 - 2. The pastor or church leader who makes you feel like you’re just there to fill in the holes. Sorry if and when I’ve made you feel that
- c. How it slowly destroys: People become tools for us to achieve our goals (explain) rather than humans made in the image of God to be loved.
- d. How to know if this is you:
 - i. If people are never behaving the way you want them to and you pull out all the tricks to try and manipulate them to get there;
 - ii. If you often say things to people like, “If you want things done right you have to do them yourself.” OR “It’s my way or the highway.”
 - iii. If you get mad at other people when they don’t behave or think the way that you want them to (why don’t you think more LIKE ME?!)
- e. The antidote: **Trust God and obey him to LOVE others ahead of yourself**

4. Control idolatry: your future

- a. How it relates to control: Those who worship the idol of control are obsessed with making sure that things go as planned and often pay for it with worry and anxiety
- b. What it looks like in real life: micro-management, manipulation and control
 - i. People who falsely believe that they can control their life's trajectory
 - 1. through diet, through exercise, through worry, planning, porn
 - ii. Busyness and panic rather than being still and waiting patiently in the midst of problems → Something goes wrong or they don't know God's plan so they panic about how to throw a solution together
 - iii. Anger when something goes wrong, someone doesn't do what you want
- c. How it slowly destroys us and those around us: We create a house of cards under the illusion of our own control and then blame ourselves, other people, and God when something goes wrong or unexpected. Our faith implodes.
 - i. ex: Christina w/ Scott
 - ii. Problem is we aren't God. Prayer isn't about twisting God's arm, it's about surrendering to his presence. → trusting God or trying to be God and then getting mad when God doesn't do what you would do if YOU were God
- d. How to know if this is you:
 - i. You live in constant fear, worry, anxiety about the future rather than peace knowing that worrying won't change anything and God is still in control.
 - ii. You boil over in anger at God anytime something doesn't go as planned
- e. The antidote: **Be still and know that he is God.** You can't control the future, only how you react to it.

5. **Control idolatry: your money**

- a. How it relates to control: People with a control idol make it their purpose to control where every penny goes as if they were the cosmic banker
- b. What it looks like in real life:
 - i. They falsely believe that their security and future is found in their money as opposed to God → if I can just save, make, protect myself w/ this \$\$
 - ii. In terms of giving, those w/ a control idol might do a few things:
 - 1. They don't give because they don't like the idea of not being able to control where it goes → give to X charity instead of church
 - a. Designate
 - 2. Give w/ stipulations → Withholding money as a form of control
 - a. I will give X but I want it spent like this
 - i. (especially true of large sums of money)
 - 3. All about control, control, control
- c. How it slowly destroys us and those around us:
 - i. Under the label of being frugal you become a scrooge
 - ii. You become so focused on your money that you forget it is a tool. It becomes the end goal rather than a means to an end (the glory of God)
- d. How to know if this is you:
 - i. You may look down self-righteously at others who don't seem to be as "in control" of their finances;

- ii. Wealthy OR poor you constantly asks questions like “Will I make enough?” or “Will I save enough?”
 - iii. Control idolatry w/ money surfaces when unknown, uncontrollable circumstances come into play → recession, unexpected events, etc
 - e. The antidote:
 - i. The reality for the control worshipper w/ money is this: God promises to take care of your needs. Not your wants. Your needs. AND everything you have was given by him and is for him. It belongs to him. You are simply borrowing it.
 - ii. **Trust in God, not your money, by giving first to His kingdom**
6. Conclusion
- a. Jesus Christ in the garden → If there was ever a time when you would want to be in control rather than submit...
 - i. “Not my will, but yours be done”
 - ii. Didn’t manipulate, simply trusted in God and obeyed.
 - iii. Emptied himself of his sovereign right to control in obedience to the Father
 - iv. So we could have a relationship with God
 - b. What does this means for me? Trust God, not try to be God → **repent & replace**
 - i. my relationships, my future, my money
 - c. What this means for you → **repent & replace**
 - i. How you control your relationships, your future, your money...
 - ii. Get in habit of asking yourself if you are trusting God or trying to be God?
 - iii. Called to be still → opposite is manipulating your circumstances.
 - iv. What does this look like in your....?
 - 1. You can panic, try to take control and try and be God
 - 2. OR you can trust God and be still.
 - d. The antidote for an idol of control is **trusting** in God and being obedient: trust and obey → Repent and Replace
 - e. Don’t try to be God, trust God to be God.