Differentiation #2:  How Can I Know If I Am Controlled by Something or Someone Other than God?

Matthew 6:19-24

Introduction:

1. I am to be a servant of Jesus.
2. I am to be free to follow His will.
3. The devil wants to enslave me.
4. How can I know when that is happening?
5. How can I know when I have locked myself in prison?
6. BLAMING. Genesis 3:9-13; 1 Samuel 15:1-23
   1. Blaming, excuses, takes away my choice.
   2. A little girl was making ugly faces at her pet bulldog.

Her mother told her to stop it.

She said, “Tell him to stop it.  He started it.”

1. PREJUDICE. James 2:1-9
   1. Prejudice is a great time saver–it enables us to form opinions without bothering with facts.
   2. The difference between a conviction and a prejudice is that you explain a conviction without getting angry.
   3. Prejudice comes from:
      1. Ignorance (not knowing).
      2. Generalization–applying the characteristics of a few people to the entire group.
2. LIVING IN THE PAST. Ecclesiastes 7:10
   1. I need to remember the past.
      1. I can reflect on the good experiences and rejoice in them.
      2. I can remember the pain and profit from it.
   2. I don’t want to be stuck in the past, thinking that the present can never be as good.
3. LIVING IN THE FUTURE WITHOUT BEING RESPONSIBLE IN THE PRESENT. Matthew 6:33, 34; James 4:13-17
   1. I want to plan.
   2. I want to allow God to direct me from the present to the future. Proverbs 3:5, 6
4. FEELING HELPLESS AND HOPELESS OR ARROGANT AND IN CONTROL.
   1. About finances. Matthew 6:19-34; Matthew 19:16-22
   2. About sin and temptation. 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; James 1:13-15
   3. Arrogance and hopelessness may come close together.
      1. Peter, “I’ll never deny you.” Matthew 26:31-15
      2. Peter “went out and wept bitterly.” Matthew 26:69-75
   4. Hope is the feeling you have that the feeling you have isn’t permanent.
   5. Hope has two beautiful daughters:  Anger and Courage.
      1. Anger at the way things are.
      2. Courage to see that they do not remain the way they are (*Leadership*, Volume XIII, Fall 1992, p. 60).
5. RESENTMENT, BITTERNESS.
   1. Often felt by good people.
   2. The Messiah trap. (from *When Helping You Is Hurting Me*, by Carmen Renee Berry, pp. 8, 9
      1. “If I don’t do it, it won’t get done.”
      2. “Everyone else’s needs take priority over mine.”
   3. That is a double bind.
      1. I don’t trust anyone else to do it and do it right.
      2. I resent others for not helping.
      3. But if they helped, they would mess it up.
   4. When I am in God’s control and will, I can give other people the right and responsibility to make their choices and not feel responsible or resentful. Joshua 24:15
6. LACK OF PERSONAL COMMITMENT, GOALS, GROWTH, PURPOSE, MISSION IN DOING GOD’S WILL.
   1. A “stuck” person is one controlled by people, circumstances, things other than God.
   2. That person sees where he is, where he has been, and where he will be the result of forces outside himself.
      1. That person has no ownership of what she is doing.
      2. When she is involved, she is “helping” others with their job.
   3. A free, focused person uses the perpendicular pronoun appropriately. Joshua 24:15; Philippians 3:13, 14; John 6:38; Mark 1:35-39

Conclusion:

1. The way to get unstuck is to realize that I am stuck. Acts 8:9-24
2. The way to stay unstuck is to make it difficult to go back. Acts 19:18-20
3. To become free, repent of wrong commitments and keep the right commitments. Matthew 21:28-30