

**INSTALLATION OF OFFICEBEARERS**

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15**

# **CONTROLLED NOT CONTROLLING**



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**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

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# INTRODUCTION

Why would anyone want to be an elder or a deacon? You have to give up several evenings a month, you have to take on extra responsibilities on Sundays, you're involved in stressful situations, you have to take hard decisions, and you're setting yourself up for criticism. At least pastors are paid for all that. But elders and deacons are not? So why would anyone want to be an elder or a deacon?

Sadly, some are motivated by control (1 Peter 5:2-3). They want to have power in the church. They want to advance their own agenda and have their own way. They want to have power over people's lives and use controlling techniques such as lies, moodiness, unpredictability, and intimidation to achieve their ends. Controllers devastate those they control as victims suffer from chronic stress, fear, passivity, distrust of authority, and low self-worth. Controllers themselves are often victims of insecurity and anxiety which drives them to try and exert maximum control over people and situations. They are controlled by insecurity and therefore try to control for their own security.

Although we may not be full-blown controllers, yet most of us still have controlling tendencies and temptations that we need to be aware of and fight against. Therefore, as our elders, deacons take up their new roles, and as Jordan is installed as a commissioned pastor, we want to ask: **What should be our motivation as we take up roles and responsibilities in the church? Why do we serve?**

## BACKGROUND

Paul's enemies had questioned his motives. In 2 Corinthians 5, he explains that he was motivated by the fear of the Lord (5) and the love of the Lord (14-15).



What was Paul's motivation? Why did he serve?



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# 1. WE ARE CONTROLLED BY LOVE

*For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died* (14).

What got Paul out of bed each morning? Money? Power? Popularity? Law? No, none of these. Paul was awakened every morning by love, specifically the love of Christ. As soon as his alarm went off, he thought “The Love of Christ. Let’s go!”

What aspect of Christ’s love motivated him? Was it Christ’s love for him or his love for Christ? The Greek behind these words can be interpreted both ways. As we’ll see, the context tells us that Paul is energized not so much by his love for Christ (which was subjective and changeable) but by Christ’s love for him (which was objective and unchanging).

How does Paul know about this love? How does he experience it? Does he lie in bed waiting for a warm fuzzy feeling of love to fill his emotional tank? No, he explains that he arrives at Christ’s love by a logical process. Not “We have felt this...” but “We have concluded this...” He arrived at the love of Christ by sound biblical reasoning based on objective historical events. Specifically, he was referring to the love of Christ in his death and life, Christ’s loving death and loving life.

## A Loving Death

### “One has died for all”

Christ died for the sins of others, in the place of others. This was not just sympathy but substitution. This was not just an example but an exchange of places.

When Paul says that ‘one died for all’ does he mean that Jesus died for every single person that ever lived? That does not make logical sense, because that would mean he died for those already in hell or those who would yet go to hell. Neither does it make linguistic sense because although ‘all’ can mean ‘every single person’ it can also mean ‘all sorts of people, all kinds of people’ (e.g. John 12:32). Jesus died for all kinds of people and each person he died for will be saved.

### “Therefore all have died”

It’s literally, ‘If one died, then the all died.’ The ‘all’ for whom Christ died, died at the cross. If one was put to death for the all, then ‘the all’ are reckoned as having died. His death is accepted as the personal act of ‘the all,’ as if ‘the all’ personally died. Christ died for ‘the all’ who died when he died. Christ died for us and Christ died as us.



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## A Loving Life

*...and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised (15)*

Just as 'the all' died in/with/as Christ, so we are raised in/with/as Christ. Therefore, we no longer live self-centered lives but Christ-centered lives. 'The all' for whom he died, 'the all' who died with him, and 'the all' who rose with him, no longer live for themselves but for Jesus. Because 'the One' died for 'the all,' 'the all' are for 'the One.' If we're not in 'the all' who are living for Christ, we're not among 'the all' who died with Christ.

## CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Anxious and insecure controller, Christ's death and life are peace and security for you. Think on his loving death for you and his loving life for you. Think of his loving death as you and his loving life as you. The peace and security you get from this love is greater and any anxiety and insecurity that you get from your upbringing or circumstances. As you're more and more controlled by Christ's love, you'll be more and more motivated by Christ's love in all that you do. That will change what you do, why you do it, and how you do it. It no longer becomes about us but about him.

**BECAUSE ONE DIED FOR THE ALL,  
THE ALL ARE FOR THE ONE.**



How do we move from getting Christ's love for us  
to giving Christ's love for others?



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## 2. WE CONTROL BY LOVE

When we're controlled by love, we control by love. In some ways, that's a contradiction in terms because love is the opposite of control. What we mean is that when Christ's love is the greatest influence on our lives, then we will seek to influence others by Christ's love and with Christ's love. We are no longer motivated by a desire to control others for our benefit, but to serve others for their benefit. We no longer use controlling methods but Calvary methods. When Calvary controls us, we control with Calvary. When Calvary leads us, we lead with Calvary. When Calvary motivates us, we motivate with Calvary.

**Christ's love changes him:** This was a very different Paul to before. He was still dynamic and driven but the force was no longer fear, intimidation, hatred, reward, law, or insecurity, but Christ's love for him. He was no longer out for himself but for Christ and for others.

Christ's love is current to him: 'Controls' is in the present tense referring to a present power not an experience in the distant past. Calvary was not a past event but a present power. He returned to Calvary daily in order to abandon control daily. He returned to Calvary daily to get Christ's love daily. He returned to Calvary daily to love others daily.

Christ's love is central to him: The Cross was at the very center of Paul's life. If you were able to probe to Paul's center, at the heart of his heart, you would find the cross. Calvary's hill was his heart, his core. The cross was his magnificent obsession.

Christ's love channels him: The word for 'control' can also be translated as 'constrained.' The word is used to describe what happens to a wide river when it enters a narrow gorge. The banks and walls hem in the water pressurizing it to run faster and faster. Calvary's hill and the empty tomb were like the gorge walls for Paul, creating an unstoppable pressure and energy, constraining and channelling him into a cross-like life.

### CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Every Christian should be controlled by love and control by love, but that's especially true for leaders. Immediately after asking "How can I get the love of Christ better?" we ask, "How can I give the love of Christ better?" Defeat temptations to use controlling methods with the Calvary method. Instead of asking, "How can I get my way better?" ask "How can I show the love of Christ better?"

WE LEAD BECAUSE OF LOVE,  
OUT OF LOVE, AND IN LOVE.



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the Story



# SUMMARY



**PRAYER:** Loving Controller, control me by your love so that I control by love.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What motivations might someone have for becoming a pastor, elder, or deacon?
2. How do you keep Christ's love alive in your life?
3. In what sense have you already died?
4. What's the greatest influence in your life?
5. How is Christ's love changing you?
6. Who are you trying to control and what will you do to change that?

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