

## **Dad Jokes:**

"I don't trust stairs... they're always *up to something*."

What do you call an angry golfer?"- *Tee'd off!*

"What did the Dalmatian say after dinner?" - *That hit the spot.*

Did you hear about the red and blue ships that collided? All the sailors were marooned.

How did Benjamin Franklin feel when he discovered electricity? He was shocked!

What do you call a boomerang that doesn't come back? A stick.

What comes once in a minute, twice in a moment but never in a thousand years? The letter M.

What did the llama say to his date? "Want to go on a picnic? Alpaca lunch."

One more. . .

"My extra winter weight is finally gone. Now, all I have is spring rolls."

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We're in the second week of our series called "Altar Ego." Based on the book "Altar Ego", Becoming Who God Says You Are. By Craig Groeschel.

He spelled altar, A-L-T-A-R. Because in church history, back in the Old Testament, an altar was a place where people would lay something down before God. And in the series we are looking at things we may struggle with that we need to lay down before God.

An ego is who we think we are; it's what we think about ourselves.

And as I mentioned last week it's unfortunate, that so many of us, have an inaccurate view of ourselves. We either think too highly of ourselves or we think too lowly of ourselves, and we don't really know who we're supposed to be.

So, what we're going to try to do is sacrifice who we think we are so we can become who God says we are. We're going to lay down different characteristics of our ego before God so we can become who God says we are.

Last week, we looked at laying down our feelings of inadequacy, and we saw that God sees more in us than we think. God has given us more than we think and it's less about us than we think.

Today, what we're going to do is we're going to lay down our need for control.

So, let me begin today with a question, and that is this: How many of you, in some area of your life, you really like to be in control?

It's interesting to me how almost everybody even those of us in the Body of Christ in some area of their live they try to control something.

And typically we try to control two categories or areas of things. Not all of us but many of us, we try to control people or we try to control circumstances.

We try to control people. There may be someone in your life where there's one or two things about them that you just don't like.

We have all heard that, "God loves people and has a wonderful plan for their lives." Amen?

We know that's true.

And so at times because we know that to be true. Without even knowing it, we will try to manipulate the behavior of others, because we really believe we know what's best, and we want to control those around us.

It may be your coworkers, it may be those who work for you, it may be your children, it may be your spouse. But we want to be in control.

And let me say this when it comes to believers. God is not into behavior modification. He wants transformation. And as a new creation with a new heart, and because of His grace upon our life's he enables to walk in righteousness.

We also will try to control the circumstances.

We want to look just right. We want our houses to be just perfect. We want our kids when they go out in the public to be the perfect representation of us in every single way.

And I will add this as well we are God's representatives as well. So we often try once again to look good before God

and man.

And listen, I'm not saying you don't need to, but once we realize that we are what we are by the grace of God we no longer work for victory, but from victory. We no longer work for acceptance, we come to understand we are accepted. And since we are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, our righteousness bears fruit to holiness. And because of that transformation, and just a modification we become better representatives and ambassadors of the Savior.

But because we want to control our circumstances we want to control our schedules and the future, and the schedules of the people that we love. And we want to control what other people think of us.

We want to control people and we want to control circumstances. And the reason we want to be in control is because our ego is out of control.

Because we really believe that we know what's best.

Ken Blanchard, says that EGO is an acronym for "Edging God out." I since I know what is right I'm going to force it, do everything in my power to see it happen and not trust God.

I'm going to edge God out.

And hear this church, and I will deal with this in just a few moments. There are things that we need to partner with God to see come to pass. We have a roll in the answer, but we must never Edge God Out of the situation and think we can handle it all on our own.

(play with the verse)

Proverbs 3:5–6 (NIV): Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

The fact is we need to trust in the Lord because honestly, we don't know what He knows, as much as He knows. He sees the answer before there was ever a problem.

And what's really interesting is the more that we try to control something, the more we fear losing control. And the more we fear losing control, the more we try to keep control.

And suddenly, we spiral into a cycle of fear. And honestly we don't always see it because control is very difficult to see in the mirror.

It's very hard for us to see our own need for control in the mirror because we legitimately think that we know what is best. We're edging God out, and we don't even know it.

So, what I want to do today is give you an example of control gone bad. And then we're going to ask three questions that honestly can be application questions that you take with you to apply to this area for the rest of your lives.

Let me show you a story from the Old Testament about a couple originally named Abram and Sarai -- their names were changed to Abraham and Sarah -- and they had a problem, like most of us, they wanted to control the outcome of certain situations.

You can read one story, early on in their lives, when Abram was worried about Sarai's safety, thinking that some men

might do something inappropriate to her. And so, rather than trust her to God, and tell the people who she really was, he took control and he lied about who she was. And he said, "her. . .she's my sister," and he took control.

The other is when God said to them, "I'm going to bless you and you're going to be the parents of many nations." "You're going to have so many descendants, it's going to be more than the sand on the seashore, more than the stars in the sky."

And God promised this childless couple -- who for years, were unable to conceive -- God says, "you're going to give birth. And there's going to be many nations born from you."

What an incredible promise. Let's look at it Genesis 15. . .

Genesis 15:1–6 (NIV): After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." 2 But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." 4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Did you catch that look at verse 6 again, Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

But when God didn't immediately do what God promised to do, remember what he just said in verse 6? Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

But since it didn't happen as fast he thought it should. Abram and Sarai did what so many of us do, they tried to take control of their own destiny and they stepped over God's promise.

Genesis 16, verses 1 through 4. . .

Genesis 16:1–4 (NIV): Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress.

In other words, I know God promised but he's not doing it in my timing. So, I'm going to help out. I am going to take control because I know what's best. I'm going to Edge God Out and I'm going to take control, I have a plan.

By the way Abraham had to wait 25 years for his promised child.

But when they edged God out, it's impossible to describe all the chaos, what taking control did, not just in their lives, but for centuries and centuries to come.

If you read on in the story, Hagar gave birth to a son named Ishmael. And then those 25 years later, God finally blesses Abraham and Sarah with a son named Isaac. And there was more tension than you can imagine between Hagar and Sarah and Ishmael and Isaac.

Listen so many of us are settling for Ishmael's when God has a better promise in our Isaac's. We just need to learn to wait on God's promises to come.

And here we are, centuries later, and the descendants of Ishmael, which are the Palestinians, are still often at war with the descendants of Isaac, the Jews.

And there's entire wars and the chaos and it all traces back to when a couple decided to take control and to Edge God Out.

Now, chances are, all of you are sitting thinking, "Okay, I understand that. But I'm never going to sleep with my maid servant called Hagar. I don't even have a maid servant."

And that may be true, but instead you may be a single man or woman, and the clock is ticking and you love Jesus and you have your standards. But since one hasn't come along that meets those, you just settle for the first one that will take notice.

And you force something, you manipulate it, you compromise, and you settle for something that's less than God's best because you're going to take control, and you're going to edge God out.

Or it may be financially, you're a strong follower of Jesus, and you know that God loves a cheerful giver but you rationalize, you compromise, you take control. It's not that you can't



afford to give it's that you choose not to give. And you take control of something that God loves, and you edge God out.

And listen church God doesn't need you money and I did a whole message on giving not that long ago. So, I'm not going to go through it all again if you forgot what I said you can find it on our website. It's there go listen to it again. But God still loves when give not out of manipulation like many churches do, but cheerfully.

You want something and you want it bad, I'm not talking about needed it, just wanting it, and you can't afford it. So, what do you do? You Edge God Out.

You manipulate it, you find some way to borrow, steal, or whatever, and you make a very bad long-term decision for a short-term benefit because you're going to Edge God Out, and you're going to make it happen one way or the other.

And then we feel strapped, anxious, and not at peace.

So, here's an application question I want to ask you, "What are you trying to control?"

Is it people? Your children? Maybe it's your grown children. Maybe it's the way your grown children raise your grandchildren because they're not doing it right.

Maybe it's your coworkers, maybe it's your image, maybe it's what people think about you.

What are you trying to control? And when you identify this in your life, I want to give you three questions that you can ask over and over again that I believe can help you learn to lay down what you're trying to control and trust it to God.

The first question we're going to ask is this: "Is it worth my concern?"

There was one time, Jesus was visiting the house of Mary and Martha, and Martha was trying to control something that didn't matter that much. It mattered it had to be done that's what Scripture tells us, but it wasn't as important as something else.

Martha just wanted everything perfect and she's freaking out,

So, she goes to Jesus and says, "Jesus, get Mary to help me out. She's lazy; she's not doing anything, I want the house to be perfect because you're here."

And Jesus looks on and says to Martha, in Luke 10. . .

Luke 10:41–42 (NLT): But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details!  
42 There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

This isn't worth getting upset about.

"Is it worth my concern?"

So many of us, we're trying to control things that don't matter that much, that a month from now, it's not going to matter a lick.

So, I would ask you, Does it really matter if someone doesn't fold the towels just right? Or load the dishwasher perfectly?

Does it really matter if your grade school son goes off to

school and his hair is not combed perfectly? Will that alter his chance to get into Harvard one day? Probably not, trust me the school kids will give him a hard time about it anyway and he will make sure it's right the next time.

Does it really matter, guys, if your wife comes back and leaves trash in your perfect car?

Ok maybe that one does matter. . .No it actually doesn't.

Is it worth my concern?

Look at your neighbor and ask them "Is it worth my concern?"

The second question we're going to ask is, "Is it mine to control?" And the answer is sometimes "yes, it's yours to control." When there's something you need to do about it go for it. And you need to partner with God to see it come to pass, let Him help you work it out.

But there are other times the answer is "no." And you need to stop trying to be the savior.

The truth is church, surrendering control is not the same thing as relinquishing responsibility; those are two very different things. You should still be responsible when you can.

If you are messed up financially, you should probably cut back on your spending. Do what you can. Do something about it.

And listen God will help you in those situations as well. He has provided for me and my family even after we did stupid. But I still worked. Didn't just latch onto the debt sit on the couch and said OK God I give this to you take care of it. I

did my part, and God showed up and blessed us in the process. But we partnered with Him. We didn't Edge God Out.

If your marriage is messed up, can you do something about it? Absolutely. You can pray together, you can get some counseling. You can do something about it.

If you're a guy and you haven't been on a date in like forever, do you just trust God with it? Of course you trust God with it. But also, you can do something about it.

Brush your teeth, put on some deodorant, sell your video game console. Get out of your house, smile at the girls, ask them out. You can do something about it.

If you need a job, get off the couch and go look for one. Trust God in the process, but do your part as well.

Listen God will open doors, you just have to be willing to knock on them.

But there are some things that you just can't or shouldn't even try to control, so, ask yourself, "Is it mine to control?"

And there are some things, you're going to have to say, "No, not mine to control. Not for me, shouldn't even try.

James 4:13–14 (NIV): Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

James says to all who want to control their every circumstance, situation, or life event. Listen, you who say, today or tomorrow, we'll go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money. He says, You think you can iron everything out, you try to plan it all out, you think you know exactly what's going to happen.

Proverbs 16:9 (TPT): Within your heart you can make plans for your future, but the Lord chooses the steps you take to get there.

Again in Proverbs. . .

Proverbs 14:12 (TPT): You can rationalize it all you want and justify the path of error you have chosen, but you'll find out in the end that you took the road to destruction.

But then Jeremiah tells us. . .

Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT): For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

And then the Psalmist tells us. . .

Psalms 33:11 (NLT): But the Lord's plans stand firm forever; his intentions can never be shaken.

Back to James he goes on to say, You don't even know what will happen tomorrow. You don't even control tomorrow. How do you think you can control a year from now?

So, ask yourself, "Is it worth my concern?" "Is it mine to control?"

And the last question is if you're taking notes, Is it for God alone? Is it worth my concern? Is it mine to control? Or is it for God alone?

Ask those questions over and over again. Is it worth my concern? Is it mine to control? Or is it for God alone? If I can do something about it, I will. But if it's something I need to let God handle. . .

Paul said it like this, He told the Philippians something in chapter 4 something we all need to do. He said,

(play with the verse)

Philippians 4:6–7 (NIV): Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

How many of you are anxious about something?

Hear this church, it is so easy to be anxious. It is especially easy when we are trying to control things that are simply out of our control.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, what are we to do? By prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

And when you do that what happens?

The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

I love that. When you give it to God, the peace of God will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. So, even when it is for God alone we still have a role. Give it to God.

When you try to control something you can't control, you're anxious. But when you give it to God, you have peace.

The circumstances may not have changed, the situation may not have changed, but in the midst of it all you can still have peace.

So many of us we're trying to control it and we're stressed and worried and anxious and consumed with fear because we're trying to control something that's really for God alone to take care of.

And when you surrender it to God, he gives you peace.

Let me try to make this applicable for us today. I'm trying to bring the plane in for a landing.

I want to ask you, Can you change your spouse? . . .Some of you had to think about that for a while. This isn't a trick question.

I think I can. No, you can't.

You can love your spouse, you can pray for your spouse, you can encourage your spouse. But you can't change your spouse.

So, what do you do if your spouse needs changing?

Besides looking in the mirror and figuring out what might be up with you. You love them, pray for them, and you trust

them to God. You stop trying to control and you trust them to God.

Can you heal your loved one that is sick? Can you do that? Not without God working through you to accomplish that. In your own power no you can't, So, what can you do?

You can pray for them, you can encourage them, you can help them get the medical attention they might need.

But ultimately, what do you do? You trust them to God, and the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Can you control your future or the future of your children or the future of anyone for that matter? No. What can you do? You can pray, you can plan, you can give wise counsel, you can make wise decisions.

But ultimately God control's our and their's future not you.

And so, what do you do? You give it, you give them to God.

Let's go back to Abraham for a minute.

Remember what he was promised. A son. It's what he wanted more than anything. And after 25 years of waiting God does what He promised.

(Play with verse)

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV): For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.



So, he has a son and what did God ask him to sacrifice?  
His son.

And for those of you that may not be familiar with the story.  
God promises him a son, and then asks him to lay down the  
life of his son.

It's a story that makes me think about what I would do in the  
same situation.

And so, this father, who for years and years prayed for a son,  
tells his son, We're going to go up to the top of Mount Moriah  
and we're going to make a sacrifice.

And the son carries the wood, and they're walking up and  
maybe holding hands and the son looks up and says, Daddy,  
where's the animal for the sacrifice?

Listen church most scholars believe Issac to be around 12  
years old, maybe a little younger but he carried the wood so  
we know he was old enough for that task.

And Abraham looks at his son that he loves more than  
anything in the world, the promised child and says, The Lord  
will provide.

And the guy who wanted to control everything, tried to help  
God out in the son department. Walks up to the top, builds  
an altar, takes his son and puts him on the altar, raises a knife  
to sacrifice his son. And an angel says, Don't lay a hand on  
him. I see you trust God. Abraham looks over in the  
bushes and there's a ram right by the spot of the sacrifice.

Genesis 22. . .

Genesis 22:13–14 (NIV): Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”

When Abraham finally surrendered control of that which he wanted most, he saw the miraculous provision of God.

When he stopped Edging God Out and started exalting God only, and surrendered what he valued most. That's when the peace of God which transcends all understanding, guarded his heart and his mind because the Lord provided.

Hear this church when you're trying to control something that's not yours to control. You will be filled with anxiety.

But when you take what belongs to God only and you lay it down at his feet you will know God as Jehovah Jireh, the Lord who provides.

Philippians 4:19 (ASV): And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

We willing lay down even what we think we want so God can ultimately give us what we need.

And what He has for us is far better than what you can accomplish on your own.

Ephesians 3:20 (TPT): Never doubt God's mighty power to work in you and accomplish all this. He will achieve infinitely more than your greatest request, your most unbelievable dream, and exceed your wildest imagination! He will outdo

them all, for his miraculous power constantly energizes you.

And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Father, today we pray that you would set some people free. Free to trust you completely.

Listen church if you and I won't Edge God Out He says that He will. . .

Psalm 37:4 (NIV): Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Maybe someone here or listening online has been trying to control this or that thing, or trying to control someone's idea of you, your image or some people or some circumstances.

But it's outside of your jurisdiction, and you're anxious about it and you want the peace of God.

You've been trying to do what might be one of the most common problems that people around the world for centuries have tried to do. And that is, you're trying to be in complete control of your life.

And hear this church, I wanted to be in control of where I stood before God.

So, for years I felt I needed to perform so I could win God's approval. And I dealt with that not so long ago in another message.

But the truth is you could never ever accomplish that. I could never accomplish that.

Our problem is we are not in control of God's standard. His standard is perfect and we all fall drastically short.

God said that our sin, it separates us from him. And the only way we can be made right with him is to surrender completely all control to Jesus. Trust in him who was perfect, him who was without sin, him who died on the cross and rose again so we could be forgiven.

And because of what Jesus did and not what we could do. When you come into relationship with Jesus you become a new creation the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

You are in right standing before Him not because of what you do, but because of what He did. And that's the good news of the gospel. He did for us what we couldn't do for ourselves.

Prayer

**Grad videos**