

IDENTIFYING & AVOIDING A “CONTROL FREAK”¹ (i.e. a Psychopath)

“A Christian man’s treatment of his girlfriend or wife—**whether he is loving, caring, gracious, and humble, or is instead argumentative, controlling, and manipulative**—is the subject...” (p. 34)

“**What might this controlling behavior look like?** It could be keeping track of their girlfriend [or spouse]—**calling, texting, emailing to see who she is with and what she is doing. He might check her email or texts, having no regard for her privacy.** This could carry over into demands about the way a dishwasher needs to be loaded, or how the home is arranged... He may tell her what to wear on certain days. He gets to decide what they do, including where they go on vacation together... **He finds more and more ways to exert control over her life. He is not a boyfriend or a husband; he is more like a dictator... He’s always in charge; she must listen to him, or else he makes her life miserable by verbally berating her.** Intimidation... pressures her into living under his tyranny. If she disagrees or fights back, he tries to exert greater and greater control. **He’s always right; she’s always wrong. Over time, she doubts herself,** because he consistently disregards her opinion. **He’s prideful; she’s insecure, so he manipulates her. He’s always got the higher ground in a disagreement.**” (p. 36)

“**This kind of behavior is wrong on so many levels,** but biblically speaking, let’s define why this is an affront to what true biblical manhood and womanhood should look like. (pp. 36-39)

- “**First,** consider that **a wife or girlfriend has inherent value because she is an image-bearer made in the likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-28)**
- “**Second,** as an image-bearer, she is not anyone’s robot, but she has a spirit, a brain, emotions, and a will—all of which give her a fundamental ability to make volitional choices on her own. She can choose responsibility for herself. She doesn’t need a boyfriend or husband to tell her what to do with every decision in her life. (2 Thess. 3:4-5)
- “**Third,** Christian male leadership is not characterized by control or “lording over” someone, but by loving, servant-hearted leadership. (Mark 10:41-45)
- “**Fourth** and finally, a humble and wise man knows who is truly sovereign—God—and not himself. (Isa. 40:21-23)

“**In stark contrast, a man who manipulates and controls a woman—through his words, sex, flirtation, threats, withdrawal, or passive-aggressive games**—is not trusting in God’s sovereignty, but instead is taking matters into his own hands.

“John Gottman says that **husbands who refuse to be influenced by their wives end up divorced**... in a longitudinal study of 130 newlywed couples he found that with about 80% accuracy, he could predict which couples would end up no longer married.” (p. 39)

“**[Why do smart girls settle for a controlling, psychopathic type of guy?]** “Janelle settled for Dominique because she devalued her life as a single adult... Believing that marriage was

¹ With the exception of the Addenda, all of the material contained here apart from that found in brackets [] has been taken verbatim from “*She’s Got the Wrong Guy*” by Deepak Reju (New Growth Press: Greensboro, NC, 2017). Compiled by Mike Edwards, June, 2018, Madison, Ohio.

somehow a superior way to live, she thought, ‘*Let me just get married, then I can work all these other things out.*’ She struggled with fears of loneliness, discontentment with her singleness, insecurity about herself, and frustrations with her life in general... She wasn’t ignorant to the fact that Dominique was controlling, but she was more focused on the painful realities of her singleness. The grass was greener on the other side... **Paired with this, she wrongly overestimated what the change of circumstances in marriage might bring.** She believed, ‘*I won’t be as lonely anymore,*’ yet she didn’t realize that a lot of married people are very lonely. Marriage is not a paradise. As one pastor commented, ‘*Being single and lonely is better than being married and lonely.*’...Piled on top of all of her other fears—loneliness, never having children, being unmarried for the rest of her life—was the fear of missing out.” (pp. 40-41)

“Because Janelle is insecure about herself, she often thinks, ‘***Maybe I deserve the way he treats me.***’ She’s always questioned herself, wondering if anyone would ever love her... Because she thought so poorly of herself, it was not hard to accept Dominique. ‘***I know this guy has got problems, but who else is going to love me?***’ ...she didn’t want to have to start over... Perhaps you too ignore important issues because your fears are too big, and [your] God is too small.” (pp. 41-42)

“A controlling man can use the Bible to get his girlfriend or wife to do what he wants... [or] maybe the guy’s control comes in a form that is less spiritualized—he is just overbearing in his demands, jealousies, or insecurities...”

“No one deserves this. God doesn’t treat us this way. If God is loving, gracious, and merciful—why would you ever think to settle for anything less than a kind, thoughtful, Christ-centered man?” (pp. 41-42)

ADDENDA

Sociopath vs. Psychopath: What’s the Difference?²

“Both lack empathy, the ability to stand in someone else’s shoes and understand how they feel. But a psychopath has less regard for others, says Aaron Kipnis, Ph.D, author of *The Midas Complex*. Someone with this personality type sees others as objects he can use for his own benefit.

“They’re not always violent... In movies and TV shows, psychopaths and sociopaths are usually the villains who kill or torture innocent people. In real life... most are not. Instead they use manipulation and reckless behavior to get what they want... If you recognize some of these traits in a family member or coworker, you may be tempted to think you’re living or working with a psychopath or sociopath. But just because a person is mean or selfish, it doesn’t necessarily mean he has a disorder.

“It’s not easy to spot a psychopath. They can be intelligent, charming, and good at mimicking emotions. They may pretend to be interested in you, but in reality, they probably don’t care... They’re skilled actors whose sole mission is to manipulate people for personal gain [L. Michael Tompkins, Ed.D] says. He’s a psychologist at the Sacramento County Mental Health Treatment Center...”

“A psychopath doesn’t have a conscience. If he lies to you so he can steal your money, he won’t feel any moral qualms, though he may pretend to... [they] are more ‘cold-hearted’ and

² These excerpts taken verbatim from *Sociopath vs. Psychopath: What’s the Difference?* By Kara Mayer Robinson, WebMed.Com, copyright 2014 – accessed May 04, 2018.

calculating. **They carefully plot their moves and use aggression in a planned-out way to get what they want.** If they're after more money or status in the office, for example, they'll make a plan to take out any barriers that stand in the way, even if it's another person's job or reputation... A psychopath [when he sees blood or violence in a movie, has the opposite reaction of most people whose hearts beat faster, breathing quickens, etc.]. He gets calmer. Kipnis says **that quality helps psychopaths be fearless and engage in risky behavior.** 'They don't fear the consequences of their actions,' he says."