



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

Monthly Message for the Priests Wives

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Overbearing or Controlling Behavior

Volume 5

- **Academic Definition:** Controlling behavior refers to actions or attitudes that seek to manipulate, dominate, or dictate the thoughts, actions, or decisions of others. In academic literature, controlling behavior is often discussed in the context of interpersonal relationships, leadership, and psychology, highlighting its negative impact on individual autonomy and well-being.

- **References and Studies:**

2- "Controlling Behaviors in Intimate Relationships: Scale Development and Gender Differences" by Neil S. Jacobson and John M. Gottman:

This study focuses on controlling behaviors in intimate relationships, examining their impact and gender differences, shedding light on the detrimental effects of such behaviors.

3- "Controlling Behavior in Adolescence: The Role of Parenting Style and Adolescent Self-Esteem" by Jiaxiu Shi and Nan Zhou:

The research explores the connection between parenting styles, adolescent self-esteem, and controlling behaviors, emphasizing the potential long-term consequences on well-being.

4- "Leadership and Coercive Control: A Social Psychological Perspective" by Laura M. Graves and Richard L. Moreland:

This article delves into the impact of coercive control in leadership, discussing its effects on group dynamics and individual motivation.

- **Avoidance:** Encourage humility and servant leadership, emphasizing collaboration rather than control.

- **Biblical Reference:** Mark 10:42-45 - Jesus teaches about servant leadership.
- **Biblical Stories:**

2- Saul's Unhealthy Control (1 Samuel 18:6-9):

King Saul's increasing jealousy and attempts to control David out of fear and insecurity led to negative consequences. This story illustrates the destructive impact of controlling behavior.

3- Pharisees' Legalism (Matthew 23:1-12):

Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for their controlling and legalistic behavior, emphasizing the importance of humility and servant leadership over authoritarian control.

4- Jewish Leaders' Opposition to Jesus (John 9:13-34):

The Pharisees' attempts to control the narrative and discredit Jesus, particularly in the healing of the blind man, exemplify the negative consequences of using authority to manipulate others.

- **Implications for Pastoral Care, Leadership, and Interpersonal Relationships:**
 - 2- Erosion of Trust:** Controlling behavior undermines trust within a religious community, hindering effective pastoral care and leadership.
 - 3- Individual Autonomy:** Controlling behavior restricts individual autonomy, impeding personal growth and well-being.
 - 4- Community Harmony:** Healthy relationships within the community are compromised when controlling behaviors prevail, leading to disharmony and division.
- **Conclusion:** Academic literature and biblical stories converge to highlight the detrimental impact of controlling behavior on interpersonal relationships, leadership, and community dynamics within religious settings. Leaders within religious communities are encouraged to adopt servant leadership principles and foster an environment that promotes autonomy, respect, and collaboration.
- **Funny Stories:**
 - 1- The Overenthusiastic Event Organizer:**

In a religious community known for its events and gatherings, there was one particularly enthusiastic member who took on the role of the event organizer. This individual had a habit of meticulously planning every detail, from the seating arrangements to the color coordination of decorations. One day, the community decided to organize a spontaneous picnic. The event organizer, determined to maintain control, brought a measuring tape to ensure that each picnic blanket was placed precisely six feet apart. The community, instead of feeling restricted, found the situation amusing and affectionately referred to it as the "Precision Picnic." In the end, everyone enjoyed the event, and the community embraced the organizer's quirks with good humor.

- Moral: Even in moments of excessive control, a community that can find humor in the details fosters a sense of togetherness.

2- The Tale of the Strictly Timed Sermon:

In a church where sermons were strictly timed, the priest had a habit of using a stopwatch to ensure that each sermon lasted exactly 20 minutes. One Sunday, as the priest passionately delivered the sermon, the stopwatch accidentally slipped from their hand and went rolling down the aisle. Instead of panicking, the congregation burst into laughter. The priest, realizing the humor in the situation, decided to continue the sermon without the stopwatch and stayed for 40 minutes 😊

The community, appreciating the pastor's ability to let go of control, found the unplanned moment to be one of the most memorable and enjoyable services.

- Moral: A community that can find humor in unexpected disruptions fosters a more relaxed and enjoyable environment.
- These stories aim to use humor to address the concept of controlling behavior within a religious community, emphasizing the importance of flexibility and the ability to find joy in unexpected situations.