M16A1 Manipulation Resisting

George Earle Wade

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Chapters 1 and 2 - The Results Of Mind Manipulation

Philosophies ultimately devolve to only two viewpoints: Divine or human centered. Even when mostly anchored in the divine we remain susceptible to the human. Peter shied from aligning with gentiles when in a joint meeting. Abraham’s great faith wavered when facing pagan kings. Only near the end of his life did Sampson shake off his predilection toward the human.

Chapter 14 talked of boundaries God’s word provides the Christian. Value within these boundaries are high values. Those values outside are low. *God determines the ranking of values.*

Most people adopt the low values outside the boundaries. Those aiming at Christ likeness aim for values inside the boundaries. Those outside share some values with those living inside. And although living inside God’s boundaries, all persons can be tempted toward some outside lower values.

Over time, Seth’s progeny as the sons of God compromised with Cain’s progeny, the sons of man. By Noah’s last days before the flood, only his family represented God’s family in valuing the high calling of God. Although descendants of Seth, all but Noah’s family had, over time, shifted values from high to low. They chose to become associated with Cain’s lineage as sons of man. We are sons and daughters of God by choice, agreeing to adoption by him.

The Pharisees, Jesus said, strain at a gnat but swallow a camel. They lost sight of what’s important and prided themselves in the smallest things of the law. As Christians it is easier to be involved in the color of the carpet or the order of the service. Welcoming the guest, serving those in need, sharing God’s grace and way to heaven might be lost in serving the grandeur of the meeting place itself.

We become a believer with a focus on Jesus but it’s too easy to shift focus to the small things of life and church; too easy to see the church as the building and our cliquish friendships as the purpose of coming together.

We as humans are blessed, or cursed, with an infinite thought capability. From the most hideous evil to sublime imaginings of heaven, we can think it. We must endeavor to control our thoughts from imagining the *joys* of sin. In 1 Corinthians 14:32 God tells us, “The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.” He enables this power. We must endeavor to avail ourselves of his power to “think on these things” - whatever is true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report. We must choose to think on things of virtue and praise him who gives us both capacity and with control. -Philippians 4:8 The lecturer mentions Job’s wife as thinking disparagingly. This story might have an alternate understanding. (1)

When life throws us a curveball, we face the choice of positively adapting or blame shifting. Face the challenge or wallow in self pity or excuses.

We can also indulge in an unhealthy mental occupation with sins, lust, and competition. Men especially indulge in competition: on the sports field, at work, and in dating. Rich old men seek trophy wives. We don’t outgrow unhealthy obsessions. We must always engage our heavenly support system to continually adjust away from impulsive indulgences.

As believers we must protect against mind manipulation, even self manipulation. Without protective effort we can fall into “Changing Of Values, Shifting Of Focus, Uncontrollable Thought Life.” -Lecturer These indulgences lead us into making sinful choices.

It’s not unusual to see believers backslide. This is not sudden, but is instead a lengthy process where the believer fails to guard his or her mind, allowing spiritual enemies to tamper with the boundaries meant by God to keep us close to him.

We must cast down our lustful imaginings, even good things that “exalteth itself against the knowledge of God” We must bring “into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

Chapter 3 - Strategies Used For Mind Manipulation

1-Repeated Exposure To Experiences

2-Consistent Repetition Of Ideas

3-Depth Targeting Of Human Mind

4-Emotional Manipulation Of People

Those of us growing up in Godly families learn spiritual boundaries. Things outside the boundaries, such as Lewd and vulgar conversation, Pornography, Intoxication, shock us. Even Sunday church attendance shocked me until my mid 30s when I began attending Sunday services as the organist. My wife played the piano for Sunday evening services. Doing this we learned that these people, different from us nevertheless believed much like us on most issues. Our language to say what we believed was different but in the end our beliefs and values resembled the same on most issues.

Of course, when the pastor on Sunday preached on how to worship he unintentionally said that on the seventh day we shouldn’t go shopping or watch football. He corrected himself saying “that is, for us, we shouldn’t shop or watch football on Sunday.” And we were replaced that week by someone else at the organ and piano. But I continued to realize that non-Sabbath observing people nevertheless are Christians. To this day, though, I fail to understand how Sunday worship replaces the Sabbath of the Bible. I was exposed enough to recognize brotherhood among Christians but I still recognize the boundary of the fourth commandment.

I realize this personal story isn’t reflective about crossing boundaries. You’re talking about boundaries protecting us from evil and sin. But without this non-objectionable story about boundaries, my understanding of brotherhood was breached. I may be a better person because of it, but familiarity beyond the boundary changed me in a small, or big way.

Consistent exposure and consistent repetition are close cousins. Our resistance breaks down and we can even desire what was previously forbidden. When we even “indulge” frequently in what is only tolerable by God more than what he wants us to find Desirable, we will begin to look fondly on what is forbidden. We can come to want what the world wants. I once had an 8th grade student in an Adventist Christian school assure me that her friends wanted the good things of God. But complicatingly they also wanted the good times of the world.

Depth Targeting was discovered by psychologists about a hundred years ago. Depth targeting aims at the subconscious level, thus largely bypassing reasoning and tunnels below our God given boundaries. “Depth Targeting is used to convince people that wearing clothing that is seductive, provocative, and revealing are not wrong, but the most sophisticated thing to do.” - lecturer The lecturer informs us that “Depth Targeting is also used to sell after-shave lotions, cigarettes, liquor, and even underwear for men. What they say through these advertisements is that their using product makes a man "totally manly"! This insidious undermining of our values leads to a shift in values towards materialism and indulgence. We don’t easily recognize these mind manipulative influences.

With ubiquitous cellphones with us all the time we listen to music and watch movies even while on the go. We expect constant entertainment. Listening to a sermon in church becomes an interruption from our flow of entertainment. Many churches in recent decades substitute electric guitar and drums in place of the organ. We sing fewer hymns and more repetitive contemporary music. The compensation I find in my church is that our contemporary singing is counterintuitively sung to a very slowtempo. We don’t have drums.

We have a natural, built in attraction to worshipping winners. Boys look to sports hero’s while girls may look to fashion models. All look at famous singers, actors and actresses. We might even admire politicians as hero’s. These earn tremendous incomes accruing to our spending to try to be like them. God made us as individuals to interact with and serve beneficially in society. We do not gain when trying to emulate someone else’s God given gifts. He gave us gifts. When comparing ourselves to others we risk losing site of the gifts he gives us.

We risk following the examples of our hero’s across the boundaries God sets. We may not realize we’ve crossed until we look back to see the boundary behind us. It may take more courage than we can muster to turn away from our hero’s presence to recross inside the boundary and refocus on Jesus.

Our emotions reach past our minds. Our sinful world appeals directly to our emotions. The world around us tells us not to think so much, just do it! Our world tells us we’re losers when we hesitate. Jump in with the rest of the world. You only have one life to live. But God tells us that after this life ends and we sleep a bit in the first death, that there’s a glorious eternal life awaiting us when we hear the trumpet at Jesus’ second coming and are awakened. We must remember to respect the boundaries to receive this promise.

Chapter 4 How To Resist Mind Manipulation

I understand chapter four to say that we must be a Christian apologist to ourselves. Maybe this entire lesson teaches the same. I’ve wondered about the connection until now. We can be our own worst opponent in the Christian walk. There’s so much temptation surrounding and even within us. These temptations afflict us like a mixture of thorns and aloe Vera. Our temptations irritate our spiritual selves and at the same time sooth us, lulling us to a near slumber and we risk sleep walking over the boundaries meant for good. We must rouse ourselves in faith and active connection with Jesus.

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1. How this module helped your studies

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2. What new lessons you learned?

1. Interestingly, Job 2:9 Young’s Literal Translation translates the Hebrew word as “bless” and not as curse God. It is possible that Lot’s wife tells Job, You’re a good, righteous man and husband. You can die in peace with a clear conscience. She is the wife not touched in person but otherwise hurt by everything else. I understand the same Hebrew word can reasonably be translated as curse or it can equally mean bless.

We aren’t led in the story to know that Job was given a new, better wife. She was blessed with a new family as was Job. It appears that God trusted her along with his faithful servant Job with the blessings that followed this cosmic test of Job’s faithfulness.

In the amplified version, Job’s wife says, “Do you still cling to your integrity [and your faith and trust in God, without blaming Him]?” It goes on to say curse. But her preface seems to say, “You’re still faithful despite the pain and sorrow. You’re a good man.” These are words a loving and believing wife would say to tell her husband to relax and trust in his last hours of life.

<http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1015-87582018000300007&lng=pt&nrm=iso&tlng=pt#:~:text=A%20literal%20translation%20of%20the,God%20and%20die%22%20as%20normative>.

3. Your critical evaluation on the topic. We mean what is the shortcoming you see in the text, your suggestions for improvement.

The lecturer briefly touches on racial or ethnic hatred by Jonah interfering with his willingness to obey God. This could have been an opportunity to update this lesson to point out the insidious mind control exercised in recent years by both American and Indian governments, political parties and politicians (by even our polarized Christian churches, in America at least). This mind control cultivates divisions and distrust racially and ethnically. And in both nations religious bigotries, if I may chance it to say the word, has become a political football. I’m more familiar of course with American changes in values but I’ve read some on changes in India as well. Between only our two countries we have close to a quarter of the world’s population, perhaps 23%. Democracy itself is threatened. And in that I see freedom of religion threatened.

4. How does this lesson help you?

Living within God’s boundaries but too often walking in close proximity to those boundaries makes it all too easy to step over the boundary. Only one step over seems small but yet leaves us totally outside.

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George Earle Wade, MBS

[George@wade.us.com](mailto:George@wade.us.com)

Primary: 22329 Berg Rd, Southfield, Mi 48033 USA

Secondary: 13063 S La Rambia Rd, Arizona City, AZ 85123 USA

Date: 05-22-2022

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