Abandon Yourself

By Jason Triplett

Do you love to control things? It's a hard question to look in the mirror and answer honestly. Being "controlling" is taboo in our culture. Ironic because we are a culture of control freaks...

Did you feel that? Even the name, "Control Freak" comes with a sting of fear and pain. No one wants to be labeled as controlling.

Me? If I can influence an outcome to something; then I find myself tempted to do so. It's hard for me to stay out of situations and let them fall where they may; even when it's none of my business. Honestly, losing control makes me edgy. I think it makes us all a bit edgy.

Yet, I think there is a more serious problem in our culture other than simple control issues. Beyond the obvious issues that arise in attempting to direct people and situations, control can mask itself as responsibility.

Wait, responsibility is a good thing, right? All I have ever been told by the authorities in my life is to, "be responsible". Every parental lecture, every teacher, every employer, every self-help book I've read all stressed personal responsibility.

In some cases a thinly veiled sense of security lives underneath personal responsibility. The belief is "just doing the right thing" equals a predictable, safe outcome of good things. If this is you, I want to ask, how's that working for you?

I have seen many people who have their lives set in familiarity and comfort. They are responsible, upstanding people, but are also under the burden of maintaining the life they've built; all in the name of responsibility. Then when outcomes in life are unfavorable or even devastating they look to the heavens like, "What gives? I've done the right things, attended the right meetings, loved my kids, paid my bills. God, why are you doing this to me?"

The idea of irresponsibility reminds me of the Gospel of Mark. Jesus called his disciples together and began to send them out to spread the good news of God and to serve others. (Mark 6:6-13) This is a major responsibility! This is the big show. It's the reason why Jesus was training them, right?

But what would they need? What did Jesus tell them to take with them? Money? Food? Extra Clothes? Tablet? Smart Phone? Nope, nothing, nada. He said, "don't take a walking stick, leave the food here, you won't need backpack, and don't take any money." Not even a Bible! They went out with the clothes on their backs and sandals. How irresponsible!

I ask myself, would I have gone? Let's be honest. When I leave the house I usually have a smart phone, wallet, keys, sunglasses, sometimes my laptop bag, jacket (if needed) and, um, a plan. Jesus allowed them none of that for a very specific reason.

Denying ourselves and following Jesus is about abandon. (Luke 9:23) Notice I didn't say "abandoning". "Abandoning" indicates leaving things or people. "Abandon" involves leaving the one thing Jesus doesn't need to accomplish his will, You. Don't get me wrong, Jesus wants to gracefully and wisely use us, but He doesn't need us. He wants a willing soul, a person whose abandoned themselves to Him.

Think of things that can be abandoned: children, houses, whole families or jobs. It is absolutely certain that leaving these for someone else to attend to is all irresponsibility. But don't rule out that Jesus may be calling you to "take nothing, consider nothing" and leap. It'll feel like you're being irresponsible, but pray and seek Him, He'll be there, to assure you it's the best thing you can do.