

Aflame the Heart
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To Be In Control

Obedience is among the unpopular virtues. Nobody wants to be told or to follow another. All wants to be their own master. No one wants rules or commandments; for that means being subordinate. When we obey, we submit ourselves to somebody above ourselves. Yet, obedience and or submission is essential and necessary in our spiritual life, our relationship with God through our Lord Jesus with the Holy Spirit. God is the Ruler; thus, we obey. He has sovereignty and dominion over all; hence, we submit everything to Him. Our whole life will only have purpose and meaning in the measure that we let God reign in our lives and our will in submission to His Holy Will.

In Chapter 45 of the book of Prophet Isaiah, God speaks about His sovereignty and omnipotence, *"I am the Lord and there is no other,"* He created everything and no other God besides Him. God even said: *"Woe to anyone who contends with their Maker... shall the clay say to the potter, 'what are you doing?'"* Every word of this chapter is captivating, disturbing, and powerful at the same time; in other words, the whole chapter is simply telling us, He is in control not us. This idea of control can be problematic, especially when we now move into the realm of spiritual life. Everything is grace and the primacy of grace, meaning everything is under God's control and His work. All we are to do is obey, be docile, cooperative, and like the clay, be malleable and formable.

I brought this topic into our reflection, because we do not want us to fall into the mentality that we are the ones in control and not God. There are things left for us to do; but never be mistaken, we are not the ones doing everything, God is. We want to be in control, since the dawn of creation. We want to know all, but our heads are not big enough. We long to possess all, but our hearts will not contain all it wants. We want to hoard many things, yet our hands and arms are not capable of holding them all. Our very physical or bodily structure can reveal who we are not; we are not God and we are not in control.

We are obsessed with control because we are emboldened by the many progress in science and technology, progress in nature, in medicine, economy and so on. However, we should bear in mind, these progress and development of many things and in many areas in human existence are already known by God. There is nothing that we are doing now and their consequences that He does not know. He even knows the things that man has made that can be his own destruction. Man can have some illusion of control, but will never have what he wants. Every advancement is just a spec in the degree of God's infinity and perfection. But humanity wants control even the illusory one just so one's ego and self-exaltation can be fed.

Control is power, but spiritual life is never in the realm of human control. In the physical and material realm, there are areas that human beings are given control and this makes us think that the metaphysical order too can be under our spell and machination. We are limited and finite beings, that should be enough for us to nurture in our minds and hearts the importance of God's presence and sovereignty. Accepting our limitations will not be weakness but rather power, for we will not only live by our own efforts but also with the consciousness that God will

do great things with us and in us. Consequently, obedience to God and docility to His ways must be our daily concern.

God taught us obedience by Himself obeying to human beings, Jesus obeying Mary and Joseph. By obedience to God, we learn that true control happens only when we work with God and not against Him. Control in our life is achieved by letting Christ totally be all in all of our existence, so that as He reigns in everything in us, we reign with Him. As we reign with Him, we are in control with Him. The freest person is one who considers himself a slave of Christ (Rom. 1:1), like St. Paul, like all the saints. One may consider himself free because he can do what he wants in this passing world; yet the greatest freedom is of the spirit, the freedom of living for God. As you free yourself from the allurements and worldly mentalities; there and then, you obtain control in life for you let Jesus, our Lord, reign in you.