
[illegible]

VIEW

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Sharon's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how she answers the following questions.

Where did Sharon say we inherited our desire for control?

How did Sharon describe the illusion of control?

Watch Session 2: *Why Is Control So Enticing?* (12 minutes).

REVIEW

Like Maurissa, many of us feel a sense of control when we have everything in our life mapped out. But Maurissa's story shows us that even when we think we have control, everything can change in a day. **What about Maurissa's story did you relate to? When have you tried to map out the details of your life, hoping for a particular outcome?**

After Maurissa experienced an unexpected job termination in the middle of her pregnancy, she relied on her own effort to fix her finances and job situation. She believed that all her checklists, due diligence, and planning would get her the expected outcome she desired. **When has an unexpected change highlighted your own issues with control? How did you learn to trust God after that unexpected change?**

Sharon opened the session by sharing what psychologists call “the illusion of control.” This term describes our tendency to think we have more control over our circumstances than we actually do. **What habits have you formed that contribute to an illusion of control?**

Sharon listed different examples of how we contribute to the illusion of control—athletes wearing the same article of clothing for games or gamblers shaking their dice a certain way. **What other examples do we see in**

How does this passage describe the way the Israelites took control of their situation? Where did the illusion of control lead them, and how did it affect their relationship with God?

The Israelites became concerned when Moses took longer than expected to come back down from the mountain to meet with God. Instead of waiting patiently, the Israelites acted rashly when didn't have the answers they wanted. **When has God's "slow" timing tempted you to control your life instead of trusting God?**

God had a plan for the Israelites, but because of their impatience, they took control of the situation by forming their own plan. Sometimes, when we're consumed by control, we conflate the plans we've created with God's desire for our lives. **In what ways is it easy to mistake your plans with God's will? When have you ever conflated the two like the Israelites did?**

When it feels like God is moving slower than we'd like, it's easy to turn to a false god we think will fix our problems. Like the Israelites to the golden calf, we sacrifice our most precious resources (time, energy, money, relationships) to the false god of control. **Where do you turn when it feels like God is being too slow? What kinds of resources (time, energy, finances, etc.) do you try to control?**

Instead of trusting God in his silence, the Israelites turned to an idol—something they could control—to satisfy their anxiety. **In what ways have you turned to control for comfort from anxiety?**

While we don't bow down to golden cows, we still struggle with idolatry. An idol is anything other than God that we turn to when we feel like life is out of control. **What could it look like to cultivate a more accurate view of why and when you turn to control instead of turning to God?**

Through the Israelites idolatry, we've learned how important it is to never seek refuge in an illusion. We must seek refuge in what is real and true—God himself. As Sharon said, we can find the answer to our illusion

DEEPER WALK

Read: Read chapters 1–2 in Sharon’s book *The Cost of Control*.

Memorize: Memorize John 8:31–32, “. . . If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Pray: Pray that God would reveal any habits or behaviors you have that are contributing to the illusion of control in your life. Ask him to give you grace as you wrestle with what he reveals to you.

Write: Take a notecard or grab a journal and write down three to four ways that taking control gives you a sense of comfort. Ask God to replace those ways with his peace as you learn to seek him for comfort instead.
