

Definition of Manipulation: To seek to control, coerce or constrain someone through evil means or intentions in order that the person may move or not move in the particular course of action that one desires.

I. *Biblical Examples of Manipulation:*

- A. Luke 10:40 – seeking to arouse guilt by implying through a question that the person does not care in order to steer people to do what one desires.
- B. James 4:1-3 – seeking to fight and quarrel with people or pray with wrong motives in order to steer people and/or God to do what one desires.
- C. Luke 6:2 – seeking to openly accuse a person of wrongdoing in order to steer the person to agree with the accusations to bring them down from their level of authority in order to gain what one desires.
- D. Luke 20:19-22 – seeking to use flattery and seeking to pigeon-hole a person into a corner with questions that limit their answers to “yes” or “no” in order to gain what one desires.

II. *Basic Desires that Can Become Inordinate, Leading to Manipulation:* When what you want becomes more important than loving God and loving others, you will create a love of something that becomes sinful which makes it inordinate, which can lead you to seek to manipulate to have it (James 1:13-14). For example:

- A. You can create a sinful love of security (willing to sin to get it and to sin when you do not get it) which can lead you to seek to manipulate to have it.
- B. You can create a sinful love of approval (willing to sin to get it and to sin when you do not get it) which can lead you to seek to manipulate to have it.
- C. You can create a sinful love of power (willing to sin to get it and to sin when you do not get it) which can lead you to seek to manipulate to have it.

- D. You can create a sinful love of having one's own way/not being denied what one wants (willing to sin to get it and to sin when you do not get it) which can lead you to seek to manipulate to have it.
- E. You can create a sinful love of comfort/pleasure (willing to sin to get it and to sin when you do not get it) which can lead you to seek to manipulate to have it.
- F. You can create a sinful love of being held in high regard (willing to sin to get it and to sin when you do not get it) which can lead you to seek to manipulate to have it.
- G. You can create a sinful love of being understood (willing to sin to get it and to sin when you do not get it) which can lead you to seek to manipulate to have it.
- H. You can create a sinful love of being taken care of (willing to sin to get it and to sin when you do not get it) which can lead you to seek to manipulate to have it.

III. *General Ways You May Seek to Manipulate People:* Manipulation is generated by a heart filled with bitter jealousy or selfish ambition (i.e. earthly, natural, demonic wisdom) (James 3:13-16). Therefore, when you are operating out of bitter jealousy or self-ambition (i.e. earthly, natural, demonic wisdom) you may seek to manipulate a person by:

- A. Charging – to accuse someone of doing something wrong because it does not line up with your agenda.
- B. Clamoring – to create conflict, to argue over what you want the person to think or not think, to feel or not feel, to desire or not desire, or to do or not do according to your agenda and personal preferences.
- C. Crying – to use tears as a means to show the person they have done something wrong.
- D. Challenging – to use “why” questions in a way that is not seeking legitimate answers, but seeking to show disapproval and rejection of the person.
- E. Coercing – to seek to invoke or enforce some form of obligation. Using the words “You should” often to bring about what you want from the person.
- F. Compiling – to bring up words, actions, or decisions from the past to compare and contrast the person's words, actions, or decisions to some other situation in order to prove hypocrisy or contradiction.
- G. Condemning – to verbally express disapproval or punishment by putting down or accusing.

- H. Concealing – to withhold any favorable regard or emotion towards the person.
- I. Cooperating – to go along with the other person in order to get the person to do what you want.
- J. Charming – being pleasant, likable or endearing to get the person to give you what you want or to do what you want.
- K. Criticizing – bringing up negative issues about the person, whether perceived or actual, with a negative tone in an attempt to get the person to stop or start something you want them to do or to give you something you want.
- L. Commanding – talking to a person as if they were your child; using intimidation and implying that if they do not comply there will be some kind of negative or devastating consequences.
- M. Canceling – to noticeably dismiss or disregard what a person is doing or saying in order to demonstrate disapproval to lead the person to do what you want.
- N. Conducting – injecting your input, ideas, agenda, opinions and directives into everything a person seeks to think, say or do, while seeking to make the person believe they are wrong if they choose to reject your input, ideas, agenda, opinions and directives.
- O. Conditioning – seeking to reward or punish people according to how much they do what you want when you want as a routine, leading to them being habituated to your agenda accordingly.
- P. Cynicism – showing through words, actions or nonverbal ways your disbelief in another person’s integrity on a matter.

IV. *The Emotional Expectation You May Have Behind Seeking to Manipulate:* Sometimes there is a way that seems right to us and that way leads to our demise (Proverbs 14:12). This happens when we trust in our own hearts leading us to be foolish (Proverbs 28:26). Seeking to manipulate people through some form of a negative emotional experience in order to accomplish your selfish agenda reveals you are being foolish, leading to your own demise. Here are some emotional expectations you may have through seeking to manipulate:

- A. Through manipulation you may be seeking to influence the person to feel bad about their perspective, words, actions or decisions to accomplish your selfish agenda - revealing you are being foolish, leading to your own demise.

- B. Through manipulation you may be seeking to influence the person to experience embarrassment for their perspective, words, actions or decisions to accomplish your selfish agenda - revealing you are being foolish, leading to your own demise.
- C. In general, you may be seeking to influence the person to experience pain at any or all levels to accomplish your selfish agenda - revealing you are being foolish, leading to your own demise.

V. ***The Possible Desired Outcomes Behind Manipulation:*** Since we are using manipulation to obtain what we love in an inordinate way, there may be some specific outcomes we pursue in order to obtain what we love in an ordinate way:

- A. The possible desired outcome of manipulation may be to have the person change their perspectives, words, actions or decisions to fit the agenda of the manipulator (i.e. to spend or not spend money in a way that fits the agenda of the manipulator so that the manipulator may obtain what he or she loves in an inordinate way from that outcome).
- B. The possible desired outcome of manipulation may be to have the person validate and affirm how right the manipulator is and to acknowledge how wrong the person is so that the manipulator may obtain what he or she loves in an inordinate way from that outcome.
- C. The possible desired outcome of manipulation may be to have the person be under the control of the manipulator in order that the person will say, do or decide only what fits the agenda of the manipulator so that the manipulator may obtain what he or she loves in an inordinate way from that outcome.

VI. ***The Message Manipulation Communicates:*** When you manipulate, you give various messages in subtle, evil ways, demonstrating a perversion of the heart that can crush the spirit of others who engage and react to the subtle, evil message you present through the manipulation (Proverbs 15:4).

- A. If you don't meet my emotional desires, I'll get your attention and seek to make you take responsibility for my lack of emotional fulfillment.
- B. If you don't line up with my standards, you will not get any attention whatsoever from me.
- C. If you don't satisfy my expectations, I will let you know how perturbed I am with you.
- D. If you don't satisfy my expectations, you don't deserve any dialogue with me but I'll make my point in other ways.
- E. If you don't do what I want or give me what I want, you don't deserve my respect, my approval or my communication.
- F. What I want is more important than everyone else.

- G. You should take care of me and if you don't, you are callous and cruel.
- H. You should meet my every need and expectation and if you don't, I'll seek to make you take responsibility for my needs and expectations.
- I. If you don't respond to me being nice to you by doing what I want you to do, you are ungrateful.
- J. If you don't act or respond the way I want you to, I will use words to wound you and make you wish you had.
- K. I am right and you are wrong and you are guilty of neglecting me.
- L. After all I have done for you, you owe me and should please me. "If you don't meet my expectations, you are guilty of neglect."
- M. It is always your fault until I think and tell you otherwise.

[Insights for the section adapted from
Manipulation: Cutting the Strings of Control by June Hunt
(Torrance, CA: Aspire Press, a division of Rose Publishing, 2013). Kindle edition.]

Summary: Whether you know it or not, when you choose to manipulate you are demonstrating a heart that is filled with selfish desires. These selfish desires are more important than loving God and loving others. As a result, you are choosing to be foolish by manipulating, leading to your own demise. The question is not "Are you a manipulator?" The question is "With whom and how much do you manipulate?" If you are only able to see how you have been manipulated as we have learned about this topic, pray that God will help you see just how much of a manipulator you are and have been and with whom. Also, if you have any doubt about your lack of manipulation, ask the people around you. Be careful not to dismiss their discussion as an insignificant, unfair assessment of you or just another form of slander or accusation toward you. You could be hiding behind those belief systems in order to ignore the reality of the truth.

[For further insight into this subject, see
Manipulation: Knowing How To Respond by Lou Priolo]