

REDLINED • Week 4: Control

Daily Briefing • Day 1 of 5 • Deliberate Restraint

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Proverbs 3:5–6

This is the first briefing of the week, and it goes back to the last passage from Sunday. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I ask that You keep me from trying to control outcomes, people, and circumstances that are well beyond what You have called me to focus on. Help me occupy myself with what You have put in front of me today, and leave the rest to You. You have demonstrated Your love and Your power in Jesus' death, burial, and Resurrection, so help me let go of the silliness of trying to control a universe You have already handled. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

Sunday finished on a psalm that runs three verses from start to end. Psalm 131 shows a person who has stopped straining against his limitations, and this week begins there, because the strain is a breeding ground for overload, anger, and anxiety. You can be faithful and still be worn out simply by reaching for control beyond the scope of God's calling for the moment you are in.

The heading on the psalm attributes it to David, and that is worth pausing on for a second. David was the king of Israel, which means he had more money, more influence, and a wider span of responsibility than anyone else in the country. He had achieved and attained far beyond most people who ever lived, and yet he still recognized the need to accept his limits and the narrowness of his calling.

In verse one, David says his heart is not lifted up. He is talking about his drives, his values, his loyalties, and his pursuits, and he is saying he confines those so they are not running past what God actually handed him. When he says his eyes are not raised too high, he is saying he has stopped measuring his life against a place God never assigned him. When he says he does not occupy himself with things too great and too marvelous, he is saying he will not demand answers beyond his understanding or control beyond his reach.

The sin underneath all three is easy to say but hard to admit. It is wanting more for yourself than God wants for you. This frequently introduces the temptation to control. That is not a condemnation of wanting good things, and it is not a condemnation of working hard at the calling God has placed on your life. Scripture does not treat ambition inside your own assignment as a problem. The problem is the insatiable appetite for more that never gets put in check. Until you deliberately rein it in, no amount of control will bring you peace.

Verse two is the picture of a person who has stopped striving. David says he has calmed and quieted his soul like a weaned child with its mother. A nursing child in his mother's lap is there for something he needs. A weaned child in that same lap has nothing to get and no reason to be anywhere else, and he is simply content to be held. That might be a tough picture for strong, independent people to embrace, but it is a good illustration of the difference between being with God and using God. It is also the difference between rest and the redlined reality this series has sought to address.

The psalm does not simply end with David at rest. In verse three he turns and speaks to the whole nation, telling Israel to put its hope in the same place he put his. Peace does not just stop with you. Once you have found relief from the redlined rat race and its accompanying desperation to control, God calls you to point others to the same hope. You cannot hand anyone a peace you have not accepted yourself, which is why the questions below start with your own scope.

READ & MEDITATE

Psalm 131

O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me.² But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me.³ O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time forth and forevermore.

Read it and meditate on it slowly. What happens to grasping at control if you limit your focus to the calling of the present moment?

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment are far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

Start with what David actually claims before going anywhere near what it means for your week.

Verse one names three things David says he does not do. Write all three in your own words.

Fill in the blank from Psalm 131:1:

O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not _____ myself with things too great and too marvelous for me.*

*These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.

David had more authority and more reach than anyone in Israel, and he still drew a line around what he would occupy himself with.

What situation are you currently trying to steer that God never put in your hands? A specific situation will do more for you here than a category.

Sunday asked what you are trying to control. This narrows it to one item, and the order of these questions matters more than any one of them.

What has been keeping you up at night?

Is that something God assigned to you in your present season, or is it something you picked up?

Is there anything you can actually do about it?

If there is, have you done it, and have you done what the Bible says to do about it?

Sunday asked four questions about control. This last one asks what your answers have been costing you. Looking honestly at the last month, how much of your exhaustion came from the assignment God gave you, and how much came from extraneous burden you unnecessarily added to it?

Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. Name the specific thing you have been carrying that God never handed you, and ask Him for the honesty to set it down.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite Proverbs 3:5–6 from memory:
