

**June 13th, Connection vs Control**  
**Part 5 in the series “Love Handles”**

What were some things from last Sunday’s message that resonated with you?

Was there anything you wrestled with?

In last Sunday’s message, Jim talked about the reality show ‘Alone’ where contestants survive on their own in the wilderness. Can you remember why the final contestants dropped out after 7, 8 weeks?

A: because of isolation

What are the two things that ultimately matter in life?

A: Our connection with God and our connection with each other.

**READ Matthew 22:34-40**

34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. 35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

37 Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Why do you think Jesus gave two responses to the Pharisees’ question?

What do you think Jesus meant by “All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”?

**READ 1 John 4:18-21**

18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

19 We love because he first loved us. 20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

How is control connected with fear and punishment?

How does John connect loving God and loving your brother and sister?

Who are our brothers and sisters?

**READ Genesis 2:15-18**

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

18 The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

In the message Jim said “There can be no authentic, loving connection as long as one is trying to control the other.” How do you see this statement being played out between God and Adam?

In this passage God warns Adam about what will happen if he eats from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. What’s the difference between a threat and a warning?

In what way did Adam and Eve choose control over connection by picking the fruit from the tree of knowledge?

Name some ways people exercise control in relationships when it’s connection that’s actually desired.

A:

- Paying or threatening someone to be your friend.
- Doing something really cruel and disrespectful to someone who isn’t giving you respect.
- Giving unsolicited advice is often an attempt to control someone else.
- Using the silent treatment.
- Keeping score.

We resort to control tactics and choose control even though it’s connection we want (because of fear). But what things are we afraid of when it comes to connecting with others?

- Rejection
- Being hurt
- Fear of what they might think of you.
- Fear of what you might find out about yourself.
- Being alone despite trying to connect with someone.

**READ Romans 5:6-8**

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

How did Jesus act towards us while we were actively severing our connection with Him?

How would you connect this passage with what John spoke about in 1 John 4:18-21?