

Manipulation

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Manipulation

Knowing How to Respond

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SO, YOU THINK you are being manipulated! My guess is that the person you suspect of being manipulative is someone you love or respect. That's what makes it so difficult to know for sure. When you try to talk to this individual about your concerns, you end up thinking that *you* are the one who is at fault. Maybe you're just being too temperamental about the matter.

Perhaps you are. But by the time you're through with this little booklet, I pray you'll be able to figure things out. What's more, if in fact you are being manipulated, you should be well on your way to putting a stop to it. At the very least, you will learn how to remove the little handle on your back by which manipulators push you in one direction and pull you in the other.

What Is Manipulation?

Webster's dictionary defines the verb *manipulate* as "to control or play upon by artful, unfair, or insidious means."¹ For a Christian, manipulation is using unbiblical means of controlling or influencing others. More specifically, manipulation is often an attempt to gain control of another individual or situation by inciting an *emotional reaction* rather than a

1. There is an interesting biblical term that may come close to describing manipulative individuals. The word is *oppressor*. There are several Hebrew words that have been translated into English as *oppressor*. Take the word 'asoq, for example. According to the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, B. K. Waltke [Chicago: Moody Press, 1999], 705), the word is concerned with acts of abuse of power or authority, the burdening, trampling, and crushing of those lower in station. Another interesting word for *oppressor* is *tok*. Used in Proverbs 29:13, the term connotes fraud and deceitfulness. As we will see in a moment, manipulators deceitfully conceal significant information from those whom they are trying to control.