NEW BOOK PROPOSAL

PROPOSED TITLE

Control Girl:

Lessons on Surrendering Your Burden of Control from Seven Women in the Bible *

AUTHOR

Shannon Popkin

ONE-SENTENCE DESCRIPTION

Control Girl invites today’s woman to identify with seven controlling women of the Bible and then pry the ‘controller’ from her own clutches and place it where it belongs—in the big, wise hands of God.

REPRESENTED BY

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OVERVIEW

Many women often struggle with control. Their drive and commitment to make everything turn out right often causes them—without realizing it—to evolve into exasperating, controlling women who make everyone miserable. While author Shannon Popkin likes to keep her inner ‘Control Girl’ well-cloaked, she knows just how far she’s willing to go to control things like her daughter’s bangs hanging in her eyes, her husband’s crumbs in the sheets, and her kids’ boots on the pretty wool rug by the front door—not to mention the big things she’d like to control!

To help readers consider where this struggle for control can lead, Shannon invites seven Control Girls from the Bible to the conversation:

• Eve took control by eating the fruit, rather than trusting in God’s goodness.
• Sarah circumvented God’s hand and took matters into her own hands.
• Hagar, who had relatively little control, was still pressed by God to surrender all she had.
• Rebekah tried to stand in for God, and control her family’s outcome.
• Leah was controlled by the opinion of her unloving husband.
• Rachel turned to everyone but God, trying to leverage control.
• And Miriam undermined authority in a subversive attempt to gain control.

With these unedited stories as backdrop, Shannon gives practical steps for any Control Girl who wants to loosen her sweaty, clawing grip on life’s ‘controller’ and lay it into the big, wise hands of the One who truly is in control.

CATEGORY

RELIGION / Christian Life / Women’s Issues
AUDIENCE

- Primary: This book targets women, of all ages and stages, who want to give God control of their lives, yet struggle with being controlling.
- Secondary: Women, who are seeking. They identify with the struggle of being controlling, and wonder if the Bible might offer answers they haven’t considered.
- Tertiary: Christian counselors and church leaders who provide resources and materials to their women, both as individuals and groups. Leaders will find this to be a tender resource for the woman who is burdened with things she can’t control.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Many women often struggle with control. They have this insatiable desire to make everything turn out right, and are willing to do what it takes to create the happy ending they have in mind. But in the process, they inevitably make everyone miserable with their endless Control Girl ploys and tactics. And then, when they sense that control has escaped them, they either blow up in uncontrolled anger or collapse with uncontrollable fear. Ironically, they lose control of themselves, when self is the only thing they actually have control over.

When life blows up around them, you’d think these Control Girls would throw up their hands and say, “I guess I’m not in control after all.” But instead, they do the most illogical thing—they become even more controlling… which makes everyone cringe.

Some of the most famous Bible stories hinge on the tactics of certain Control Girls, who wanted their way just as badly as women today do. By studying these stories, women learn about themselves. And they learn about God, too. They see that ever since the story of the first Control
Girl—Eve—God has been inviting women to abandon their weak-hearted, miserable ways, and come follow Him to a peaceful place—where He’s in control, and they are free.

READER BENEFITS

Women who purchase and read Control Girl will…

• Identify with the real and unedited stories of seven Control Girls in the Bible who each struggled uniquely with control.

• Understand the Bible character’s struggle for control, given the culture of her day, and compare this with parallel struggles faced by women today.

• Search their hearts for the sinful control patterns seen in the story—especially those which women are particularly prone to.

• Understand that their desire for and attempts to get control each reveal a misperception of God or a lack of faith in Him.

• Surrender their own appetite and strategies for control—especially in the areas of marriage, parenting, status, safety, security, identity, and planning—to God. The author’s warm, conversational, and often humorous tone will disarm the reader, making it easier for the reader to engage this emotionally charged subject matter.

CURRENT INTEREST

With her Smartphone in hand and her Facebook page open, today’s Control Girl has more access than ever before to the people she’d like to control. And they have access to her, as well! At any given moment, a single ‘ding’ can initiate an electronic firestorm of control tactics.
One Control Girl texts her traveling husband to ask if he’s sleeping alone, which is her begrudging way of holding past sins over his head. Another Control Girl updates her Facebook status with a provocative selfie—her way of sending embedded messages and power statements. She smiles slyly at the comments which pop up instantaneously: “Who is THAT?” and “You’re so hot!” Yet another Control Girl punches the air when a message from her mother pops onto her screen, asking, “Why are you still up? Remember who’s paying your tuition.”

As technology bulldozes through privacy fences and creates new, limitless controlling opportunities, the Control Girl’s appetite is not satisfied; it increases. She knows that the little screen in her pocket can be used like an electronic weapon in a battle for control, and she’s not putting it down any time soon.

UNIQUE ANGLES
No other book has allowed the women of the Bible to lead a discussion on controlling women. Many studies about these women of the Bible have been written, and other books have given practical, biblical wisdom on control issues, but by honing in on the controlling tactics of these Bible women, Control Girl helps the reader consider her own tendency to want control. By considering God’s hand in these stories, the reader also gains new understanding of God’s character and insight into His involvement in her own unfolding story.

Control Girl divides each chapter into ‘lessons,’ which allow the reader on a time budget to engage a complete train of thought, as she reads the chapters part-by-part. The author writes out of brokenness and struggle, often making herself vulnerable, which helps prepare the reader for the personal reflection questions at the end of each reading. These questions each focus on
one point of application which has been mined from the Old Testament story, allowing the reader a bite-sized truth to assimilate and apply.

COMPLEMENTARY WORKS

Wagner, Kimberly. *Fierce Woman: The Power of a Soft Warrior* by Kimberly Wagner (Moody, 2012). This book clearly outlines the issue of controlling women under the guidance of Scripture, also using a conversational tone and vulnerability from the author. It doesn’t, however, use the studies of women in the Bible to frame the discussion.


*Girls Gone Wise in a World Gone Wild* by Mary Kassian (Moody, 2010). This book has a similar format to *Control Girl* in that it uses the warnings of the sage Father in Proverbs 7 regarding a ‘wild woman’ to lead its discussion on feminine wisdom. Where *Control Girl* analyzes the control-based decisions of characters in Biblical narratives, this book examines a broader list of contrasting feminine character traits listed in Proverbs.

*Bad Girls of the Bible* by Liz Curtis Higgs (Waterbrook, 1999). This book uses the negative examples of Women in the Bible, often in a humorous way, to open discussion on our own sinful patterns. However, the bulk of each chapter is given to fictional parallel stories and commentary, with several points of application tagged on at the end. *Control Girl* is less general as it harvests each story for help with the specific struggle of control, and as a result, lends itself to deeper and more specific application.

*Feminine Appeal: Seven Characteristics of A Godly Wife and Mother* by Carolyn Mahaney (Crossway, 2004). This book also takes the approach of using phrases from Titus 2 to lead its discussion on the woman’s role as wife and mother. It talks occasionally about the tendency of women to control within family relationships, but it does not dissect the problem as *Control Girl* does, or widen the application beyond women’s roles in the home.

PROPOSED BACK COVER COPY

Fights with your husband and kids. Unhappiness when things don’t match your version of perfect. Tension, anger, fear—it all begins with a heart that craves control. When your vision of how life should be replaces God’s vision, you doom your quest for security, peace, and joy before it even starts. Thankfully, there is a better way.

Join Shannon as she shares what she has discovered about her own control struggles and about God from studying Control Girls in the Bible. Learn how you too can lay down this burden and find rest in surrendering to the One who truly is in control.
“In this funny, tender, and truth-telling book, Shannon Popkin peels back the layers of our control problem.”
—ERIN DAVIS, author, blogger, and recovering Control Girl

“In the style of Liz Curtis Higgs, Control Girl is an easy and entertaining read, yet Shannon Popkin packs a punch where we so need it if we are to be set free from the stressful habit that robs our joy and ruins our relationships!”
—DEE BRESTIN, author of Idol Lies

“With personal vulnerability, biblical depth, powerful personal illustrations, and pointed application questions, Shannon Popkin reveals how seven women of the Bible can teach us how to surrender our will to God’s design for our future.”
—CAROL KENT, speaker and author of Becoming a Woman of Influence

“Control Girl is a penetrating look at how selfishness and self-protectiveness wreck lives—and why surrender and trust are God’s life-giving pathways to true freedom and joy.”
—NANCY DEMOSS WOLGEMUTH, author and Revive Our Hearts teacher and host

Shannon Popkin is a wife and mom, a speaker and teacher, and a leader of small-group studies. She is a contributing blogger for TrueWoman.com and has blogged for several years at ShannonPopkin.com. This is her first book.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shannon Popkin wishes she had far less experience being a controlling woman (as do her husband and kids). She writes out of expertise that comes—not from mastery—but from her struggle to relinquish control to the Lord. She is thankful to be sharing life with her husband, Ken, who makes her laugh every day. Together, they currently live the fast-paced life of parenting two teens and a tween. When she’s not taking pictures at a soccer game or water-polo match, Shannon loves to be home, opening her front door to friends and family.

Ken and Shannon serve together, leading a small group from their church (Ada Bible Church’s Kentwood campus). Shannon serves as a small group leader for women’s Bible study and a storyteller for the 4th and 5th graders. In the past, Shannon has directed and led various women’s and children’s ministries.
Shannon has been published by *Family Fun, Thriving Family, P31 Woman Magazine, MOMSense,* and *Focus on the Family Magazine*. She has also blogged for several years at Tiny Paragraphs (www.ShannonPopkin.com). Shannon has also written a Bible study on the life of Sarah, which has been piloted by several groups, and is ready to be considered for publication.

Shannon’s strengths as a speaker lie in using humor, storytelling, and using analogies to equip and encourage women. She has spoken at dozens of ladies groups and retreats, mostly in the West Michigan area, over the past few years.

Way back when she thought she had motherhood figured out (but no kids to prove her wrong), Shannon taught at a Christian elementary school. Her education degree is from Liberty University.

**Contact Information:**

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**AUTHOR PROMOTION**

Shannon Popkin is a writer and speaker who will work closely and actively with the publisher to promote the book *Control Girl* through:

**Speaking Opportunities.** Shannon frequently speaks on the ‘Control Girl’ topic and will continue to pursue speaking opportunities at events where Christian women will be in attendance. Some of her recent and upcoming speaking events include:

- “How to Have a ‘Mary’ Christmas,” Kilpatrick MOPS, December 2015
- “How to Have a ‘Mary’ Christmas,” Kentwood Community Church, December 2015
- “How to Have a ‘Mary’ Christmas,” Cup of Christmas at Mount Pleasant Community Church, December 2015
• “Treasure Maps that lead Little Ones to Jesus,” High Pointe Community Church in Byron Center, MI, November 2015
• “Control Girl,” Trinity Baptist in Grand Rapids, MI, women’s retreat, November 2015
• “Treasure Maps that Lead Little Ones to Jesus,” Ada Bible Church Moms Group, October 2015
• “Treasure Maps that Lead Little Ones to Jesus,” Fairhaven Moms Unplugged, October 2015
• “Treasure Maps that Lead Little Ones to Jesus,” West Cannon MOPS, September 2015
• “Control Girl,” Trinity Baptist in Grand Rapids, MI, women’s retreat, September 2015
• “More Than Just a Pretty Package,” Mars Hill Church, Grandville, MI, May 2015
• “The Significance of Crumb Sweeping and Nose Wiping,” Chapel Pointe MOPS, March 2015
• “The Significance of Crumb Sweeping and Nose Wiping,” GRMom2Mom at Frontline Community Church in Grand Rapids, MI, January 2015.
• “The Significance of Crumb Sweeping and Nose Wiping,” Kilpatrick MOPS, November 2014.
• “Control Girl,” Ada Bible Church, November 2014.
• “Control Girl,” Retreat for Heritage United Methodist in Pierson, MI, October 2014.
• “Control Girl,” Lake Center Church in Portage, MI, women’s event, October 2014
• “Control Girl,” Hastings MOPS, October 2014
• “The Significance of Crumb Sweeping and Nose Wiping,” Thornapple Covenant MOPS, October 2014

Author Networks and Associations. Shannon has numerous personal connections with fellow authors and ministry leaders. Shannon will pursue book endorsements from and will invite these friends to promote Control Girl on blogs, through social media, and in bookstores.

Authors:

• Nancy DeMoss, radio host of ‘Revive Our Hearts’ and ‘Seeking Him,’ and author of 15 books, including Lies Women Believe, Seeking Him, and Choosing Gratitude
• Cindy Bultema, author of Red Hot Faith: Lessons from a Lukewarm Church
• Erin Davis, author of Beyond Bathtime, Graffiti, and Lies Young Women Believe, and blogger at True Woman, Beyond Bathtime, Lies Young Women Believe, Start Marriage Right, and Lifeway Ministry
• Paula Hendricks, author of Confessions of a Boy-Crazy Girl: On Her Journey from Neediness to Freedom
• Susan Sorenson, author of Praying Through Cancer: Set Your Heart Free from Fear
• Susie Finkbeiner, author of Paint Chips and My Mother’s Chamomile
• Chris Brauns, pastor and author of Unpacking Forgiveness, When the Word Leads Your Pastoral Search, and Bound Together
• Mike Wittmer, seminary professor at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, and author of Heaven is a Place on Earth, Don’t Stop Believing, and Christ Alone
• **Ann Byle**, author of *The Making of a Christian Best Seller* and *Devotions for the Soul Surfer* with Bethany Hamilton, editor, freelancer, and co-founder of Breathe Christian Writer’s conference
• **Del Fehsenfeld**, editor of *Revive Magazine*, communications director, publishing director and pastoral services director at Life Action Ministries
• **Wendy Widder**, author of *A Match Made in Heaven, Living Whole Without a Better Half*, and *The Forest and the Trees* and contributing editor at Logos Bible Software
• **Jeff Manion**, pastor and author of *The Land Between*
• **Jocelyn Green**, *Heroines Behind the Lines Series, Faith Deployed*, and *The Five Love Languages Military Edition*
• **Susan TeBos**, author of *Before You Were Mine*
• **Amelia Rhodes**, author of *Isn’t it Time for a Coffee Break?: Living life together in an all-about-me kind of world*
• **Lorilee Cracker**, author of *A is for Atticus: Baby Names from Great Books, Money Secrets of the Amish, and Through the Storm* with Lynn Spears.
• **Donna Gaines**, author of *Leaving Ordinary: Encounter God through Extraordinary Prayer, There’s Gotta Be More*, and *Seated: Living from Our Position in Christ*
• **Wendy Blight**, author of *Living So That: Making Faith-filled Choices in the Midst of a Messy Life*, and *Hidden Joy in a Dark Corner: The Transformation Power of God’s Story*
• **Jenifer Jernigan**, author of *Dive Deeper: Finding Deep Faith beyond Shallow Religion*
• **Amanda Hope Haley**, author of *Barren Among the Fruitful: Navigating Infertility with Hope, Wisdom, and Patience*
• **Tracy Groot**, author of *Madman, Flame of Resistance*, and *The Sentinels of Andersonville*
• **Ashley Linne**, author of *Inseparable: Who I am, was, and will be in Christ*
• **Alison Hodgson**, author of *The Pug List* (released 2016)

**Bloggers:**

• **Miriam Walsh**, blogger at ‘Holy Wonder’
• **Heidi Vriesman**, blogger at ‘Dearly Loved Mist,’ and writer for several homeschool magazines and blogs
• **Mark Kakkuri**, nationally published freelance writer specializing in worldview, blogger at markkakkuri.com
• **Patricia Hunter**, blogger at ‘Pollywog Creek,’ contributing blogger at several other blogs
• **Mary Pluhar**, blogger at ‘Cohagan Chronicles’
• **Christy Wood**, blogger at ‘Let Me Be Foolish’
• **Lara Izokaitis**, blogger at ‘Caterfly Lara’
• **Anna Connelly**, blogger at ‘AnnaConnelly.com’

**Ministries:** Shannon has a rolodex of over 40 different women’s ministries and moms’ groups across the country and frequently speaks at their events. She plans to invite these (and other)
leaders to help get the word about *Control Girl* out to their groups. She also plans to provide extra resources (such as video conference leader training) to any leaders who would like to host or launch a *Control Girl* Bible study.

**Articles.** Shannon has previously been published by *Family Fun, Thriving Family, Focus on the Family Magazine, MOMSense, MOPS International, MOMSNext, P31, Homeschooling Today,* and *HeartCry! Journal,* and will continue to use these avenues to promote the book.

**Social Media.** Shannon will use her Facebook page and her blog, “Tiny Paragraphs” at www.shannonpopkin.com to promote the book. She plans to host a Facebook Launch Party and put together a Launch Team. Close to the release date, Shannon will generate enthusiasm by interviewing women on her blog, regarding topics covered in the study such as controlling mothers/mother-in-laws, being in control but not controlling as parents, and controlling wives. Shannon will also pursue additional ‘guest blogging’ opportunities on the blogs of friends (see above). Some of her previous guest posts have been featured on TrueWoman.com, www.BeyondBathtime.com and www.MomColoredGlasses.com.

**CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SYNOPSIS**

Each chapter is divided into three to five lessons, which can be read as stand-alone devotionals/Bible studies if desired. Each lesson is between 1,000 and 2,000 words and concludes with several application and study questions. Also, a Bible verse and short meditation, which encapsulates a single application point, is provided for each lesson.

**Introduction: A Chunky Board Book Happy Ending?**
Shannon knows that women don’t want to be seen as harsh and abrasive; they’re just trying to make everything turn out! Yet Shannon also notices how unhappy life becomes when she tries to create a ‘chunky board book’ version of her family’s story—which skips immediately to the
happy ending. Shannon believes that the rich, satisfying life she’s meant to have requires putting God in charge of her happy ending, and she invites readers to do the same.

Chapter One – An Unplugged Control Girl (Included in Sample Chapters)
Like a child clutching an unplugged video game controller, Shannon finds herself behaving as though she’s controlling how everything plays out on the big screen of life; yet she’s not “plugged in.” Ironically, the more she tries to control, the more she loses control of her anger or fear. But Shannon warns readers that giving full vent to control cravings only turns them into those horribly controlling women who seem to plague every family. Thankfully, this decline into the slimy pit of controlling-ness is not inevitable. No woman has to be a Control Girl. She can lay her sweaty controller in the hands of the One who truly is in control: God.

Chapter Two - Eve: It Looked Good to Me
The tree in the middle of the garden posed a question as Eve walked by it each day. Would she trust God enough to stay away from that fruit? Convinced that God was keeping something from her—something that looked good to her—Eve reached out and took control. But the shattering results were anything but good. Eve’s story offers keen insight to the battle and consequences faced by every Control Girl.

• Lesson One – “Keep Out” Tape
• Lesson Two – Looking at a Solar Eclipse (Included in Sample Chapters)
• Lesson Three – Kicking at Locked Doors
• Lesson Four – Role Playing
• Lesson Five – Cursed with Desire for Control
• Conclusion – Eve’s Happy Ending

Chapter Three - Sarah: I Did It My Way
Sarah was desperate for a baby. When her hope in God expired, she took control over her destiny by telling another woman to share her husband’s bed. But the outcome was far from satisfying. Sarah’s story shows the empty aftereffects of striving for manipulative control, contrasted with the satisfying fruit born of faith. God, whose control is unlimited, invites wives and moms to put their hope in Him.

• Lesson One – My Heartache, in Big, Good God Hands
• Lesson Two – Inviting God not me to Direct my Husband
• Lesson Three – Hell Hath No Fury…
• Lesson Four – Never Too Old to Become Beautiful (Included in Sample Chapters)
• Lesson Five – A Threat to my Family
• Conclusion – Sarah’s Happy Ending

Chapter Four - Hagar: Mistreatment and Surrender
Though Hagar was Sarah’s slave, what happened between them was nothing short of a battle for control. When God visits this Egyptian ‘Cinderella,’ we expect Him to wave a wand, dry her tears, and fix her problems. But surprisingly, He does the opposite; He sends her back. Hagar’s story shows that God doesn’t always release women from mistreatment, but He does coat their hearts with promises. Hagar is a beautiful picture of surrender—not to deplorable injustice, but to the listening Lord.
Chapter Five - Rebekah: Standing In for God
Rebekah had been given a prophecy about her children. She knew which son God had chosen; but her husband was about to bless the other one. So Rebekah did what Control Girls often do—she stood in for God. Rebekah’s story shows that hijacking a husband’s leadership and rupturing relationships with deceit are not God’s way of making things right. A Control Girl can’t railroad her loved ones into surrendering to God. This is His work, not hers.

• Lesson One – When God Threads the Knot
• Lesson Two – A Prophecy Over Twin Boys (Included in Sample Chapters)
• Lesson Three – His & Hers Parenting
• Lesson Four – Four Ways to Repent of Control
• Lesson Five – Standing for God Vs. Standing in For Him
• Conclusion – Rebekah’s Unhappy Ending

Chapter Six – Leah: Invisible and Unloved
Leah had an evil father, a beautiful sister, and a husband who didn’t want her. Out of insecurity and pain, Leah desperately tried to capture her husband’s approval with baby after baby. But rather than gaining control, she ended up being controlled by her husband’s opinion. Leah didn’t realize that she had already captured the attention of One who valued and loved her. She didn’t know He had selected her for something grand. Leah’s story invites Control Girls who also feel invisible and unloved to let God be the Daddy who determines their worth and writes their happy ending.

• Lesson One – An Invisible Bride
• Lesson Two – An Unveiled Bride
• Lesson Three – Who Gets My Controller?
• Conclusion – Leah’s Happy Ending

Chapter Seven – Rachel: When She Has More
Rachel’s unsatisfying story is proof that you can be pretty and have the undying affection of a man, yet still be miserable. Rachel spent her whole life in a tug-of-war match with her sister, trying to add more babies to her side of the rope. She was controlling and entitled, and even when she was blessed with a baby of her own, she demanded more. Rachel missed out on the big picture of what God was doing. Her small-minded, selfish ways ring out as warnings to Control Girls, who might be tempted to strive after small, unsatisfying ‘happy endings’ of their own.

• Lesson One – Breaking the Second Commandment
• Lesson Two – Compared to my Sister
Chapter Eight - Miriam: Taking the Lead
Miriam was a gifted leader, who demonstrated the tendency women have of taking things personally, when their efforts are overlooked or underappreciated—especially when their work is for God. Feeling threatened and displaced by other rising leaders, Miriam networked to rally opposition to Moses, and support for her own top-tier leadership. But God, who was listening in, interrupted Miriam with dramatic consequences. Her story reminds gifted women, who are tempted to take control and make ministry their own, to face forward and follow God, surrendering their craving for honor and recognition to Him.

• Lesson One – Gifted to Lead
• Lesson Two – In the Lead
• Lesson Three – Sharing Leadership (Included in Sample Chapters)
• Lesson Four – Healing a Control Girl
• Conclusion: Miriam’s Happy Ending

Chapter Nine – From Control Girl to Jesus Girl
It is not in the nature of a Control Girl to surrender, yield, or relinquish control. But the Spirit powerfully creates internal compass shifts that point women toward Jesus. Control Girls participate in the Spirit’s work by yielding, which is the most active (not passive) work of their Christian lives! Readers are invited to relinquish control in four small, incremental ways. By repeatedly relinquishing control, readers can be sure that they won’t be Control Girls for long! They’ll gradually be transformed into Jesus Girls.

• Lesson One – Heading in a New Direction
• Lesson Two – Bridle Your Tongue
• Lesson Three – Put the Cap on the Red Pen
• Lesson Four – Live Within Limits
• Lesson Five – Be Respectfully His (Included in Sample Chapters)
• Conclusion: Your Happy Ending

OTHER DETAILS
Format: Trade Paper
Word Count: 60,000 words
Page Count: 216 pages
Manuscript Status: Complete

LINE EXTENSION POSSIBILITIES
• Control Girl Study Guide
• Control Girl Leader’s Guide
• DVD Curriculum
• Control Girl Coloring Book

SAMPLE CHAPTERS
The introduction and sample lessons are included on pages 15 and following.