

SURRENDER TO GOD

YOU ASKED FOR IT (PART 5)

I would like for you to picture in your mind two separate doors leading into two separate rooms. Behind door number one, we have the complete will of God for your life. Behind door number two, we have life as you would choose it to be. Which door would you choose? I think most of us would like to think that we would choose door number one, which is the will of God, but the fear of what might be behind the door of full surrender often holds us back. After all, what if God asks me to do something that I totally don't want to do? I mean, if I walk through door number one and accept God's will for my life, I may end up as a missionary running through some dark jungle with unclothed natives throwing spears me. If that is the case, I might end up being someone's dinner that night!

The word, "surrender," doesn't even sound good. Surrender is a word that is often associated with negative actions like "surrender in the name of the law!" Tom loaned me a series of movies about a young man who worked his way up through the ranks of the British navy. When the captain of another ship was defeated in battle, he would submissively hand his sword to the conquering captain in an act of surrender.

If I hand the sword of surrender over to God, how do I know that he won't have me climbing mountains looking for Noah's ark? What if he sends me to preach about Jesus on the street corners in Iraq? But if I choose door number two, my will for my life, then I will be in control of what I do. That seems a lot safer to me. If I don't want to do something, I just won't do it! It all boils down to the question of who do I trust most to do what is best for me? Should I go through door number one and trust God to do what is best for me, or do I go through door number two and trust in my own brilliance?

What does it mean to surrender to God?

1. Surrendering to God means I do what He says

There are many examples in the Bible of people obeyed God when obeying was not easy. Abraham is one of those examples.

Hebrews 11:8, "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going."

Abraham was very comfortable in Ur of the Chaldeans which was a huge city in the area today known as southern Iraq. It was a very large city even by today's standards, about 500,000 people! Ur had a very sophisticated culture. It had an extensive library, postal

system, large factories, public school system, two-story homes, well developed art, mathematics, and sciences, and one of the highest cultures of ancient times!

All the comforts and opportunities for wealth and happiness were to be found here, but God had other plans for a man named Abram and his wife family. What did Abraham do? He let go of his security and personal plans and obeyed God.

The story is told of how a college student back in the 19th century took six postcards and wrote a very large letter on each one of the postcards. The letters were, L E T G O D. He then put them on the mantel piece of his room where he was living. One evening, a draft blew through the window, and the "D" blew away. As he picked it up, what he saw seemed to be a message from God. It is the secret of the Christian life, "let go." The only way that you can let God have his will in your life is to let go.

2. Surrendering to God means and I do what He says in the way that He tells me to do it

The father tells the child to leave the living room go to his room and begin cleaning it. If the child does not stop what he is doing and go to his room, he is obviously not being obedient. On the other hand, simply going into his room and cleaning it is not enough. What if the child's version of cleaning his room is different than the father's version? What if instead of putting away his books and toys in an orderly way, he throws them all in the closet one on top of the other? He is cleaning his room, but he is not cleaning it the way his father wants it done.

1 Samuel 13:5-14 tells us that is where king Saul got into trouble. He was waiting for the Prophet Samuel to come and offer a sacrifice to God before a battle with the Philistines. When Samuel did not come as quickly as Saul wanted, Saul took it upon himself to offer the sacrifice.

Offering a sacrifice was the right thing to be done, but it had to be done in the right way. God had appointed the priest to offer sacrifices, and Kings were not allowed to do so. Saul did the right thing, but he did it in the wrong way. And it cost him his kingdom. Someone may say, "I worship God in my own way." If that is the case, then you are not truly worshipping God because God does not accept our own ideas of what worship should be. True surrender to God means that you do what God wants you to do in the way that he wants to do it.

3. Surrendering to God means I do what he says when he tells me to do it

Bible teacher Donald Grey Barnhouse (1895-1960) told the following story: A young son of a missionary couple in Zaire was playing in the yard. Suddenly the voice of the boy's

father rang out from the porch, "Philip, obey me instantly! Drop to your stomach!" Immediately the youngster did as his father commanded. "Now crawl toward me as fast as you can!" The boy obeyed. "Stand up and run to me!" Philip responded unquestioningly and ran to his father's arms. As the boy turned to look at the tree by which he had been playing, he saw a large deadly snake hanging from one of the branches! The boy could have hesitated and asked, "Why do you want me to do that?" Or he could have casually replied, "In a minute." But his instant obedience without questioning saved his life! Real surrender is to do God's will when he tells us to do it.

Why should I surrender my life to God?

1. I should surrender my life to God because of who He is

Revelation 4:11, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

God is the ultimate source of all things. He is our creator, and is only natural to submit to the one who created you. For the past few weeks, I have been reading once again the classic book "the pursuit of God" written by A.W. Tozer. I believe that book is one that should be read over and over again. Tozer said,

"Every soul belongs to God and exists by His pleasure. God being Who and What He is, and we being who and what we are, the only thinkable relation between us is one of full Lordship on His part and complete submission on ours. We owe Him every honor that it is within our power to give Him. Our everlasting grief lies in giving Him anything less."

2. I surrender to God because of what He has done

Both Old and New testaments remind us to be thankful for all that God has done for us.

Psalm 103:1-5, "Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits- who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Romans 12: 1, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship."

When Paul said, "I urge you," he used a word that was used by military leader to call the soldiers to action. Why? Because in the light of what God has done for you, surrender is the only logical thing to do.

If you understand the structure of the book of Romans, you know that the first eleven's chapters are devoted to what God has done for us. In those 11 chapters there is a very detailed explanation of what God did to save us, and what he's going to do in the future. In the light of what God has done for you, surrendering your life to Him is the only thing that makes sense!"

To give you an understanding of the kind of thing that he's talking about, let's say that you are in your bed sleeping one night when suddenly you wake up to the smell of smoke, and you realize the house is on fire. The flames are very high, and it is hard to breathe. You are able to barely get out of your bedroom, but you are trapped. What's worse is the fact that you know that your children are trapped in their rooms. Your heart is beating it 1000 beats a minute, and you are terrified. Suddenly, the front door is kicked open, and your neighbor runs in your house. He grabs you and leads you outside, and then he goes back in the burning house and retrieves your children one by one. Thankfully, he has enough time to get everyone out before the house is completely engulfed in flames. Do you think that you would sense a feeling of obligation towards your neighbor? You owe everything to him, and that is what Paul is saying in Romans 12. You owe everything to God. Because of his love for you, he sent his son to die in your place so that you can go to heaven and miss hell. He gave you his Holy Spirit to live within so that you can have a different kind of life.

2 Peter 1:3, "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and Godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness."

Paul says I urge you in the light of what God has done for you to offer yourselves as living sacrifices because that is the only reasonable thing that someone should do.

3. I should surrender my life to God because of what he is doing

Not only is God responsible for giving you life, he is the one that allows you to keep on living. At any moment that God willed it to be so, your life on earth would end. Paul, in quoting one of the philosophers of his day said "in him we live and move and have our being."

Paul Harvey reported the story about a man who was trying to set a new world's record for staying under water with an aqua lung. After remaining for hours upon hours underneath the water in a private swimming pool, and being just minutes from attaining the record, he was forced to surface. He came out of the water in a rage. Immediately he was asked, "Why did you come up? You would have broken the record in two minutes." It was then that they discovered someone had set their lawn chair on the tube that was supplying the diver with oxygen. He simply could not make it without oxygen. Neither

can we make it without God. We are obligated to surrender to Him because He keeps us alive.

4. I should surrender my life to God because of what He is going to do

The Bible says that Jesus went to the cross for the joy that was set before Him. If you know anything about death by crucifixion, you know that it was not a joyful thing. It was the most horrible death that could be experienced in that time. Jesus knew all the pain and suffering that He would endure before he endured it, but he went anyway. Why? He knew that what would come from the suffering of the cross was far greater than the pain that He would experience. This is the very heart of surrender. Surrender at its core is the belief that if I surrender to God, no matter how rough it may be in the immediate, it is going to work out for the best in the end. It is the belief that if I am willing to die to my own desires now, God will give me blessing later.

Romans 12:2, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Notice how doing God's will is described. It is described as being good, pleasing and perfect. In other words, surrendering to God's will brings blessing into your life. There are a number of places that I go to on the Internet to find Biblical material. A few of those require a password. When you put in the password, suddenly you have access to thousands upon thousands of pages of scripture verses and commentaries. It's all out there ready for you to use, but you have to have the password. If you don't have the password, you don't get the material. The same is true in the Christian life. Many Christians hear about what God can do for their lives. They hear about fullness of joy. They hear about peace in the midst of heavy trials and unwanted circumstances. They hear about having boldness to witness for Christ, but when they look at their lives, they see very little of the above. The question is why. And the answer to that question is, they don't have the password. What is the password to God's blessings? The password to God's blessings is "surrender."

What will a surrendered person look like?

1. He will reject the world's standards

Romans 12:2, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

When the Bible uses the word “world” here it is not speaking of the people of the world. It is speaking of a system of living that is opposed to God’s way of living.

Romans 12:2 NLT - "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is."

One of the great enemies to your walk with the Lord is this thing the Bible calls the world. God wants you to surrender all of the worldly thoughts and actions to Him.

SERMON SPICE “THE HALL CLOSET” video clip

Surrender to God is the only right thing to do because of who he is and what he has done, but that is not the way the world operates. It is very important that we remember that a majority does not make something right.

2. He will live to bring Glory to God

Psalm 57:5, “Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.”

Surrendering to God means if I do what he says for his glory not mine. The reason so many are so miserable is because we think life is about us. Ultimately, the meaning of life begins and ends with God’s glory. Glory is a word that literally means, “heavy.” We use the term “heavyweight” to refer to someone with great influence. God is heavy, but because of our sin, we take Him “lightly.”

One author wrote,

“It is one of the defining marks of our time that God is now weightless... He rests upon the world so inconsequentially as not to be noticeable. That is weightlessness. It is a condition that we have assigned him after having nudged him out to the periphery of our secularized life. His truth is no longer welcome in our public discourse. The engine of modernity rumbles on, and he is but a speck in its path.”

A person who is truly surrendered to the Lord is jealous for God's glory, and he lives in such a way that God will be honored.

*Colossians 3:17, “And whatever you do, whether in **word** or **deed**, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*

Some of the great classical composers of the past wrote their music in order to bring Glory to God. The same is true with some of the great artists of the past who devoted their talents to bring glory to God.

Eric Liddel was one of the fastest runners the world had seen in 1924. If you've seen the movie, "Chariots of Fire, you know that Eric ran "for the glory of God." Whatever it is that you do, do it so that God may be glorified. That is the mark of a surrendered believer.

3. His life will be continually changing

When I was a young boy, I would put together model cars and then paint them. Later on I would sand down my bicycle frame, put a coat of primer on it and then paint it. I learned early on that you couldn't just put one heavy coat of paint on the bicycle and think it was finished. If the bicycle was to look good, I would have put layers upon layers of paint on the bicycle. That is very similar to what happens in our lives. Left to ourselves, as we get older, we have layer after layer of sin and selfishness covering our lives. When God begins to work in our life, he begins to peel back those layers one at a time. And each time that he does, we become more Godly and more like him. How quickly does God peel back the layers of sin and selfishness in our lives? That's all according to how we willing we are for him to do it.

A.W. Tozer wrote,

"Father, I want to know thee, but my heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding, and I do not try to hide from thee the terror of the parting. I come trembling, but I do come. Please root from my heart all of those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self, so that Thou mayest enter and dwell there without a rival. Then shalt thou make the place of thy feet glorious. Then shall my heart have no need of the sun to shine in it, for thy self will be the light of it, and there shall be no night there. In Jesus' name, amen."