

Surrender Study Guide

Relationship 1.2 Surrender

Anyone can say they love Jesus, or that they're a Christian. How do we know if someone's really in relationship with Jesus? How do we know if *we're* following Jesus authentically?

Jesus makes demands on His disciples. This lesson teaches one of the greatest demands Jesus makes on the people who follow Him.

TALK IS CHEAP. Just because someone has confessed Christ and prayed the "prayer of salvation," doesn't necessarily mean they're following Jesus. Every authentic disciple must surrender every area of his or her life to the will of Jesus. Without surrender, there can be no following. If we say we believe in Jesus, but we never surrender our lives to Him, we're just kidding ourselves. Surrender is an essential component to living in a way that pleases God.

How do you like it when people tell you what to do? I have never liked having someone else tell me what to do. I guess it's a pride thing or a rebellious thing. But I've been raised to believe that I'm captain of my own ship. Not only do I make decisions about my life, but somehow my independence is my right. I get to decide what I want to do with my life. Anyone who tries to decide my life for me will be resisted. What about you? Can you relate?

But Scripture teaches that Jesus has a very different idea about how he wants us as His followers to live. In fact, Jesus has no problem at all telling us that He wants to rule in our lives. Our prideful independence is met with direct confrontation in Scripture. We're not called to live for ourselves. We're called to surrender to Jesus.

Do you remember how Jesus invited His 12 disciples to become disciples? He simply said, "Follow Me."

Matthew 4:19 And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

When Jesus says, "Follow Me," to a prospective disciple, He's not just telling them that they need to adopt His principles for living and obey His rules. No, it's about more than that. Sure, we need to obey all that Jesus taught us, but at the root of Jesus saying "Follow Me" is the basic idea that Jesus is the leader and we're the follower. That concept doesn't seem to complicated does it?

Jesus put it this way:

Luke 6:46 "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"

One of the key components of pleasing God in our relationship with Him is our attitude of surrender before Him. As followers of Jesus we surrender our destination in life to His leadership – we surrender the direction of our life to His leadership - we surrender the timing of our life to His leadership - the purpose of our life is His to determine. You say, "Pastor, these areas of surrender cover my whole life." Yes! That's the point. We surrender every area of our lives to Jesus' leadership when we set our hearts on following Him.

This attitude of surrender to the will of God in our lives is beautifully demonstrated by Jesus Himself. Surrender to the will of God is how Jesus lived:

John 8:28 So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. **29** And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."

What's He saying? I've surrendered my life to do the will of my Father. "Not My will but Thine be done." Jesus says He does nothing on His own authority. He speaks as the Father taught Him. He always does the things that are pleasing to His Father. And that's exactly what He wants you and I to do as well. We are called to surrender our lives to do what He wants, not what we want.

Jesus spoke of surrender like this:

Luke 9:23 And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. **24** For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

In verse 24 we're told that living for ourselves will lead us to losing our lives. If we prioritize our will before God's and live the way we choose, we will be lost for eternity. But, on the other hand, if we surrender to the will of God and lose our life now in order to do what Jesus wants, we save our lives. Why? Because to lose your life now for Jesus' sake is to know Him and follow Him. He has promised to save all who belong to Him.

In Luke 9:23 Jesus speaks of surrender in three ways:

1) "Let him deny himself"

Just say "No" to whatever you want your life to be and say "Yes" to whatever the Lord wants your life to be. This is not living to please yourself, rather, this is living to please God. We strive each moment of every day to do what God wants.

2) "Take up your cross"

Taking up our cross is about surrendering the destination and outcome of our lives to Jesus. Jesus followed His Father all the way to His execution on a cross. God's will dictated that Jesus be sacrificed for the sin of the world. Jesus surrendered to God's will and allowed Himself to be crucified. We may not know what God has in store for us, but we are called to surrender the destination and outcome of our lives to Him even it means enduring very difficult circumstances – including death.

3) "And follow Me"

To follow Jesus, we must trust Him. We must believe that He knows the best way for us. We must believe that He's alive and actively engaged in leading our lives. We know there's more to life than just having a good time and living to please ourselves. True life is found in following Jesus – both now and for eternity. That's why we surrender our decisions/direction/speed/distance/destination/time/talent/treasure - our life and our death to the will of Jesus.

Hebrews 10:7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'

Following Jesus is not like Burger King. Their motto is, "Have it your way." Jesus doesn't let us have it our way. No, instead of our way, all who follow Him and sincerely love Jesus are called to obey Him – to have it HIS way. We must surrender our lives to Him

How do we nurture our relationship with Jesus? We call Him Lord, Lord and strive to do everything He commands.

Luke 14:33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Please pause and reflect on the word "CANNOT" in Luke 14:33. Without surrendering our lives to Jesus, following Jesus is impossible.

Jesus demands radical obedience. It's not casual for Him.

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS:

- 1) Reflect on your own life. Who is in charge? How would an outsider see that you've surrendered your life to Jesus?
- 2) What does Jesus say about His own submission to His Father in John 8:29-30.
- 3) What point does Jesus make about calling Him, "Lord, Lord," in Luke 6:46?
- 4) Reflect on what Jesus means when He tells us to deny ourselves. In what areas of your life are you being called to deny yourself? Are you denying yourself in order to follow Jesus?
- 5) What kind of commitment does Jesus demand in Luke 14:33?