

Provisions

“until Christ is formed in you”



“For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?”

Isaiah 14:27
(NIV)

"Only God deserves absolute surrender because only God can offer absolutely dependable love."

David Benner, *Surrender to Love: Discovering the Heart of Christian Spirituality*

Surrender

a soul care resource from LifePoint Resources



www.LifePointResources.org

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Sailing into Interior Freedom

Surrender is to be avoided at all costs. Fight against it. Strategize to evade it. Push back until your last breath! Never yield! Never give up! **NEVER SURRENDER!** It's a basic survival rule of life. Or is it?

Maybe not. Maybe we need deeper comprehension of this invitation. **Surrender isn't giving up.** Surrender isn't the result of failure. It does not mean shackles. It isn't becoming spineless or acquiring the flavor of an egg white. Surrender isn't apathy, it's engagement.

The practice of surrender, to which God daily invites us, is more like sailing.

The joy of sailing depends on the sailor's understanding of the wind. A happy sailor surrenders to the wind. When the wind is blowing contrary, good sailors aren't stopped or blown off course. They work with the wind rather than fighting it. They stop resisting the wind and adjust the sails to skim over the water in cooperation with the wind. **Experienced sailors understand that the wind is for them, not against them.**

And so it is with the Spirit of God who daily invites and empowers us to cooperate with the winds of deeper transformation blowing through the expanse of our souls.

Granted, both sailing and active surrender are far from the hammocks and tiki huts of lounging on the beach. It's easier to stay on shore and play it safe, but the journey of transformation calls us out of our comfort and into the adventure. Surrender is hard work, and it is repetitious and slow. **Surrender requires awareness and intentionality and loss.** There will be sweat – and probably tears. And maybe blisters and sunburn. And a daily dying to self, as C.S. Lewis reminded us: to surrender a self-will that is inflamed and swollen with years of usurpation is a kind of death.

As our autonomy slides through our hands, it can mean a rope burn on our tender palms. We can bang our shins as we relinquish the captain's chair – for the fourth time in the day. Sometimes the saltwater stings our eyes when we, once again, strain forward to see further ahead than we really need to. Our habit of trying to read the charts and plot a course can be really hard to yield. And it can be humbling to realize that we have been carrying around self-propelling oars just in case the sails don't serve our purposes.

But, oh, the wide-open space that surrender brings us to! Wind through the hair! Untethered joy! Almost like flying! Sailing! Surrender is freedom! Interior freedom of the soul!

The Practice of Surrender

Imagine a life with God free from the weighty burden of second-guessing, of revisiting the “What if” and “If only.”

Imagine breathing without the restriction of pretending to be other than your true self.

Imagine the ease of movement when you stop stretching and yearning for something just out of reach.

Imagine the absence of disappointment because expectations are set only on our God who never fails.

Imagine contentment. Gratitude. Peace. Satisfaction. His nearness.

All of that is possible as we practice surrender to God, whose purposes cannot be thwarted (Isaiah 14:27) and whose plans are “for good and not evil, to give us a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11) It is possible to journey forward enjoying the internal freedom found in having the heartbeat of “on earth as it is in Heaven.” **Do you sense God’s invitation into greater freedom?** Are you ready to set sail on the sea of deeper communion? Are you willing to trust deeply, and be held secure in the unshakable peace found by practicing surrender?

A Prayer of Surrender

Lord, keep me aware
of Your presence
and my resistance,
for I know that
the surrendering of my will
is an ongoing reorientation
as I release my plan,
and partner with Your Spirit
at work in me to replace
my thoughts with Yours.

The Practice of Surrender

Recognize my current posture of resistance – Am I braced, heels dug in, obstinately crouched in a defensive, fighting stance? “God, will You show me why I feel resistance?”

Remember who God is and who I am – “Will You remind me that You are infinite in wisdom, love, and power, and that I am finite in all things?”

Request a change of heart – “Will You create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit in me? I invite You to do the work of transformation.” (Psalm 51:10)

Recall His goodness – Will You bring to my mind specific examples of how You have already fulfilled, “No good thing will He withhold.”? (Psalm 84:11)

Release – “Please, Lord, take from me anything that keeps me from saying, ‘Not my will, but Thine be done.’”

Rest in the Holy Spirit’s transforming work and delight in God’s delighting in me.

Surrender consists, not in doing great, heroic deeds about which self can brag, but simply in accepting whatever God sends, and not seeking to change it (unless it is His will for it to be changed).

Full surrender is full peace. If we are restless and concerned about things formerly renounced, we have not genuinely surrendered. Surrender is the source of true peace; if we aren’t at peace, it is because our surrender is not complete.

17th century pastor, François Fénelon,

Let Go: To Get Peace and Real Joy. New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House.

**Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
Come near to God and He will come near to you. James 4: 7-8 (NIV)**

“To pray, ‘Thy will be done,’ I must be willing, if the answer requires it, that my will be undone.” Elisabeth Elliot

Such a life has two sides — on the one side, absolute surrender to work what God wants you to do; on the other side, to let God work what He wants to do.

Andrew Murray, *Absolute Surrender*

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES for the JOURNEY

Surrender to Love: Discovering the Heart of Christian Spirituality (David Benner)

[SURRENDERED](#) from One House Worship (featuring vocals by Amanda Cook, Mitch Wong & Roosevelt Stewart)

The purpose of spiritual practices is to make space for the Holy Spirit to do transforming work so that Christ may be formed in us.

The point is an ever-increasing union with God—loving God for God’s sake—overflowing the banks of our hearts for the sake of the world.

We hope that these quotes, prayers, ideas, and resources will help you practice the way of Jesus.