

SURRENDER AND SELF-EXAMINATION

“Give up yourself and you’ll find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Keep nothing back. Look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else is thrown in.” - C.S. Lewis

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why is surrender so difficult? What does our culture say about the idea of surrender?
2. Share one area of your life that is a place of control or a place that is difficult to surrender.
3. How does surrender relate to trusting God?

SMALL GROUP SHARING

1. Romans 6:19-22; Matthew 6:33 – Discuss how these verses relate to the concept of surrender.

2. Surrender Your Attitude – Philippians 4:8 -

The world we live in can be a dark place, filled with ups and downs, and things that don't always go the way we want. There are many times when bad things happen and we let our thoughts and attitudes get just as bad as the situation. God knows how a bad attitude and unpleasant thoughts can tear us down, which is one of the reasons He wants us to keep a positive attitude and think happy thoughts.

Read Philippians 4:8 – can you think about such things when life gets you down? How can you get to a point where you can surrender your attitude and think about the things in which God wants you to dwell on? Come up with specific ideas on how to live this verse in your life.

Randy Alcorn from “Money, Possessions and Eternity” – “In the truest sense, Christian pilgrims have the best of both worlds. We have joy whenever this world reminds us of the next, and we take solace whenever it does not.”

3. Surrender Your Worries – Luke 12:16-34; I Peter 5:6-7; Philippians 4:6-7

The more we try to control or hang onto anything, the more we are likely to worry and take our eyes off of the One who makes our lives possible.

What things do you worry about? What do these verses say about your worries? What practical steps can you take toward removing worry and anxiety from your life?

4. Surrender Your Relationships – Matthew 10:32-39

How do we surrender our relationships? What are we clinging to? Are we attempting to find life through our own efforts or through our relationships? Do we keep trying to fix our relationships or do we spend time getting to know Jesus better? Can we change people? How does change take place?

5. A. Surrender Your Stuff – Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-25

Consider what is important in your life. All we have needs to be surrendered to God's control. Ultimately, everything we have is from God. All we have is given to us so that we can use it for God's glory. It is not that these things are not important, but we are stewards, or caretakers, of them. Sometimes it is hard to release control of the things we hold dear. The problem is that the more we try to control or hang onto it, the more we are likely to worry and take our eyes off of the One who makes our lives possible.

Your attitude toward possessions is a spiritual matter. Our things can come between us and the Kingdom. Possessions are tools to bless others, not a measure of success. The stuff entrusted to you is a test of who is master and Lord of your life. Your use of possessions demonstrates how much responsibility you are worthy of assuming in heaven.

What are your favorite possessions? How important are they to you? Are they a sense of security or fear?

Discuss the below quotes in light of the verses you just read?

“I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all. But whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.” - Martin Luther

“I place no value on anything I possess, except in relationship to the kingdom of God. – David Livingston

Money, Possessions and Eternity, by Randy Alcorn – “The comic strip ‘Cathy’ depicted a young man and woman discussing various items they’d acquired:

“Safari clothes that will never be near a jungle.”

“Aerobic footwear that will never set foot in an aerobics class.”

“Deep-sea dive watch that will never get wet.”

Keys to a four-wheel-drive vehicle that will never experience a hill.”

Architectural magazines we don’t read filled with pictures of furniture we don’t like.”

Financial strategy software keyed to a checkbook that’s lost somewhere under a computer no one knows how to work.”

“Art poster from an exhibit we never went to of an artist we never heard of.”

Finally, as both characters stand with blank stares, one says to the other: “Abstract materialism has arrived.” To which the other replies: We’ve moved past the things we want and need and are buying those things that have nothing to do with our lives.”

Randy Alcorn goes on to say: “Shopping has become our most popular weekday out-of-home entertainment.” “Many of us act as if we believe the words of the old bumper sticker: “he who dies with the most toys wins.”

Randy Alcorn – “God created us to love people and use things, but materialist love things and use people.” ...tendency to treat people as objects.

Randy Alcorn – “Materialism results from a failure to realize that we were made for only one person (Jesus) and one place (heaven). Those of us who know Christ will one day be with him in heaven. Until then, nothing else can satisfy us. Materialism is a lie that Satan whispers in our ears: ‘If you had this thing or this person, you’d finally be happy.’ As long as we live by the lie, regardless of what we say we believe, we will be practicing materialists.”

Randy Alcorn – “...the more things we own – the greater their total mass – the more they grip us, hold us, set us in orbit around them. Finally, like a black hole, a gargantuan cosmic vacuum cleaner, they mercilessly suck us into themselves, until we become indistinguishable from our things, surrendering ourselves to the inhuman gods we have idolized. This is the final end of materialism.”

6. B. Surrender Your Stuff

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 – Emptiness and meaninglessness are the fruit of unbridled materialism. What are some examples in our society of the emptiness produced by excessive greed? Identify pictures in magazines that illustrate a loss of meaning. Discuss.

7. Surrender Your Money – Matthew 6:19-24

What do you treasure? Is it family, money, car, home, job, personal possessions? We all have the desires and love for people and things. But they should never come before our relationship with God. By giving all we have to God and allowing Him to be in control of it, we will be free to have that relationship with Him.

Discuss the following quotes keeping Matthew 6:19-24 in mind:

“Prosperity knits a man to the world. He feels that he is finding his place in it, while really it is finding its place in him.” – C.S. Lewis

“The lust for affluence in contemporary society has become psychotic; it has completely lost touch with reality.” - Richard Foster

“Where riches hold the dominion of the heart, God has lost His authority.” – John Calvin

What do you see in the following quotes?

“I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness.” - John D. Rockefeller

“The care of \$200 million is enough to kill anyone. There is no pleasure in it.” - W.H. Vanderbilt.

“I was happier when doing a mechanic’s job.” – Henry Ford

“Millionaires seldom smile.” – Andrew Carnegie

8. Surrender Your burdens – Matthew 11:28-30

The burdens and issues of life, no matter what they might be, are not for us to carry. To lighten that load we need to give them away and the only place to give them is to God. Are you tired, do you need rest? What burden are you keeping? Why are you keeping it? Are you ready to lay it down and rest?

Things to Think About On Your Own

1. Read Mark 8:34-35 – What does it mean to “deny yourself”? Ponder these verses. In what areas have you been putting yourself first? What might God be asking you to surrender?

2. A.W. Tozer in “The Transmutation of Wealth” said that there are four basic questions:
 - a. What do we value most?
 - b. What would we hate to lose?
 - c. What do our thoughts turn to most frequently when we are free to think of what we will?
 - d. What affords us the greatest pleasure?

Based on the above four basic questions, what is your treasure?

How will you get to a point where you live in the knowledge that the greatest treasure is Christ Himself?

3. Read Matthew 4:18-20 and Luke 12:16-34. Then list what is really important to you.

4. Read Psalm 63:1; Psalm 34:8; Matthew 5:6; and Revelations 21:6. What do you yearn for?

Surrender and Self-Control

Ideas & Tips

1. First thing in the morning, before even getting out of bed, say to the Lord out loud, "I am yours."
2. Make a "control-inventory." This is the list of all the areas of your life you try to control yourself. Pray over each one, giving up the control to the Lord. Do this often. Celebrate when you see progress in letting the Lord slowly take over these areas.
3. Make a "possession-inventory." This is the list of all the stuff in your life you are attached to and cling to. Pray over each thing on this list, visualizing giving them over to the Lord. Walk around your home or office saying out loud to the Lord, "this is yours, not mine."
4. Journal the different ways you tend to try to control others or your surroundings. For example, are you demanding, pouting, angry, working harder, etc.? Ask God to take these under the control of the Holy Spirit.
5. Give something away that you are particularly attached to.
6. Notice how many times in a day you use the pronoun "I". Be intentional to stop using the "I" word.
7. Pray constantly during the day. This is called a "breath prayer" meaning pray every time you notice taking a breath. Pray this: "Not my will but your will."
8. Increase the amount of money you give away. Surrender your finances to God.
9. Pray with your children aloud and verbally surrender their lives to God. Not only does this help you as a parent remember that your children belong to God, but it also teaches your children about surrender.
10. With your children, purge toys and clothes for donation. Pray together before you start and all throughout the process. Resist the idea of clearing out toys without your children just to avoid the confrontation. Make this a powerful teaching opportunity.
11. Use the Golden Rule to teach your children to surrender to one another. (Luke 6:31 – Do to others as you would have them do to you.)"

Possession Inventory

1. What things do I have in my life that I absolutely cannot do without?

2. Why am I tempted to place security and trust in stuff?

3. Take an inventory of all you have. Ask yourself, am I using this _____ for God or myself?

4. List five ways that you are using your possessions on earth to glorify God in heaven?

5. How can I use the things that I do have to give God glory?

6. Make a list of all the things you treasure here on earth (people, places, things). Rate them in order of how important they are to you...remembering you can't take anything with you to heaven. Is God first? Are you holding tight to something or someone?

7. Pray about surrendering the items on your list in #6 above to God's loving care.

Control Inventory

1. Am I treating God as owner and CEO/CFO of “my” assets, relationships etc., or am I treating God merely as my consultant, to whom I pay a fee (of 10 percent or greater)?

2. Who is master of my life – God or my stuff? (Luke 16:13). After reviewing my credit card statements, my checkbook, and looking over my possessions, take a sheet of paper and list specific examples that demonstrate that God’s eternal kingdom and my soul are my highest priority (Luke 16:1-9).

3. When I make a list of all the assets you’ve entrusted to me and ask what you want me to give away, is there anything I’m leaving off the list? Is there anything I’m treating as if it were untouchable, as if it were mine and not yours?

4. In what areas do I still maintain control?

5. Are there areas of my life that I feel are not important to God? Things He would rather I just take care of myself.

6. Read the following scriptures: Psalm 9:10; Psalm 13:5; Psalm 20:7; Psalm 22:4; Psalm 22:9; Luke 16:11; Acts 14:23; Romans 15:13. Then re-commit to trusting God in everything. Give Him the areas that I have kept to myself based on my inventory of areas of my life that I try to control myself as listed in #4 above. Pray over each one, giving up control to the Lord.

7. Be purposeful about going to the Lord with everything and see the difference in your joy and peace over time.

Things to Do this Week

Sunday (Today): Pray about putting God first in your life.

Monday: List what is really important to you and pray over your list.

Tuesday: Surrender your thoughts and attitudes to God.

Wednesday: Surrender your time to God.

Thursday: Surrender your relationships to God.

Friday: Surrender your stuff to God.

Saturday: Assess your week for hold backs, things you have not fully given to God.

Then, repeat the above again weekly for four weeks.

Transfer of Title

Date: _____

I hereby acknowledge God's ownership of me and all "my" money and possessions, and everything else I've ever imagined belonged to me – including my family and loved ones. Instead of seeing myself as the ultimate recipient, I will see myself as God's delivery girl, enjoying what he intends me to keep and distributing what he intends to go elsewhere. From this point forward I will think of these assets as his to do with as he wishes. I will do my utmost to ask him and to prayerfully consider how he wishes me to invest his assets to further his kingdom. In doing so I realize I will surrender certain temporary earthly treasures but gain in exchange eternal treasures, as well as increased perspective and decreased anxiety.

Signed: _____

Witness: _____

- From Money, Possessions and Eternity, by Randy Alcorn

All In
Finding True Life on the Path to Total Surrender
By Mike Guzzardo

“...the greatest problem with the church in America today is that everyone is looking at a relationship with Me (God) as an addition to their lives.”

“A relationship with Me (God) was never meant to be an addition; it’s an *exchange*. It’s about a person surrendering everything they are to receive everything He is.”

“Following Christ is not about making Him *one* priority among many; it is about making Him *the* priority.”

“We really want everything Jesus offers, but we aren’t willing to relinquish complete control. The mere thought of yielding all control to Christ instantly causes our minds to fill with irrational fears. *What if He doesn’t do a good job? What if He keeps me from good things? What if He fails me?* As if a loving God who has already proven His love through such great sacrifice would ever fail us. Yet we feel much safer when we hold the reins. So we try to ‘add Jesus in’ to our lives while still maintaining control, which of course produces little or no results.”

“More often than not, we try to carve out a comfortable place in our lives for Jesus to reign while we continue to rule in the really important areas. Unfortunately, this will never work. We will never truly experience God in this way. To experience Jesus, we must relinquish our right of control in every area of our life. As much as we may want it to work another way, it won’t. Luke 16:13 clearly states, ‘No servant can serve two masters.’”

“The only way to have true life is to let go.”

“Surrender is not living a perfect life, it is maintaining an attitude of the heart where we continually allow God to lead, instruct, and mold our lives as He desires.

Q – If you had to choose only one of the two words to describe your commitment to Christ, would **addition** or **exchange** be more accurate?

Q – Can you identify areas in your life that you have yet to submit to God’s control?

“The choice is simple: *camp* or *climb*. Choosing to climb – to go all in – requires a decision to make Jesus Lord of all. You may have already made a decision to invite Jesus into your heart, but this is something more. Jesus is not looking for an invitation to your heart. He is looking for ownership of your heart.”

“God is not looking for perfection – He is looking for surrender. Perfection means we never fail, but surrender means we are always willing to remain yielded to Jesus *even if we fail*. God’s call is for us to maintain a stance of surrender in every area of our lives.”

Recommended Reading

All In
Finding True Life on the Path to Total Surrender
By Mike Guzzardo

Money, Possessions and Eternity
By Randy Alcorn

God & Your Stuff
The Vital Link Between Your Possessions and Your Soul
By Wesley K. Willmer