

The Heart of a Surrendered Life

Luke 9:23

Introduction:

1. God's plan for the believer is found in **Galatians 5:22-23**. This describes for us the character and attitude that Christ desires to produce in and through us.

□ **Galatians 5:22-23** - **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 meekness, and self-control; against such, there is no law.**

2. These qualities are wonderful, priceless commodities, but they won't come to us while self (our flesh) is enthroned on our hearts. These fruits are displayed in us when we surrender our will to God's will and allow Christ's Spirit to flow through us freely. The Bible calls it in **Ephesians 5:18c** **"be filled (controlled) with the Spirit."**
3. They come to us when we seek the Father above all else and desire to please Him more than anything or anybody, including ourselves. This process is when you make Jesus **"Lord"** of your life, which requires complete surrender to Him.

4. **Self** always stands in defiance of surrender.

□ **Self** says, *"It's all about me and my happiness."*

□ **Surrender** says, *"It's all about Christ and His pleasure."*

□ **Self** asks, *"Am I pleased with this action, attitude, and decision?"*

- **Surrender** always asks, “*Is Christ pleased with this action, this attitude, this decision? Is Christ honored?*”
 - **Illustration:** Ever had a garden hose with a kink? It restricts the flow of life-giving water to your plants, flowers, bushes, grass, etc. Without water, they will die. The water is there (in the hose), but it can’t get out.
5. When self is enthroned on our hearts, it restricts the flow of God’s Holy Spirit in and through us. If this happens, we begin to shrivel up spiritually. As Christians, this can happen in our life; we can quench and grieve Christ’s Spirit according to **Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19**
- Unwilling to surrender, Christians can be some of the most miserable people on planet earth because they have God’s Spirit within them, trying to teach them the way of Christ, but they are opposing and resisting His instruction.
6. If you are saved, Christ’s divine, resurrection life is in you. **How do you open up the hose and allow Christ’s Spirit to flow through you? It takes a heart of surrender. What does a heart of surrender require?** Jesus tells us clearly in **Luke 9:23**.

The heart of a surrendered life is a denying of your flesh.

1. Look at **verse 23** again. The word “*deny*” means “to deny utterly, to disown, to reject.” That is very strong and adamant. To be a disciple of Christ means that I completely

deny my fleshly nature the things that are contrary to the way of Christ.

2. Again, ***“The flesh”*** speaks of the part of us that desires to live independent of God and it seeks **self-gratification**, rather than seeking to please Christ. Denying yourself is not asceticism (torturing or disciplining yourself). It is simply seeking Christ and His will above all else.
3. Anything that would hinder us from seeking Christ and pull us away from Him, we gladly refuse and refrain. Anything keeping us from total surrender to Christ (the kink in the hose), we must take out of our lives. In **Titus 2:11-12** **For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, righteously, and in godliness in this present world,** You see, salvation teaches one thing, but the flesh, being contrary to our spirit, teaches another.
 - **Self (the flesh)** says – **“I deserve this. Everybody else is doing it. It makes me happy. There is nothing in the Bible that directly forbids it.”**
 - **The Spirit** says – **“Does it please Christ? Does it help me to run the race for Christ? Does it draw me closer to Christ?”**
4. **When self is on the throne of our heart, we are always looking for ways to excuse ourselves and skirt around things in our life. Why? The flesh does not want to deny itself. It wants what it wants and it wants it now.**
5. Paul said that athletes deny themselves in order to win worldly competitions. And it is so true – they do! But we

have a much greater and higher purpose – to please our Savior and further His work on earth by declaring the truth that can change the eternal destiny of souls.

6. The apostle Paul constantly practiced this principle of denial. **1 Corinthians 9:27 - But I bring and keep my body under subjection, lest when preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.**
7. **Paul gladly denied himself of his own preferences and rights when it meant pleasing the Lord, furthering His work, and reaching souls. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23** You could have something or engage in a thing that isn't even sinful, but it's a weight – Christ calls you to lay it aside and follow Him. **Hebrews 12:1 - ...let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.**
8. For example, you may be called upon by Christ's Spirit to:
 - Deny yourself of a certain boyfriend or girlfriend because he or she is hindering you in following after Christ.
 - Deny yourself a more lucrative job because you know it will hinder you (and maybe your family) in your following after Christ.
 - Deny yourself a hobby or recreational activity because you know it will take you away from fellowship with your small group and your corporate worship of God with your church family on weekends.
 - Deny yourself a habit because you know it will hinder you in your testimony for Christ.

- Deny yourself something that you want to buy so that you can give to God instead.
- Deny yourself the opportunity to seek fame and fortune, or even just a comfortable life, so that you might be a missionary for Christ.

In Conclusion:

1. To come to the place where you truly desire to surrender to Christ and deny the flesh, it takes:
 - Never be satisfied with where you are in your development and growth as a follower of Christ.** (You must get sick of your flesh and want to change. Sometimes life events and fleshly consequences can push us towards this.)
 - A true, deep yearning for Christ – *“if any man will come after me let him take up his cross and follow me.”*** (these are not to be blanks, just underlined)
 - A decision to do whatever it takes to experience His life-giving power in and through you.**
2. **Example:** In **Luke 19:2-9** is the story of Zacchaeus. He had a nice, comfortable life before he met Christ, but after meeting Christ, he was willing to do whatever it took to know Christ more.
3. What is the difference between a Christian who lives a wasted life with no real impact versus a believer who lives a life of high impact for Christ?
4. **At key times in your life, you will be faced with a decision – will I follow after my flesh or Christ?** The way to live a life without regrets is to deny self and follow after Christ.