

# 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. However, we are reminded of this...
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?"*

5. When self is enthroned on our hearts, it restricts the flow of God's Holy Spirit in and through us.
6. **How do you allow Christ's Spirit to flow through you? It takes a heart of surrender. What does a heart of surrender require? [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. The flesh wants what it wants and it wants it now.**
  5. Paul used athletic events as illustrations at times and he said that an athlete will 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. Look at what the Apostle Paul said in **1 Corinthians 9:24-27** - **Do you not know that all those who run in a race run, but one receives the prize? So run, that you may obtain it. 25 Everyone who strives for the prize exercises self-control in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one. 26 So, therefore, I run, not with uncertainty. So I fight, not as one who beats the air. 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.

**9. To come to the place where you truly desire to surrender to Christ and deny the flesh, you must:**

- 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 but ultimately it's your choice.)

- **Have a true, deep yearning for Christ. [Luke 9:23](#) - “*If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”* (these are not to be blanks, just underlined)**
  - **Decide to do whatever it takes to experience Christ's life-giving power in and through you.**
10. **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.
  11. **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? It comes down to what or whom you choose to follow.**
  12. **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.**

**What does a heart of surrender require?**

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

**The heart of a surrendered life is death to the mindset of, “I'm going to live my life my way”.**

1. In our text, Jesus said that in order to come after Him you must take up your cross daily.

2. What is your cross? What did Jesus mean? Many people think that their cross is a certain thing or a certain person – **I.E.** > *“this old car that is always breaking down is my cross to bear, my job and my boss is my cross to bear, my sickness or constant health issue is my cross to bear, my husband is my cross to bear, my kids, my mortgage, after all – we all have our cross to bear, etc.”*
3. But when someone said the word **“cross”** in Jesus’ day, immediately, everybody knew what it meant – **it meant death! The cross meant death.**
4. **Jesus was clearly teaching that if you want to follow Him, you must die to your way and follow My way – die to your way and realize that I am life, I am your only life source, and My way is life.**
5. Your cross is not a person, a thing, or an event. It is your entire life. It is dying to self and surrendering everything over to Christ.
  - It is saying, *“Lord, I am yours – lock, stock, and barrel. No longer will I do things my way, but I am coming after You and doing things Your way.”* **Romans 12:1**
6. While it is reasonable for a believer to surrender their way to Christ’s way, it is a lot more difficult than one might think. Why? We very much like having it our way.
  - Remember the hamburger chain whose motto was, “Have it your way”?**
  - Show Burger King vintage video**
  - That philosophy appeals to the most basic desire of a man’s nature.

7. Left to ourselves, we want it **our** way. We **like** having it our way.

- Satan didn't tempt Adam and Eve to steal, to kill, or commit adultery. He tempted them to simply live independently of God, convincing them to do things their **own** way.
- Satan asked, *"You want that fruit?" He said, "Take it and enjoy it. It doesn't matter what God said. Have it your way."*

8. Our biggest problem is that we want our own way, which is in opposition to **God's** way. This has **always** been man's biggest struggle. **Judges 17:6; Psalm 81:12; Proverbs 12:15; 28:26; Isaiah 5:21; 53:6; 2 Timothy 3:2-4**

- **Judges 17:6 - In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**
- **Psalm 81:12 - So I gave them up to their stubborn hearts, to walk in their own counsels.**
- **2 Timothy 3:2-4 - Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 without natural affection, trucebreakers, slanderers, unrestrained, fierce, despisers of those who are good, 4 traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,**