

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



Living a Surrendered Life

KEY PASSAGE: Luke 22:39-42 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 5:8

► SUMMARY

To the best of your knowledge, are you fully surrendered to Jesus Christ?

If He is your Savior and Lord, then this should be your wholehearted response. Although we all love the comfort of knowing that we are saved and our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, there should also be progress in every area of our lives through surrender to the will of God.

► SERMON POINTS

A surrendered life begins at salvation.

We must recognize that there is nothing we can do to save our souls, but must wholly trust in Jesus who bore our sins and paid the penalty we deserved. It's ironic that we surrender our souls to His authority for salvation yet try to control other areas of our lives. If Jesus is our Savior, and we acknowledge Him as Lord God, then we should also realize that He is the Lord of our lives as well.

Yet many Christians resist full surrender to Jesus because it seems too costly, too demanding. It's not like surrendering to another person because when we yield ourselves to God, it includes every area of our lives—even the things hidden deep within our hearts. Yet this absolute surrender is exactly what God expects because Christ died for us, and we belong to Him.

Full surrender is God's perfect will for our lives.

However, the application of this principle looks different for each believer. What one person finds easy to release to the Lord, someone else may not. But we can each sense what

He is asking us personally to relinquish. It's a conviction or that "thing" that keeps cropping up when we pray. It may be a bad attitude or habit, or it could be something that isn't sinful but is not presently part of God's will for our lives.

Jesus Christ is the perfect example of full surrender.

He always did the will of His Father, yet toward the end of His life, He struggled to surrender in the Garden of Gethsemane. As He withdrew from His disciples, He prayed, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

Jesus knew that He had come to die for the sins of mankind, and being fully God, He foresaw all that awaited Him as He suffered on the cross and bore the Father's punishment for our sins. His distress demonstrates that surrender is not always easy and can be excruciating, yet He never wavered from complete obedience to His Father's will. There was no other way to accomplish the salvation of mankind. Therefore, Jesus offered Himself fully to the Father and bore the penalty for our sins.

This is the same kind of attitude we should have—not my will, but Yours be done.

In a military sense surrender means defeat, but for a follower of Jesus it means victory over whatever is hindering our Christian life. It may require that we ask God to search our hearts and reveal any areas we've kept for ourselves. Then as He brings something to mind, we relinquish it to Him.

Once we've trusted Jesus as our Savior, we must recognize that we now belong to Him. Full surrender is like opening the closets of our lives and inviting Him to clean out

whatever He wants. To try to keep parts of our lives to ourselves only hinders our walk with Him. Yet we often rationalize, saying, “This one little thing isn’t that important. After all, no one is perfect. We all have our weaknesses so God will understand.” But that’s not how the Lord operates.

What does it mean to yield ourselves to God?

It requires that we open our hearts and lives to the Lord, asking Him to take out whatever does not please Him. We must be willing to confess, repent, walk away, give it up, and lay it down. Until we do, we will never become the person He wants us to be or enjoy His blessings.

It’s easy to paint a pretty picture of Christianity that leaves out the cost of surrender. We rejoice in answered prayer, the promises of Scripture, the security of our salvation, and heartfelt praise. But none of these are a substitute for wholehearted obedience and surrender to God. To be a disciple of Christ means every aspect of our lives is given to Him, and it’s evident in our conduct, conversation, and character.

What would happen if we gave ourselves fully to God?

He delights to work in our lives when we recognize Him as Lord. Such surrender affects our prayers, generosity, conversations, attitudes, families, workplaces, and interactions with those who don’t know Christ.

How would God respond if we yielded ourselves to Him?

Some people resist surrendering to God because they fear He’ll take someone or something from them. The problem with this kind of thinking is that it’s based on a faulty idea of who God is. He isn’t waiting for us to raise a white flag so He can swoop down to do something horrible to us. This is our loving heavenly Father, who is generous and kind in His blessings. He wants us to enjoy a close relationship with Him, which is only possible for those who trust and obey Him.

The Christian life is living under the leadership of the Lord Jesus, who always does what is best. Although we may want freedom from sickness, sorrow, and heartache, the Lord sometimes uses these hardships to remove whatever is hindering our relationship with Him. If we want to become the person He desires us to be, we must trust and submit to His lordship.

What is hindering total surrender?

Is it a person, a possession, a way of life, a habit? The only way to discover what God could do in our lives is to let go of anything that He says is not best for us. Although we may think we know better, we can never improve on His plan for our lives. We never lose by yielding to the Lord. In fact, that’s when life at its best begins.

What changes do we need to make?

- We must stop rationalizing and excusing our lack of submission to God.
- Trust God. He only does what is best and always keeps His word. He will not deny us anything He’s promised.
- Remember that the safest place to be is in subjection to Him.
- Surrender today, tomorrow, and every day because it’s a lifelong practice that will continue until we meet the Lord in heaven.

► RESPONSE

- What are you holding onto that God is asking you to release? What’s keeping you from surrendering it?
- Are you afraid to surrender to God? If so, why? What could you lose by surrendering? What could you gain? Which one has eternal ramifications?

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