

‘I Surrender All’: Have You Really?

In the 1890s, Judson Van DeVenter composed the spiritual hymn, “I Surrender All.” Beginning in the late 1940s, Billy Graham popularized the song in his crusades and revivals.

The hymn has been recorded by gospel legends like Andraé Crouch, Miahalia Jackson and Christian artists like Carman, Phil Driscoll, CeCe Winans, Michael W. Smith and the Newsboys. It’s a hymn that we all most likely have sung in worship service on any given Sunday.

“All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust him,
In his presence daily live.

I surrender all,
I surrender all,
All to thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.”

Think about those words. “All to Jesus I surrender. All to Him I freely give. I will ever love and trust Him. In His presence daily live.” When we sing them, do we really mean it? Do we really love and trust Him? Do we really live in His daily presence?

If you haven’t noticed, there is a huge difference between being a believer in Jesus and being a follower of Jesus. But I’ll get into that in a later post.

If many of those who profess to be Christians did those things mentioned above, then I’ve got to believe that American society, and the American church, would not be in the mess that it is in now. Oh, how we have deceived ourselves.

Have you really done as Jesus has commanded us to do and surrendered everything? Your relationship with Him? Your family? Your finances? Your addictions? Your emotions? What you eat? What you watch on television? Your time?

If we are all honest—including myself—the answer to some or all of those questions is “no.” Rick Warren says that, “Surrender is hard work. In our case, it requires intense warfare against our self-centered nature.”

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“Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts” (Gal. 5:24, MEV).

“Therefore, brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if through the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom. 8:12-13, MEV).

Warren says that surrendering your life means, 1) Following God’s lead without knowing where He’s sending you; 2) Waiting for God’s timing without knowing when it will come; 3) Expecting a miracle without knowing how God will provide; 4) Trusting God’s purpose without understanding the circumstances.

Be honest. How many of us are really doing that? For the better part of half of the 49 years of my life I thought I was doing exactly that. I thought that I had given my life over to God to do with as He wished. As it turns out, I was simply fooling myself. As the old saying goes, “I had never let go and let God.” I talked myself into thinking I was living the life He wanted for me. I couldn’t have been more mistaken.

“You know you’re surrendered to God when you rely on God to

work things out instead of trying to manipulate others, force your agenda, and control the situation," Warren said. "You let go and let God work. You don't have to always be in charge. *Instead of trying harder, you trust more.* You also know you're surrendered when you don't react to criticism and rush to defend yourself. Surrendered hearts show up best in relationships. You are not self-serving, you don't edge others out, and you don't demand your rights."

That was me—to the letter. How foolish I was. I let everybody know I was surrendering my life to the Lord, but the way I lived my life was hardly a reflection of that statement.

It wasn't until the past six months that I finally decided to give it up and let Him have it all. As Warren said, because of my self-centered nature, it certainly wasn't easy. But, it was necessary if I knew I was ever going to find true peace and happiness. The same goes for you, I guarantee it.

I'm still a work in progress, but I know that I'll eventually get there because I have this promise from God: "I am confident of this very thing; that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6, MEV).

Where I once found myself constantly angry at the injustice and iniquities in the world, I am now finding peace knowing that God is in control. Where I once feared about issues in my marriage, my relationships with my children and the state of our finances, I am now at peace because I know God will take care of all of them if my heart is right with Him.

And I'm not talking about works. I'm talking about a heart change.

It can happen for you, too. Lay it at God's feet and let Him take care of it. Surrender is simple, much less complicated than we make it out to be.

IHOPKC's Mike Bickle once said, "The Lord makes the most of whatever is unreservedly surrendered to Him." What a tremendously encouraging thought.

If you've not completely surrendered your life to Jesus, take these words to heart. If you call yourself a believer in Jesus Christ, I challenge you—no, I dare you—to start showing the character of Christ from this day forward.

"All to Jesus I surrender,
Lord, I give myself to thee,
Fill me with thy love and power,
Let thy blessing fall on me."

And as I always like to say, "There is that." God bless.

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