

When God Speaks, Surrender

Your life is not your own. Perhaps this comes as a huge surprise to you or no surprise at all, but either way it's absolutely true.

I'm not sure how **God speaks** to you, but sometimes He uses some arbitrary ways to capture my heart. *The Princess Bride* happens to be one of my favorite movies of all time. There is a particular line in that movie that grips my heart every time I hear it. In case you lived under a rock in the late 90s and missed the phenomenon that is *The Princess Bride*, you need to step away from the computer screen and run to the nearest movie store or Redbox kiosk to rent it! Just kidding—you don't have to go right this minute, but certainly do so in the near future.

This movie has everything you need in a romantic comedy—scaling cliffs of insanity; battling rodents of unusual size; surviving a kidnapping by a trio of outlaws; and disrupting an impromptu sham wedding. Hey, all the ladies out there understand that true love doesn't come easy! It's a classic fairy tale about Westley, an ordinary farmhand who is in love with the beautiful and nymphlike Buttercup. Though he knows his love is unrequited, every time Buttercup orders him to do something, even a menial task, Westley always responded with only three words: **"As you wish."**

The narrator then adds this profound thought: "[Buttercup] was amazed to discover that when he was saying, 'As you wish,' what he really meant was, 'I love you.'" Because of his love for Buttercup, Westley was willing to surrender his desires, his pride and his will to her every whim.

It was while watching this scene that I heard, as clear as day, the Holy Spirit whisper to my heart to read the story of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

I was amazed by both the clarity of His voice and the softness of the prompting. I would really love to tell you I am so spiritual that I immediately leapt to my feet and raced to read my Bible, but I didn't. I sat there for a few seconds, thinking, *Is this really God, or did I just make up that voice in my head? The movie is just getting to the good swashbuckling part!* I am so glad I decided against ignoring the prompting and stopped the movie, picked up my women's **devotional Bible** and thumbed to the book of Luke to read the story of Jesus in the garden.

Luke's account of this scene tells us that Jesus went up to the Mount of Olives with His disciples to pray before He would be handed over to the authorities to be crucified.

Jesus was facing the ultimate test of His love as He was about to suffer the cruelest form of death imaginable. On His obedience literally hung the salvation of billions upon billions of lives. If He failed, no one would get saved; if He succeeded, the spiritual landscape of the world would be forever changed. No pressure, right?

Jesus was literally sweating blood in agony for what He was about to endure, and His response fully displays both His deity and His humanity. Luke 22:41-42 says, "He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them [the disciples], knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.'" I am amazed by His surrender in this moment.

It astounds me that of all the prayers Jesus could utter in that moment, the one that left His lips was, "**Father, not My will, but Yours be done.**" Jesus was saying, "Father, as You wish." And ultimately, He was saying, "Father, I love You."

Many of us start out sincerely chasing after God, but somewhere along the way we get distracted and lose our way. For some of us, it's a trial or disappointment along the way

that makes us reject the idea of surrendering to God because He let us down and we don't trust Him. We have to reach a point where even though we don't understand God's ways, we can still trust His heart. If we allow the pain of life and the bitterness of suffering to take root in our hearts, before long we are off the path God has laid out for us.

It is not enough to **surrender to God** once, when you initially asked Jesus to come into your heart and be your Savior. You must continue to surrender day by day, decision by decision, minute by passing minute. I can say this with certainty because little did I know as I watched the movie that day, God was preparing my heart for my own garden scene and my own place of testing.

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