

A Lame Excuse for Not Surrendering to the Holy Spirit

To say we have no voice or say in what happens in our lives is an excuse for not surrendering to the Holy Spirit. We do have a voice, but it means we are just living by every whim we have and not by God.

Galatians 5:16 (TPT) tells us, "As you yield to the dynamic life and power of the Holy Spirit, you will abandon the cravings of your self-life." This lets us know that our voices will be dynamically powerful or marked by continuous productive activity, and change in an energetic way when we make sure we have left behind our desires and cravings which seem to lead us down the wrong paths.

With so many other voices competing for our attention, it can be difficult to hear our own voice. That makes us feel like we don't have any input into our own lives.

God Longs to Hear Your Voice

Remember when Adam and Eve sinned and they hid from God. Genesis 3:9 (NLT) God asked Adam, "Where are you?"

God knew where Adam and Eve were, but He wanted to hear their voices. He wanted to have a conversation with them. And yeah, it wasn't a conversation that praised them, but God still wanted to hear what they had to say.

God created us. Colossians 1:16 tells us that "All things were created by Him and for Him." Did you get that? We were created for God.

Created With Three Distinct Parts

Not only that He created each of us individually with three distinct parts. We are spirit, soul and body as 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 tells us.

Our bodies are the physical part of us and our spirit is the part of us that connects to God's Spirit. The soul, though, is sometimes difficult to understand.

Most biblical scholars agree that the soul is composed of three parts: the mind, will and emotions. Our voice or the essence of who we are resides in our soul. It is a combination of what we think in our minds, what we decide in our wills and what we feel through our emotions.

Our Soul Includes Our Mind, Will and Emotions

Our minds and knowledge are a part of our soul. Proverbs 2:10-11 (NKJV): "When wisdom enters your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, discretion will preserve you; Understanding will keep you."

Our wills, which is where our decisions are made, are also a part of our souls. In Deuteronomy 10:12 (NLT), God tells the people that they need to make a decision to serve Him "with all their hearts and souls."

Our emotions are also a component of our souls and many times drive our voices. Emotions like love and joy and many others reside in our souls. Deuteronomy 6:5 (ESV) says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." It is in our soul that the emotion of joy is also felt. "Make the soul of Your servant joyful, For to You, Lord, I lift up my soul," (Ps. 86:4, NASB).

Your Voice Depends on You

In my life, I see I have had two distinct voices. Before I began my transformation journey and lost 250 pounds, my voice

was driven by my soulish desires which wanted to eat what it wanted to eat in order to calm my emotions.

The emotional part of my soul governed my life. My feelings overrode my decisions. I had formed such bad habits that my mind seemed like it was being reasonable when it agreed that I could and should eat whatever I wanted.

I was allowing my humanity to steer my soul where food was concerned. I had not surrendered that part of my life. I had a voice but it wasn't the right voice. My voice was being overridden by the voice of the enemy and my selfish desires.

Your Voice Can Change

When the monumental shift happened in my life, my voice began to change. When I realized I was being controlled by substances that were harmful to me, I finally fully submitted my soul, the essence of who I am, to God. That changed my voice completely.

I began to understand that my voice has to speak from my mind which I had to allow God to renew. Romans 12:2 (MSG), "Fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out."

The renewing of my mind had to come by me fixing my attention on God and not on what I wanted or felt or thought. I had to make a willful decision based on what I knew was true for me. I did not want to continue to be super morbidly obese. Only offering my body as a living sacrifice would do that.

I Found My Voice

I really don't think I had a strong voice before, even in my writing. I was trying to find it but it really didn't happen until I finally did what God had been asking me to do for years—surrender the foods I loved to Him. That's when I found my voice.

God called me to write my first book and now I'm working on

book seven. Then He called me to use my voice in a different way through coaching, then speaking and podcasting.

Our voices will be influenced by all of our experiences, both good and bad, everything we have learned, every person we've allowed to speak into our lives, our personalities and what we are passionate about. Most of all, though, our voices are influenced by our relationship with God and that is by far the most important.

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of six books and two study guides, including her No. 1 bestseller, *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds*. Her sixth book, *Sweet Surrender: Breaking Strongholds*, is live on Amazon. She blogs at . She is also a Christian weight loss coach (check out her coaching group at *Overcomers Academy*) and speaker. Don't miss her podcast, *Sweet Grace for Your Journey*, available on CPN. This article first appeared on . For more on this subject, listen to episode 147 of *Sweet Grace for Your Journey* podcast, "Do I Have a Voice?"