

Knowing When It's Time to Surrender the Vision

I surrender ... I found myself saying those words while talking with the Holy Spirit about my frustrations.

Whether you are in ministry, in the marketplace or tackling the all-important task of raising a family—or perhaps, like me, doing all three at the same time—you will no doubt come to a point in your walk with God that you feel like giving up. Paul wouldn't have admonished us not to grow weary in well doing if he hadn't witnessed people losing heart at times along the journey (Gal. 6:9).

But I'm here to tell you that the answer is not to quit and give up. The answer is to surrender. And there's a vast difference between the two. As much as I want to sometimes, I'll never admit defeat in the midst of doing something God has called me to do. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13). And, of course, we know that God always leads us in triumph in Christ (2 Cor. 2:14). I could rattle off a few other Scriptures to drive home the point, but you get the idea.

No, as much as I want to quit sometimes, I'll never admit defeat in the midst of doing something God has called me to do. But I have learned that there is a time to surrender the vision. Miriam-Webster defines the word *surrender* as “to yield to the power, control or possession of another upon compulsion or demand,” and “to give up completely or agree to forego especially in favor of another.”

Absolute Surrender

Yes, there is a time to surrender the vision. And that time is not after you've done everything in your fleshly power to bring it to pass. That time is not when you get so frustrated

you feel like giving up. That time is not after people and circumstances have worked against the very thing God called you to do. No, the time to surrender the vision is immediately after God gives it to you.

What am I saying? If God didn't give you the vision, there's no use in trying to labor for it anyway. Psalm 127:1 says, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain." In other words, "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6).

See, it's not really your vision. It's God's vision (if it's not, He has no obligation to empower you to bring it to pass). God has chosen you to be His hands and feet on the earth. But apart from Him you can do nothing. The faster we learn that truth and surrender to His will—obeying His way of executing the plan and yielding to His grace flowing through us to get the job done—the faster we'll see the vision become a reality. We have to remember that it's not about us. It's about Him.

"Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to be My disciple, let him deny himself [disregard, lose sight of, and forget himself and his own interests] and take up his cross and follow Me [cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying, also]'" (Matt. 16:24 AMP).

Denying Your Rights

Deny your "right" to do things the way you think they should be done and surrender to His ways. Deny your interests in the project and surrender to His interests. Deny your feelings of frustration and surrender to His grace. When we follow Christ, we walk in peace, love, joy, righteousness and the like. When we follow our own will and our own way—even when our will and ways are eager to serve God's vision—we just plain wear ourselves out.

I know the harvest is plenty and the laborers are few. But your crew—however small it is—is a mighty force when you surrender to God. Don't worry about who walks away from the vision, who betrays the vision or who is too scared to execute the vision. Just surrender the vision to God and He will bring you the resources you need for the victory.

I'm reminded of Gideon. God gave him a vision to deliver Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Gideon was surrendered to God to the point that the **Spirit of the Lord** clothed Gideon with Himself and took possession of him (Judges 6:34). But not all of his brethren were as sold out to the vision of deliverance. Gideon started out with 22,000 men in his army and ended up with just 300 after obeying God's instructions.

With 300 men, it seemed like an impossible task to defeat the Midianites. Surely, Gideon would not have chosen to execute God's vision for Israel's deliverance this way. Gideon could have gotten frustrated to see 12,000 men turn back in fear and trembling. He could have been disappointed that another 9,700 were not ultimately called to battle. He could have decided not to enter the war seemingly so ill-equipped.

Gideon's men were faint yet pursuing the enemy as they crossed over the Jordan (Judges 8:4). No one would even give them bread to eat. Gideon had every natural reason to quit and give up. Instead, Gideon surrendered the vision to the God of the vision. And God's vision became a reality: The Israelites conquered the Midianites so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the land had peace and rest for 40 years in the days of Gideon (Judges 8:28).

If you want peace and rest, even in the midst of the battle that rages as you co-labor with Christ to bring God's vision to pass, don't surrender to the enemy by quitting—surrender to God and watch Him bring it to pass. Amen.

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