

The Choice Of Self Or Surrender

Luke 9:23

Introduction:

1. In order to become a true Christ-follower, it takes a heart of surrender.
2. Humanly speaking, this presents a problem because our nature wants its own way. This preoccupation with our own self-interest and self-desires has been true of our entire lives from even before we could talk.
3. This love for self is very natural, but at the same time, very destructive. It has been very popular in secular psychology to teach the concept of self-love. It teaches that you must love yourself more. The idea being, if I can somehow love myself more, everything else in my life will improve.
4. The Bible teaches just the opposite. It teaches that love for myself is the root of my problems, both inwardly and relationally. Love for myself causes me to focus on what pleases **me**, regardless of how it affects others. It causes me to focus on **my** past, my hurts, my fears, and my circumstances. Of course this is a recipe for self-destruction.
 - Love for myself keeps me in a state of immaturity, spiritually and emotionally, and keeps me in bondage to my worries, fears, and fallacious thinking.
5. What did Jesus teach? If I truly want to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, what choice do I need to make? According to Luke 9:23, it's a choice to look away from ourselves toward Jesus Christ by completely and totally entrusting our lives into His hands.
6. It is not natural for our flesh to surrender our hearts, our will, our minds, and all of who we are to Christ. Yet, it is absolutely the key to growing into the man or woman of God that we are capable of becoming.
 - Surrender is the key to overcoming our past. You must let go and learn to open up your hearts again to truly love.
 - Surrender is the key to overcoming depression in order to have continual inner joy.
 - Surrender is the key to overcoming worry and fear, by having a settled peace in your heart daily.
 - Surrender is the key to overcoming anger and hostility in order to be patient with others.
 - Surrender is the key to overcoming pride, arrogance, and abrasiveness, allowing you to become gentle and kind towards others in all your dealings.
 - Surrender is the key to overcoming doubt, which allows you to grow in your faith.
 - Surrender is the key to overcoming bad, destructive habits, allowing you to have control over fleshly appetites.
7. By the way, do you know what I just gave you? I gave you the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. This is what Christ wants to produce in your life.

8. Do you know what the next verse in Galatians says? “*And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*” **Galatians 5:24**
9. The flesh is synonymous with a life of self-dependence. It is living a life independent of Christ, instead of surrendered to Christ.
10. Again, Galatians says, “*...they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh.*” This is another way of saying that those who are given over to Christ have died to self (the flesh) and are now surrendered to Christ. Every believer must choose a life of surrender.

Surrender is a choice!

1. In our human minds, the word “surrender” may carry the idea of giving up, bondage, or oppression. But biblically speaking, nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible informs us that God’s thoughts are not our thoughts.
2. Surrender to Christ means being **released** from the bondage of self to follow Christ and to live in liberty. John 8:36; Galatians 5:1
3. Christ never **forces** surrender to Himself. He holds open His arms and invites, but He doesn’t forcefully dominate, control, and subjugate people against their will.
4. Notice verse 23 – He said to them all, “***IF any man will come after me...***”
 - In college, I made a choice of my free will to go after Deniece Webster. What if she found out later that I had no choice and that her mother made me go after her? What if her mom threatened me and forcefully made me go after her, ultimately to marry her? How would Deniece feel?
 - Lording over and dominating individuals is not the way of Christ. Matthew 11:28-29
5. Surrender is a choice that you are going to seek Jesus Christ above all else. It is a freedom that you have. Surrender does not mean submitting to a conqueror as an unwilling captive.
6. Surrender is turning our lives over completely to One who is superior, who loves us ever so deeply and who has our best in mind.
 - **Illustration:** A surrendered person is like a lump of clay, willingly yielded to the potter who, in turn, takes the lump of clay to make a beautiful water pitcher.
7. When we fail to surrender our lives to Christ we are in essence saying, “I want to stay a lump of useless clay.”
 - **Example:** A man who refused to surrender. Matthew 19:21-23
 - **Example:** Men who willingly surrendered. Luke 5:10-11, 27-28
8. Every person must choose for themselves – self or surrender. Christ died for you to deliver you from the tyranny of self. 2 Corinthians 5:15
9. **Any** person can make the choice. Jesus said, “***If ANY man will come after me...***” But nobody can make that choice for you. If you insist, God will allow you to continue down the dead-end street of self (selfishness, self-pleasure, self-centeredness, etc).

Saved or Surrendered?

1. A person can be saved, yet not be completely surrendered to Christ.
 - We are saved from the eternal **penalty** of our sins by simply believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 16:31
 - But we are delivered from the daily **power** of sin by surrendering our hearts fully to Christ. Romans 6:12-13
2. You can be saved and have your eternal destiny settled, yet live your daily life under the domination of sin and self. 1 Corinthians 3:1
 - The Corinthians were "*in Christ*," but they were living a miserable life marked by self-indulgence, pride, contention in their earthly relationships, and a lack of spiritual growth that resulted in self-consuming, immature behavior.
3. Many people live under the false assumption that getting saved is going to solve all their problems. Salvation, believing on Christ, simply does two things:
 - It provides you eternal life in heaven.
 - It provides you with the ability and opportunity to live a life of true meaning and purpose. Being "*in Christ*" while on this earth enables you to overcome the self-destructive forces of the flesh and of self.
4. But this will not happen apart from a decision to surrender your will to Christ's will. It's your choice, you can be saved and live a miserable life here on earth and die miserably. But you don't have to live that way.
5. What was the answer to the Corinthian's many issues? It wasn't salvation. They were already "*in Christ*;" they were already saved. What they needed was surrender. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
6. Surrender is when we wake up to the fact that we belong completely to Jesus Christ, and we determine that we will glorify Him in everything that we do. It is then that we begin to experience the wonderful fruit that we read about in Galatians 5:22-23.