

The Keys To A Surrendered Life Luke 9:23

Introduction:

1. God's plan for the believer is found in Galatians 5:22-23. This describes for us the character and attitude that Christ desires to produce in and through us.
2. These qualities are wonderful, priceless commodities, but they won't come to us while self is enthroned on our hearts. They come to us when we surrender our will to God's and allow Christ's Spirit to flow through us freely. The Bible calls it being "*filled (controlled) with the Spirit.*" **Ephesians 5:18**
3. They come to us when we seek the Father above all else and desire to please Him more than anything or anybody, including ourselves. This process is when you make Jesus "Lord" of your life, which requires complete surrender to Him.
4. Self always stands in defiance of surrender.
 - Self says, "It's all about me and my happiness." Surrender says, "It's all about Christ and His pleasure."
 - Self asks, "Am **I** pleased with this action, attitude, and decision?" Surrender always asks, "Is **Christ** pleased with this action, this attitude, this decision? Is Christ honored?"
 - **Illustration:** Ever had a garden hose with a kink? It restricts the flow of life-giving water to your plants, flowers, bushes, etc. Without water, they will die. The water is there (in the hose), but it can't get out.
5. When self is enthroned on our hearts, it restricts the flow of God's Holy Spirit in and through us. If this happens, we begin to shrivel up spiritually. As Christians, this can happen in our life; we can quench and grieve Christ's Spirit. Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19
 - Unwilling to surrender, Christians are some of the most miserable people on planet earth because they have God's Spirit within, trying to teach them the way of Christ, but they are opposing and resisting His instruction.
6. If you are saved, Christ's divine, resurrection life is in you. How do you open up the hose and allow Christ's Spirit to flow through you? It takes a heart of surrender. What does that require? Jesus tells us clearly in Luke 9:23.

The first key to a surrendered life - a denying of the flesh.

1. Look at verse 23 again. The word "*deny*" means "to deny utterly, to disown." That is very strong and adamant. To be a disciple of Christ means that I completely deny my fleshly nature the things that are contrary to the way of Christ.
2. Again, "*the flesh*" speaks of the part of us that desires to live independent of God and seek self-gratification, rather than seeking to please Christ. Denying yourself is not asceticism (torturing or disciplining yourself). It is simply seeking Christ and His will above all else.
3. Anything that would hinder us from seeking Christ and pull us away from Him, we gladly refuse and refrain. Anything keeping us from total surrender to Christ

(the kink in the hose), we must take out of our lives. In Titus 2:11-12, salvation teaches one thing, but the flesh, being contrary, teaches another.

- Self (the flesh) says – “I deserve this. Everybody else is doing it. It makes **me** happy. There is nothing in the Bible that directly forbids it.”
 - The Spirit says – “Does it please Christ? Does it help me to run the race for Christ? Does it draw me closer to Christ?”
4. When self is on the throne of our heart, we are always looking for ways to excuse ourselves and skirt around things in our life. Why? The flesh does not want to deny itself. It wants what it wants **now**.
 5. Paul said that athletes deny themselves in order to win worldly competitions. And it is so true – they do! But we have a much greater and higher purpose – to please our Savior and further His work on earth by declaring the truth that can change the eternal destiny of souls.
 6. The apostle Paul constantly practiced this principle of denial. 1 Corinthians 9:27
 7. Paul gladly denied himself of his own preferences and rights when it meant pleasing the Lord, furthering His work and reaching souls. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 You could have something or engage in a thing that isn’t even sinful, but it’s a weight – Christ’s calls you to lay it aside and follow Him. Hebrews 12:1
 8. For example, you may be called upon by Christ’s Spirit to:
 - Deny yourself of a certain boyfriend or girlfriend because he or she is hindering you in following after Christ.
 - Deny yourself a more lucrative job because you know it will hinder you (and maybe your family) in your following after Christ.
 - Deny yourself a hobby or recreational activity because you know it will take you away from fellowship with your small group and your corporate worship of God with your church family on weekends.
 - Deny yourself a habit because you know it will hinder you in your testimony for Christ.
 - Deny yourself something that you want to buy so that you can give to God instead.
 - Deny yourself the opportunity to seek fame and fortune, or even just a comfortable life, so that you might be a missionary for Christ.

In Conclusion:

1. To come to the place where you truly desire to surrender to Christ and deny the flesh, it takes:
 - Never being satisfied with where you are in your development and growth as a follower of Christ. (You must get sick of your flesh and want to change. Sometimes life events and fleshly consequences can push us towards this.)
 - A true, deep yearning for Christ – *“if any man will come after me.”*
 - A decision to do whatever it takes to experience His life-giving flow.
2. **Example:** In Luke 19:2-9 is the story of Zacchaeus. He had a nice, comfortable life before he met Christ, but after meeting Christ, he was willing to do whatever it took to know Christ more.

3. What is the difference between a Christian who lives a wasted life with no real impact versus a believer who lives a life of high impact for Christ?
4. At key times in your life, you will be faced with a decision – will I follow after self or Christ? The way to live a life without regrets is to deny self and follow after Christ.