



Introduction:

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. These qualities are wonderful, priceless commodities, but they won't come to us while self is enthroned on our hearts (Galatians 5:19-21). They come to us when we surrender our will to God's and allow Christ's Spirit to flow through us freely. In Ephesians 5:18, this is called being "*filled with the Spirit.*" A biblical term often used to describe surrender is "*yield.*" Paul, in Romans 6, states that as followers of Christ we are no longer to surrender to the flesh and sin, but unto God and His righteousness (vs. 13, 16, 19). As well, Paul implores us to yield our lives wholly unto God; Paul petitions believers to "*present*" their lives as a "*living sacrifice*" to God (Romans 12:1). That word "*present*" is the same Greek word translated "*yield*" in Romans 6. Therefore, giving our life for God's purpose is logical and completely equitable. Our life surrendered to God's will is our "*reasonable service*" by the fact that Christ gave His very life that we might have true "*life and peace*" (Romans 8:6; Ephesians 2:1; Romans 5:1). Is your life yielded to God? Are there areas where you have yet to relinquish control?

The Focus:

- Every believer must live a surrendered life. How?
 - By denying the flesh.

Self always stands in defiance of surrender. When self is enthroned on our hearts, it restricts the flow of God's Holy Spirit in and through us. As Christians, this can happen in our life; we can quench and grieve Christ's Spirit (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19). On our part, surrender is a greater task than salvation. Paul even stated this truth after explaining that we must allow the mind of Christ to govern our thoughts and actions (Philippians 2:5) when he told them (Philippians 2:12) to "*work out your own salvation.*" Paul wasn't speaking of salvation from the penalty of sin. The Philippians he wrote to were already saved; they were "*in Christ*" according to Philippians 1:1.

They had already received the free gift of being saved from their sins (Philippians 1:5, 29; Romans 5:16-18). Salvation, in this context, speaks of deliverance from our old ways, our old nature, and the power of sin. The process of daily deliverance from the power of sin would provide them with a great testimony before God and the people in their community (Philippians 2:13-17). Salvation from sin's penalty is immediate, it is simply accepting what Christ has done on our behalf (Ephesians 1:12-13; 2:8-9). Surrender, on the other hand, is a process whereby God's Word searches our hearts and, hopefully, we respond in faith by aligning our life to God's Word (Hebrews 4:12). Are you allowing God's Word to change who you are from the inside?

Response to the Sermon:

Pastor Dan focused exclusively on one of the keys to living a life surrendered to God, and that was denying the flesh. The word “*deny*” means “to deny utterly, to disown.” To be a disciple of Christ means I must completely deny my fleshly nature of the things that are contrary to the ways of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Again, “*the flesh*” speaks of the part of us that desires to live independently of God and seek self-gratification, rather than seeking to please Christ. Denying yourself is simply seeking Christ and His will above all else. Anything keeping us from total surrender to Christ, we must remove from our lives.

Paul said that athletes deny themselves in order to win worldly competitions (1 Corinthians 9:25). But as followers of Christ, 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. Paul constantly practiced this principle of denial and 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, 27). What is present in your life that may not even be sin, which may be weighing you down (Hebrews 12:1)? What area, what thing in your life has God’s Word challenged? What relationships may be distracting you from your relationship with God? What is hindering you from committing your life and being available to serve and minister to others?

Bible Study Thoughts & Questions:

In Titus 2:11-12, salvation by God’s grace teaches one thing, but the flesh and its works, being contrary, teach another. The grace of God which brings salvation to our soul and spirit teaches that we who are in Christ should deny our flesh the desires which are contrary to the character and nature of God. Recognizing God’s grace through the crosswork of Christ and living in this reality, our lives and manner of life ought to be contrary to the position of the world, but conformed to the Word of God (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:20-24).

In order to be given spiritual life, you must acknowledge your sin by denying that there is anything good in you, understanding that apart from Christ’s sacrifice there is nothing that could merit you eternal life. What does God’s grace bring, and to whom does He reveal it (Titus 2:11; Romans 1:18-21)?

What does God’s grace teach us to deny? What are some cross-references detailing the general terms used in Titus 2:12?

According to Titus 2:12, how should a follower of Christ live? What are some examples of what this looks like?

Application Questions:

Previous to Christ's declaration of what it means to be a Christian, He foretold of the sufferings He would face at the hands of the Jewish religious leaders, the sacrifice of His life on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead (Luke 9:22). It is upon this that Christ stated (Luke 9:23), "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*"

According to Luke 9:23, what is the first thing that a believer must do in order to follow Christ?

Christ never said following Him would be easy (Luke 9:24). What does Paul teach about the life of a believer that is surrendered to God (Acts 14:22; Philippians 1:29; 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:12)?

What does it look like to "*deny*" self (Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:24; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:5, 8-10, 12-16; Titus 2:12)?

What is the main reason why believers are immovable on certain positions and unwilling to surrender to God (2 Timothy 4:3)?

Oftentimes, we have the wrong motive for the things we do. What was the reason Paul surrendered His life to being used by God (1 Corinthians 9:22-23)?

Prayer:

- Pray that your life would demonstrate to others the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
- Pray that your life be controlled by the Spirit of God (Ephesians 5:18).
- Pray that you would live a life that moves you to declare the transforming, mind-changing power of God's grace (Titus 2:11-12).