

Surrendered Purpose

Welcome back to Walking with Purpose. I trust that your small group enjoyed your time of celebration and fellowship last week! I heard the story once of a cheerful 5-year old girl named Rosa who went shopping with her mother. As they were standing in the checkout line, she saw them: a circle of glistening white pearls in a pink foil box. "Oh please, Mommy. Can I have them? *Please, Mommy, please?*" Quickly, the mother checked the back of the little foil box and then looked back into the pleading brown eyes of her little girl's upturned face. "\$1.95. That's almost \$2.00. If you really want them, I'll think of some extra chores for you and in no time you can save enough money to buy them for yourself. Your birthday's only a week away and you might get another crisp dollar bill from Grandma."

As soon as Rosa got home, she emptied her penny bank and counted out 17 pennies. After dinner, she did more than her share of chores and then went to the neighbor and asked Mrs. Rodriguez if she could pick weeds for ten cents. On her birthday, Grandma did give her another new dollar bill and at last she had enough money to buy the necklace.

Rosa loved her pearls. They made her feel fancy and grown up. She wore them everywhere -- Sunday school, kindergarten, and even to bed. The only time she took them off was when she went swimming or took a bath. Mother said if they got wet, they might turn her neck green.

Rosa had a very loving daddy and every night when she was ready for bed, he would stop whatever he was doing and come upstairs to read her a story. One night when he finished the story, he asked her, "Do you love me?"

"Oh, yes, Daddy. You know that I love you."

"Then give me your pearls."

"Oh, Daddy, not my pearls! But you can have Princess -- the white horse from my collection...the one with the pink tail. Remember, Daddy? The one you gave me. She's my favorite!"

"That's okay, Honey. Daddy loves you. Good night." And he brushed her cheek with a kiss. About a week later, after the story time, Rosa's daddy asked again, "Do you love me?"

"Daddy, you know I love you."

"Then give me your pearls."

"Oh Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have my baby doll. The brand new one I got for my birthday. She is so beautiful and you can have the yellow blanket that matches her pajamas."

"That's okay. Sleep well. God bless you, little one. Daddy loves you." And as always, he brushed her cheek with a gentle kiss. A few nights later when her daddy came in, Rosa was sitting on her bed with her legs crossed. As he came close, he noticed her chin was trembling and one silent tear rolled down her rounded cheek. "What is it, Rosa? What's the matter?" She didn't say anything, but lifted her little hand up to her daddy. When she opened it, there was her little pearl necklace. With a quiver, she finally said, "Here, Daddy. It's for you."

With tears gathering in his *own* eyes, her kind father reached out with one hand to take the cheap necklace, and with the other hand he reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case with a strand of *genuine* pearls and gave them to Rosa. He had had them all the time. He was just waiting for her to surrender the imitation so he could give her genuine treasure.



Fellowship

1. What is most painful for you to surrender to God?
2. Talk about a time you gave something up and got more in return.



Discipleship

Turn with me to our passage for today found in Romans 6:1-14 as we read it together.

“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we

will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”

This is one of those mysterious truths we discover in God’s Word: through surrender we gain freedom and through death we find life. No one likes the thought of “surrender.” The dictionary defines it as: “to yield to the possession or power of another; to deliver up possession of something on demand; to give oneself up; to abandon or relinquish; and to yield or resign in favor of another.” In today’s culture we’re taught and influenced to think of *ourselves* first, to never give up and never give in. Winning is everything. Yet surrendering to God is the heart of worship and living within His purpose for us. We give ourselves to Him, not out of fear or duty, but in love. Surrendering is not **repressing** our personality or gifts, but allowing them to be fully utilized and *improved* by the God who gave them! Victory comes through surrender. It doesn’t weaken you...it strengthens you! William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, said, “The greatness of a man’s power is in the measure of his surrender.”

Bill Bright was the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ. Through this ministry, the Four Spiritual Laws tract was produced as well as the Jesus film. More than 150 million people will spend eternity in heaven due to this film! When Bill was asked why he believed God had so blessed his life, he responded: “When I was a young man, I made a contract with God. I literally wrote it out and signed my name at the bottom. It said, ‘From this day forward, I am a slave of Jesus Christ.’”

I once was talking with my father about sacrifices. I asked him if anyone these days still recognized their importance. He told me of his friend, T.J., and the story still stands in my mind as a testimony to the *power* of surrender. By human standards, T.J. was not an extraordinary boy. He was from a small town, grew up in poverty, and never wore clothes that weren’t handed down from one child to another. He was of average build and intelligence, contentedly going about his business and enjoying fishing on hot afternoons. He was not a leader in school nor in his circle of friends. He was someone everyone knew...but not the first person who came to mind. When World War II broke out, T.J. went into the military. He performed with his usual “satisfactory” but not “outstanding” manner. When the time came for assignments to be made, T.J. was called overseas to one of the fiercest areas of fighting. Casualties were a foregone conclusion; deaths inevitable. T.J.’s group was told to hold off the advances as best they could. Unfortunately, the enemy forces were superior in number and position. One day the fighting was particularly fierce. The enemy was closing in from the front and it was only a matter of time until his troupe faced defeat. The only way to salvage the situation was for the men to stop trying to defend themselves and make an all-out effort at retreat.

Without any fire cover, their survival would be nearly impossible. It was at this point that this unremarkable boy, who'd never done anything of special note, did something extraordinary. "Just leave me with your guns," he said, "and all the ammunition you've got—I'll hold them off while you all run." In the little time that was left, there were cries of protest...but in the end everyone realized that *someone* would have to die if *any* were to be saved. They finally agreed, leaving T.J. with their weapons. Under his fire, the boys made their escape. The noise was tremendous, and later one of them reported that the last time anyone saw him, T.J. was standing on a hill, using an empty rifle as a club to fend off the swarming enemy.

It's been said, "When we forget ourselves, we usually do something memorable." Your act of surrender may not be remembered here on earth, but God is watching and is glorified with your act of surrender. The greatest act of surrender is when we give Him our lives. Only by giving our very selves to Him will be able to walk in the purpose He has created us for. What are you hanging on to today? Have you given Him your life? If not, I challenge you to do so before you leave this here today! Your abundant life will then begin! He will take the little you have and exchange it with the Pearl of Great Price, giving you far more than you can imagine! Or are you holding on to bitterness? Hurt feelings or pride? Are you tightly grasping your calendar and schedule, your family or job? Let God have it and do the unthinkable...for the only way to true *freedom* is through *surrender*.

3. Re-read Romans 6:13. What changes will surrendering your body to God bring to your life?
4. Read Romans 12:1. What is our motivation for surrender? Why does God value it?
5. How does the trustworthiness of a person affect your willingness to surrender to him/her? How does this relate to your spiritual life?
6. How is pride related to an unwillingness to surrender? Read Isaiah 14:11-15.
7. Discuss the quote, "It is when we try to be God that we end up most like Satan, who desired the same thing."
8. How would you respond to the assertion that, "If you don't surrender to Christ, you surrender to chaos"?
9. Read Luke 9:23-24. Have you seen a correlation between surrender and effectiveness in the lives of those you know?



Ministry



Worship

10. What answers to prayer have you received in the last month? As you close in prayer in a moment, be sure to praise our faithful God for His watchful care.
11. Have you surrendered your life to Him? If not, allow your small group to provide the greatest ministry and gift they can give and pray with you today!
12. Minister to each other by sharing your particular struggles to surrender, and then pray for each member.