

“What is Biblical Surrenderance?”

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It is unfortunate that Christian surrenderance is often defined by the next level of spiritual growth. Or labeled by the statements, “Are you completely surrendered to God,” or “Are you fully surrendered to God,” or “Are you willing to obey God in everything,” or perhaps “What are you holding onto that is keeping you from being fully surrendered?” Such ideas make surrenderance something unique or special or different. The idea of surrenderance is no different than that of repentance/confession, fasting, and prayer. Like the previous three ideas, surrenderance is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that He works in us and through us to those around us.

- First, biblical surrenderance is not about us, but about Him.

It is not to show how “dedicated” we are, but how delicious and satisfying He is. When Abraham was called upon by God to offer up his son Isaac in Genesis 22, there was nothing pleasant about the demand or the obedience that it required. The purpose was not to see how dedicated Abraham or Isaac was but to show that God is worthy of such sacrifice (Gen. 22:12). Abraham and Isaac saw this. They saw a God who is greater than life itself. Abraham believed God (Heb. 11:17).

- Second, biblical surrenderance is not sought but embraced.

You cannot create the context for it to happen. He creates the context and you embrace the event as coming from Him. This is a part of biblical surrenderance. When Noah was called upon to build an ark for the saving of humanity in Genesis 6, it was not sought but embraced. Noah had only two options. He was either to believe God or stand in rebellion against Him. Only one choice would result in life. The other would culminate in death.

- Third, biblical surrenderance happens in the context of desperation.

It is the kind of desperation that brings us to the end of ourselves. These are the circumstances that show us for what we are. They bring forth weakness in order that we might see His strength. They show us our need so that we might see His resources. This is where we see King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:12. He saw who he was, against the encroaching armies, and chose God. The context forced the issue.

- Fourth, biblical surrenderance happens when we come face-to-face with our own limitations and His complete sufficiency, and we choose Him.

God always wins, but when we choose Him our enjoyment in the moment becomes magnified. He is always the best and wisest choice. This is what drove Moses in his choice between the reproach of Christ and the treasures of Egypt (Heb. 11:26). He saw that in Christ there were greater riches than anything else this world has to offer.

- Fifth, biblical surrenderance is a dynamic condition.

It is not a once-for-all decision. Each event that pushes you to the brink of despair is yet another opportunity for you to say, “I can’t, but Jesus can.” This is how life is to be lived. Each moment of every day exists to show us our need of Him.

This is how Paul saw the Christian life. Paul would say, “I die daily” (1 Cor. 15:31). He would go on to say, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). Paul saw the reality of God larger than the temporal trappings of this earthly existence. Everything Paul possessed he considered to be rubbish when compared to the “greater riches” of Christ (Phil. 3:7, 8).

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Even in the most gratifying situations, even these moments, exist to show us how wonderful He is. Their ability to gratify on a finite level only tells us that there is something or rather Someone who is the substance of which this is only the shadow.

- Sixth, biblical surrenderance is built on the absolute sovereignty of God over all things created, the total depravity of man, and the complete sufficiency of Jesus Christ and His cross work.

These three points form the context for biblical surrenderance. Knowing that God is in control of all things enables me to see the situation for what it is (2 Chron. 20:5). He has caused this moment (no matter how painful it might be) to happen for His glory and my good (Job 1:21). I might not feel this to be true or even like it, but I can embrace it as true with my mind.

One of the reasons why He has brought this moment to pass is for me to see my own inadequacy (2 Cor. 12:9). This inadequacy is a result of my personal depravity. It is my total depravity that tells me regularly that “I can’t, but Jesus can.” If I could live my life independent of Him, then why would I need Him? If I could save myself, then why would I need a Savior? This is what the moments of life afford me. They afford me the platform for me to see who I am in the absence of Him.

The second reason why He has brought this moment to pass is for me to see His complete sufficiency (1 Cor. 2:2; Gal. 6:14; Phil. 3:8). This sufficiency is two-fold. It exists first in who Jesus Christ is, and then secondly, in what He has done and is doing.

Who is Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ, because of who He is, is enough in this life and in the life to come. My problems force me to accept this truth. Jesus Christ is God, fully and completely. There is nothing in all of creation that corresponds perfectly with the Creator. All things created are reflections, but nothing created matches Him perfectly. As God, only Jesus Christ corresponds to God perfectly.

What has He done and is doing? The cross declares His vicarious sacrifice. He died in order that I might live. His death conquers my inability. Currently He is my advocate and intercessor. He is the one who enables me to exist. Not just live and enjoy and engage, but to actually live. In the absence of His ever present activity, my life as I know it would cease. It would immediately vaporize and show itself for the slight vapor that it is.

My problems show me a Savior who is glorious and a work that is incomprehensible. He loves me. Biblical surrenderance embraces this.

There is nothing mystical or spooky about biblical surrenderance. It is not a small subset established by the committed believer. It is simply our response as His children to our Father, Savior, and Lord. When you are confronted by the truth claims of Christ in your moments of being overwhelmed, you say “yes to Jesus.” This is biblical surrenderance, nothing more and nothing less.

So what is the next step?

First, when you face a problem see it for what it is – an opportunity to make much of Him.

Second, when you face a problem recognize that you can’t fix it.

Third, when you face a problem see that He is the beginner and finisher of your faith. He is the one who will bring His purpose to completion, not you.

Finally, embrace Him and His work in the moment. This is what gives you rest in your moments; it comes when we say, “I can’t, but Jesus can!”