

Surrender... A Spiritual Exercise for a Healthier Life

Do you try to control most everything? Are you attempting to live life in your own strength? Do you often become weary because this way of living requires you to use so much of your inner resources? The more we try to live life apart from God, the more we make a mess of it. It's also likely that the conflicts and demands of this approach to life will wear us out emotionally. Over time this may eventually have a negative affect on our health.

It's our human tendency to want to be in control of our life by using our own strength and with our own resources, apart from God. We received this nature from Adam and Eve, but there is a better way.

What the Bible Says: Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."
Matthew 11:28-30

"Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important for it promises a reward in both this life and the next."

1 Timothy 4:8

"If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it."
Jesus in Matthew 16:25

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. *Romans 8:11*

The Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.
1 John 4:4

Let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God – truly righteous and holy.
Ephesians 4:23-24

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me... For when I am weak, then I am strong. *2 Corinthians 12:9-10*

What You Can Do: God wants us to be reliant on Him to live all aspects of our lives. So what do we do? We surrender and allow God to live His life through us. Let's look at some practical steps we can take to surrender.

More than anything, you must use your free will to choose to change your attitude and renew your way of thinking about how you're going to live life.

Recognize and admit that your attempts to meet your most significant needs for love, acceptance, worth and security, apart from God, have not worked. Decide to turn to God for these needs to be met.

Believe and trust that He will meet those needs. *Galatians 2:20*

Surrendering to God requires intention. Choose to release your human nature and allow Christ, through the Holy Spirit, to live His life through you. Remember, if you've accepted Jesus into your life, God's Holy Spirit lives in you. *John 14:15-17*

Believe that God, through the Holy Spirit, will give you strength and power to live a new way of life which is dependent on Him.

Pray daily and ask God that His Holy Spirit direct your thoughts and actions. Tell God that you are trusting that this will be done as you allow Him to control you. Before you begin a particular task or conversation, ask God that His Holy Spirit lead your actions and your speech.

Remain as closely connected to God as possible. The more time you spend in His presence the more empowered you will be to continue with a surrendered mindset and attitude. Praying, reading the Bible, and meditating on His truths are essential.

Monitor the degree to which you're surrendering to God on a daily basis. Reflect on the posture of your heart. Like any new habit we try to incorporate into our lifestyle, surrendering to God takes practice and learning to do it is a process.

Recognize that there may be some suffering or angst as you "give up" aspects of your old nature, your old life. That's natural.

When you get to the point that you recognize and admit that you are unable to control aspects of your life on your own and are able to give that part of your life to God, it opens the door for Him to work in a greater way. As you make surrendering to God an active part of your relationship with Him, you'll find that you have more peace. The load you normally carry will be lightened. The internal tension and stress that your body might be under will be decreased. This is likely to have a positive affect on your health.

Trust God and surrender more deeply to Him.

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