

Necessary Ingredients for the Christian Journey

The Process of Surrender: Part 1

Luke 9:23-26

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are transitioning from the pain of surrender to the process of surrender. It is one thing to recognize our need to surrender to the Lord, it's another to actually begin the process. This is where many of us fall off the path because we don't take the time or maybe ask someone a little further down the road, "*What is the process to surrender to the Lord?*" This is where I want to begin looking this morning.

C.S. Lewis

Everyone has noticed how hard it is to turn our thoughts to God when everything is going well with us... While what we call 'our own life' remains agreeable, we will not surrender it to Him. What, then, can God do in our interests but make 'our own life' less agreeable to us, and take away the plausible sources of false happiness?

How many of us are at this very spot in our lives this morning?

Luke 9:23-26 ESV

²³ And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵ For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Luke 9:23-26 NLT

²³ Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? ²⁶ If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.

I. Be Intentional

- A. Being intentional comes with taking action. It piggybacks on the consideration of ‘taking up your cross.’
- B. It is one fluid motion of decision-making for the disciple.
- C. To be intentional means “to do things on purpose.”
- D. Let go of the past. You can never drive straight ahead while looking over your shoulder.
- E. Following Jesus means it has to be the purpose of your life.
- F. Press into the life of Christ reaching toward the goal of his calling you to faith.

Philippians 3:13-16

¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶ Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

- G. Clothe yourself with Christ’s presence in your life. In the same way, you put on your clothes in the morning, we need to put on His presence to go with us throughout the day. Make sure you do not forget Him.

Romans 13:14

Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don’t let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires. (NLT)

- H. We need discipline in our lives to help shape our lives into godly living. We need to learn to practice spiritual disciplines.

1 Timothy 4:8-

... On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. (NASB)

James Houston – cofounder of the C.S. Lewis Institute

Spiritual disciplines are often thought of as tasks to do to act out the faith we have in Christ our Lord. In reality though, these disciplines are a way to greater freedom in our walk with Him, and to a deeper relationship with Him not because these are tasks, we have to do, but because they invite us to experience Jesus in more places than we usually see Him.

- I. Throw off anything that gets in your way to Jesus. This thought is in combination with letting go. This means we must analyze everything in our lives and let go of anything that hinders us from our ability to follow Jesus. This would include friendships, courtships, careers, etc.

Hebrews 12:1

...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us...(NIV)

Henri Nouwen

“By practicing the spiritual disciplines, we prevent the world from filling our lives to such an extent that there is no place left to listen.”

Note: To follow Jesus comes with choices that we must learn to be intentional in making them.

II. II. Be Vulnerable

- A. Let's admit nobody likes the thought of being vulnerable. Why?
- B. Often because we feel like we would be seen for what we are and not the person we make out to be.
- C. To follow Jesus means to be stripped away from all that is not the real us so that we can follow the real Him to learn how to be the real us.
- D. Vulnerability simply means “exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed.”
- E. Many push against this thought of vulnerability because they would feel out of control.

- F. The great deception is to think we are in control in the present.
- G. To follow Jesus means to allow ourselves to feel out of control. Why? Because we trust, He is in control. Sadly, many of us say we are trusting Jesus but when you pull back the covers to the level of vulnerability, we are only trusting ourselves.
- H. To follow Jesus, we must assume the uncomfortable position of trusting Jesus in the details. We say we trust Him, but often we are simply talking about Him taking us to Heaven. Do we trust Him in the details of our lives?
- I. If we can't trust Him in the details, then how can we trust Him with the big things such as 'going to Heaven when we die?'
- J. Vulnerability is necessary in following Jesus because it allows the Spirit to open us up to the freedom in Christ which feels a whole lot like fear in the beginning because we don't live outside of our own control.
- K. Who are we truly being vulnerable to in following Jesus? It is His Spirit controlling us, moving us, making us, and reshaping us into the person He would have us become.

Jeremiah 18:1-6

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²“Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.” ³So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. ⁴And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.

⁵Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁶“O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.”¹

- L. How can the pot be shaped if it is not vulnerable in the hands of the Potter?

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Je 18:1–6). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

III. Be Faithful

- A. We should learn to be faithful because God is willing to be faithful to us.
- B. What does it mean to be faithful?
- C. To be faithful means to be loyal and steadfast.
- D. It means we show up for Christ no matter circumstances or feelings.
- E. When Jesus gave a hard teaching in John 6 the Scripture said that many of his disciples quit following Him. Then the Scripture reads:

John 6:67-69

⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

- F. Being faithful to Jesus means being disciplined enough to do what is necessary for Him and with Him even when our feelings say otherwise.
- G. We know He will show up for us, but are we willing to show up for Him?

Be Faithful in Little Things

A young preacher once approached Dr. F. B. Meyer and asked how he could one day become as influential and well-known as Dr. Meyer. Dr. Meyer responded, “Don’t waste your time waiting and longing for large opportunities which may never come. But faithfully handle the little things that are always claiming your attention.”

Luke 16:10-12

¹⁰ “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?”

H. Learning to be faithful is a daily task because faithfulness is asked of us daily.

John Ruskin

Faithfulness knows no difference between small and great duties.

Vance Havner

Christians do not have to live; they have only to be faithful to Jesus Christ, not only until death but unto death if necessary.

IV. Be Willing

Eugene Peterson

“Joy is not a requirement of Christian discipleship, it is a consequence of it.” –

- A. God will not beg you to follow Him. He simply invites. If you are not willing, then you are not willing.
- B. Jesus does not take the position many modern Churches have in begging people to be a part of their congregation. He simply puts out the invitation, then it is up to us to decide if we are willing.
- C. Matter of fact, Jesus gave people harsh responses to their delay in following Him.

Matthew 8:18–22 ESC

Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. ¹⁹ And a scribe came up and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” ²⁰ And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” ²¹ Another of the disciples said to him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” ²² And Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.”

- D. But to be willing to follow Christ means you learn your place. He is the boss, and you and I are simple followers obeying His direction.
- E. We must be willing to come down off our high horses to do what He would have us do.

F. To be willing to follow Christ is a humbling experience because we are called to do what He does, and what He does many of us on our own are not willing to do.

G. Think of Jesus washing the disciple's feet. He, the King and Creator, is willing to do a servant's job.

H. Are you willing to serve in a humble position like Jesus?

Francis Chan

“I think a lot of us need to forget about ‘God’s will for my life’. God cares more about our response to His Spirit’s leading today, in this moment, than about what we intend to do next year. In fact, the decisions we will make next year will be profoundly affected by the degree to which we submit to the Spirit right now, in today’s decisions. It is easy to use the phrase ‘God’s will for my life’ as an excuse for inaction or even disobedience. It is much less demanding to think about God’s will for your future than it is to ask Him what He wants you to do in the next ten minutes. It’s safer to commit to following Him ‘someday’ instead of ‘this day’.”

Conclusion

Dallas Willard

“The cost of discipleship is indeed great. But the cost of nondiscipleship is far greater. Nondiscipleship costs abiding peace, a life penetrated through by love, faith that sees everything in the light of God’s overriding governance for good, hopefulness that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances, power to do what is right and withstand the forces of evil. In short, it costs exactly that abundance of life Jesus said He came to bring.”

Charles Stanley

“If I win, I win. And if I lose, I win. Because my responsibility is to be obedient to God and trust Him with the consequences.”