

# SURRENDERING TO GOD – PART 2

## SURRENDERING YOUR PAST



### An Example...

A couple were expecting triplet daughters. Their excitement while waiting for the birth had a dramatic turn. At 28 weeks the mother prematurely gave birth to the first girl without a doctor's help. An emergency C-section was needed to deliver the other two girls, but they had to wait 30 mins for the doctor to arrive and perform the operation. During the delay several things went wrong, and as a result the 2 youngest daughters have cerebral palsy. One cannot walk and the other suffered a lesser degree. Imagine the pain the parents felt. Bitterness about the doctor's late arrival lasted every day for several years. It wasn't until this Christian couple joined a small group and began to make peace with the past. As they discussed what it meant to worship God with their entire lives, the bitterness issue kept coming up. They knew that in order to keep growing spiritually, they needed to give the situation to God. They needed to surrender everything – their hurt, their sorrows, and their daughters' lives.

Surrender moved them toward forgiveness and healing. After many months of prayer and talking with their small group, they made an appointment to see the doctor. They wanted to forgive him face to face. The meeting was full of tears, but also forgiveness and love. They were never the same since. When they surrendered their past to God, their present took a new meaning.

What's in your past that you're hanging on to? It may not be as life-changing as this couple's experience – or it may be even more impactful. Surrendering pain from past isn't easy, but it's a vital step to keep you moving forward and growing in your relationship with God.

To worship with your life is to surrender everything and ask God to take your emptied self and fill you with himself.

### What about Me

1. Describe an event you remember that has helped shape you today? \_\_\_\_\_

You can't change your past whether it's positive or painful. Your painful past has the potential to haunt you and paralyse your future choices. Many Christians allow themselves to become prisoners or victims of their past. If you choose that path, it leads nowhere and keeps you from becoming the person God created you to become.

The Bible helps us see that no past is so painful or prideful that God can't heal it and no past is so sinful that God won't forgive it. As you'll see in this section, a past doesn't have to be horrific for it to be surrendered.

### What about Apostle Paul

You'll see how the apostle Paul refused to allow his elite past to control his future. He called it trash when compared to knowing Jesus.

Worshiping God requires you to surrender your past - both painful and successful - so you can clearly focus on the One who controls your future.

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:4-11

2. Based on this passage and other Bible passages you may know, what do you know of Paul's character? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Paul considered his past as a loss for the sake of Christ (verse 7). What things from your past may be keeping you from knowing Jesus and living for him to the fullest? \_\_\_\_\_

***Circumcised...of Israel...of Benjamin...a Hebrew of Hebrews...a Pharisee...zealous...faultless***

*All of these terms describe the ideal Jew. Circumcision was the mark of a Jewish male. Paul belonged to the Pharisees, the most respected men within Judaism because of their supposed piety. He could even claim to have followed all the rules of the religion. Paul was saying that he had done everything to be respected in the eyes of the world.*

4. What are some positives from your past that may have a negative impact on your faith today? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What's the difference between righteousness from the law and righteousness from faith (verse 9)? \_\_\_\_\_

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***Righteousness of my own that comes from the law***

*If you were to total all the laws in the Old Testament, they'd add up to 612. God gave the Ten Commandments (and the other 602 laws) to Moses so that the Israelites would know how to live the good life he wants for his people. The Law defined perfection. That's all the Law can do, really - define perfection. Because no one is perfect, the Law shows how imperfect we are. The Law can't help us be perfect. Once you're firmly convinced that you can't be perfect you're in a position to place your faith fully in Jesus and receive his free gift of salvation.*

6. Paul makes it dear that all believers have access to the power of God - the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. Do you regularly rely on God's power? In practical terms how can you know when you're relying on God's power? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What did Paul want from God that made him willing to surrender his past? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Paul's negative past included persecuting Christians (verse 6), even helping kill them. How would you go about surrendering such a big-time sin to God? How should so-called lesser sins be surrendered to God? \_\_\_\_\_

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***Persecuting the church***

*Paul helped to lead the earliest efforts to stamp out the followers of Jesus. Acts 7:54-8:3 describes his participation in the murder of Stephen. Acts 9 tells how God revealed himself to Paul while Paul was in the middle of his anti-Christian crusade.*

**Slight Side-track**

***And so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead***

*Paul's statement doesn't mean that he questioned his status as a believer, as if he were unsure that God will keep his promises. The uncertainty in this passage isn't about whether he'd spend eternity in heaven but how it would come about. Paul was convinced the resurrection would happen; he just didn't know how.*

*I know that tomorrow the sun will rise. I don't understand everything that's involved with it. I've been told the sun stands still and the earth rotates on its own axis, but that information isn't helpful. I don't understand gravity, though I know it's an invisible force that keeps us moving around the sun. What's that about? Why doesn't gravity take a day off? Doesn't it ever get tired? Why don't we spin faster some days and slower on others? If a rock lands on our planet from outer space, does that get us off track a little? Although I have tons of (meaningless) questions about the sun rising tomorrow, I know beyond a shadow of a doubt (pun intended) that it will happen.*

## What Now...

Read the following three Bible verse

Draw a line from each term on the right to the corresponding verse on the left

<p>"How terrible it is for me!" I cried out. "I'm about to be destroyed! My mouth speaks sinful words. And I live among people who speak sinful words. Now I have seen the King with my own eyes. He is the Lord who rules over all." Isaiah 6:5</p>	<p><b>Surrender of fear</b> <b>Surrender of disobedience</b> <b>Surrender of bad decisions</b></p>
<p>I will get up and go back to my father. I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven. And I have sinned against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired workers." Luke 15:18-19</p>	
<p>I call out to the Lord. He is worthy of praise. He saves me from my enemies. Psalm 18:3</p>	

Which of these "surrenders" is the one you want to pay closer attention to in your life?

Dealing with pain from your past can be big. You need courage, faith, and help to deal with the feelings and memories that usually accompany it. Be sure to talk to someone about it. Burying it only makes it worse.