

1. I Surrender All? (Surrender/submission—not exactly an inviting topic—not one we typically enjoy discussing. But it is a thoroughly biblical one—one in fact considered essential in following Christ and when done as Scripture frames it is a beautiful and transformational blessing that brings great fulfillment and joy. But such surrender takes a perspective molded by God and spiritual discipline. First let's consider some personal reflections of the Apostle Paul—in speaking of his relationship with Christ)
2. "For whose sake I have lost all things"—Philippians 2:2-14 (**READ**—First before we look at this context, let's look at Paul himself. He was a driven man—a guy who prior to meeting Christ didn't seem to have surrender in his vocabulary. Even after that he was quick to bow up—Acts 23:2-4 for instance. So for him to make such a statement of submission was quite incredible. Contextually he was defending himself against lies and criticism coming from false teachers. He recalls his resume—easily could play that game, but concluded that all of that was less than worthless since he met Christ. He gladly surrendered his pre-Christ life, its values, his career trajectory, all of that ultimately empty way of life once he found Christ—it was just a pile of poop compared to the blessings of Jesus. But it took that surrender—that encounter with Christ—those three days blinded and with nothing else to distract him before Ananias came for him to get it. But he did and what an eternal difference his submitting to the will of Christ made.)
3. (Now let's look at someone who did not get it) Rich Young Ruler—Matthew 19:16-22 (Most point to his riches as the reason he did not submit to God's will—and certainly the text references that. But think about what his words to Jesus reveal. He was basically seeking an affirmation from Christ about the good deeds he had already done. He was focused on a performance-based approach: one that emphasized his own virtue rather than that of Christ's. This is why Christ's response to him cut so deep. To surrender he had to let go of it all—not just the riches, but also the self-sufficient attitude—the attitude of really I got this. Sure I can use some of what you are selling Jesus, but in the end—I can handle it. This is not just about riches—it can be—but it is about am I really going to completely let go and let God like Paul or not. I get it—it is not easy—especially with my personality—even with something as minor as poison ivy—I did not want to go the doc—I got this. Did not work out too well for me either—certainly did not for RYR. To truly surrender we have to come openly and honestly face-to-face with Jesus. Spend some time with no distractions wrestling with what this all means; commit and not look back just like Paul. And when we do—things will look different—more reflective of kingdom values—our relationships will change—think of Paul's teaching in Ephesians 5. Our will gives way to God's will and beautiful things happen—one huge one is we)
4. Become Other's Focused—Philippians 2:1-8 (This text contains some teaching that many of us find almost impossible—consider others better than yourselves for instance. How in the world? The answer is submission and surrender—Jesus equal with God giving that up—being made nothing—and as a result acquiring the humility and obedience to submit to the cross. One thing is for sure—Jesus was not thinking of himself on the cross—he was other's focused. It will not be until we surrender all that we can truly follow his example.)
5. "For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it."—Matthew 16 :25 (This really says it all. I hope we heed and honestly assess where we are—like Paul who surrender all and never looked back or like the RYR—still holding out while thinking I am okay-I got this. No my friends—only Christ got THIS. Time to let the rest go)