

Special Section: Surrender

Embracing God's Purposes In Your Life



Illustration by Kari Kroll

Shortly before his death in the early 1960s, A.W. Tozer wondered at the state of Christianity in America. In particular, he questioned whether evangelicalism was giving people deep enough spiritual roots in Christ. In *Knowledge of the Holy*, he observed: “The forces of religion are making dramatic gains and the churches are more prosperous than at any time within the past several hundred years. But the alarming thing is that our gains are mostly external and our losses wholly internal: and since it is the quality of our religion that is affected by internal conditions, it may be that our gains are but losses spread over a wider field.”

Christian spirituality, Tozer insisted, is more than a trip to the altar followed by a great record of church attendance. It means transformation of the heart. A new and higher approach to life, with eternal realities in view. With inner rest that comes when we have settled the issue of who is best suited—God, or us—to plan, care for, and take command of our lives.

Which leads to the theme of this section: surrender. Surrender is a state of the heart—an attitude of openness to God.

Surrender radically trusts in God's sovereign goodness. It begins when I hand into His care all my loves, agendas, judgments, demands, goals, and dreams. It rests in knowing that He is using every circumstance to form in me a new identity—the image of Christ—and to advance purposes far beyond my own.

Surrender describes the peaceful, trusting abandon of two lovers resting together—or of a disciple with his head on the chest of his Master.

Do you know this kind of full surrender? Each of the articles in this special section poses this question.

My contribution, “His Ways, Our Ways,” is a testimony about how God leads us away from the security we try to find in earthly things toward trust in Him alone. It's a story of a hardworking evangelical who did not know how to trust in the deep love and the higher ways of God, until he passed through many fires. Perhaps it will open to you a more awesome view of

God, and higher possibilities for your struggles.

Gary Thomas's fine piece, "The Freedom Of Surrender," explores the relief that is ours when we overcome our fear of letting go and allowing God to govern our lives. Here is help in identifying and getting beyond those barriers that keep us from full trust in God—and from the peace and purpose that we can experience in Christ.

"The Listening Side Of Prayer" by Stacey Padrick is for those who need to discover how to "be still" and draw near to God. If your prayer time has sunk into a monologue, in which you recite a list of needs and wants to God (or read Him the "riot act" for not responding as you'd like), Stacey's directions can help open your spiritual ears.

Howard Baker's "Guidance For Your Journey" sheds light on our tendency to come to God with a predetermined "menu" of choices. Howard helps us view guidance with a big-picture perspective that can free us from the fretting we sometimes do over each bend in the road. He also opens to us the range of ways we can seek, and live under, God's assured direction.

Our hope is that this issue will strengthen you in your own faith journey. May you learn to live as men and women who know that becoming a strong, joyful disciple of Jesus Christ is a "state of the heart."

—David Hazard, Guest Editor, Special Section