



CONNECT - HOW DOES THIS TOPIC RELATE TO US?

Choose 1 or 2 questions to get your discussion started.

1. Share an experience when you trusted a significant person in your life (e.g. parent, teacher, coach, friend) to be watching out for your best interest.
2. When you have an important decision to make, whom would you consult with and why?
3. Share a time in your life when you gave up something important to you (e.g. control, an object, a relationship, time to focus on sports/hobby) and ended up receiving back more than you expected.
4. Recall a time when you thought you were in control of something and later realized that you had no control whatsoever (or that you were powerless over the circumstances). What happened? How did you respond?

ENGAGE - WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH US?

Read the following two passages in light of the idea of surrender.

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly." Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?" The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith... Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment. - Matthew 8:5-10, 13

1. What motivated the centurion to approach Jesus?
2. Put yourself in the shoes of the Roman Centurion. You're someone with power and authority who works for the ruling government. What thoughts might the centurion have had that would have prevented him from approaching Jesus in the manner than he did?
3. What do we learn about the centurion from this story?
4. What thoughts prevent you from approaching Jesus for your needs?

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. - Matthew 16:24-25

1. Share an example of when you have seen a person "lose" their life for Jesus and then "find" it.

2. For the audience of Matthew's gospel, the call to pick up their cross would have been a clear call to be willing to give up everything to follow Jesus, which very well could have meant death. Western Christianity sometimes can lose the impact of that call because we live relatively comfortable lives free of persecution. What do you think Jesus' call to take up your cross looks like in 21st century America?

3. What does it look like in your life specifically?

APPLY - HOW CAN THIS CHANGE OUR LIVES?

1. What does total surrender to God mean?
2. What area of your life (if any) have you surrendered to God already? What was the result?
3. What area of your life do you find most difficult to surrender to God? Why?
4. What is the possible life you may "find" if you were to completely surrender that area?

ACTION STEP

Pray "Your will be done" to God every day for the next week, focusing particularly on the area of your life that you find most difficult to surrender to God. Be attentive for opportunities that God may reveal to you where you can begin to let go and trust God more.

PRAYER - TOGETHER, PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER FROM MATTHEW 6: 9-13

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. Amen.

GOING DEEPER - FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." - Matthew 26:39

- Jesus prayed to avoid the cross but was willing to endure the pain if it was God's will for him.

What does Jesus' willingness to surrender mean to you?

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. - Galatians 2:20

- How did Paul live a life that reflected being "crucified with Christ" and having "Christ live in" him?
- To what extent do those phrases describe your own life?

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. - Romans 12:1

- Paul seems to suggest that the Christian life should be characterized by self-sacrifice. Why do you think Paul refers to this sacrifice as "true and proper worship"?