

Surrendering to God

Living the Covenant Prayer

by: Keith Beasley-Topliffe

Study Guide

Chapter 1: Surrender

1. The author asserts that, "In truth . . . the initiative as always God's. God laid claim to us long before we accepted him." Take a moment to list ways in which God has reached out to you in the past. Where do you have clear evidence of his seeking you?
2. We all have immature or unconverted parts of our beings that want to be our own boss and say to God, "Oh yeah? Well you're not the boss of me!" Where have you said that to God recently? How have you handled or resolved that conflict?
3. Christ Calls us to complete surrender or trust in him. This is a lifetime process. Reflect on one choice you made recently where you let God direct you in a way that ran counter to your own will. How was this surrendering choice a positive step for you in relating to God?
4. "We are most fully alive when we are most fully surrendered to God." How have you experienced the truth of this statement?

Chapter 2: God's Call

1. The author talks about his struggle to make long range career plans. Take a moment to write down different jobs you have held and what long range career goals you have followed. When you changed directions, how did that happen?
2. The author asserts, "The necessity to let Christ take charge is actually a relief. He knows us better than we know ourselves." React to this statement. Where do you agree? Disagree?
3. Topliffe asserts that in abandoning self to God, there is no promise of a map and indeed there is no hope of one. How do you react to this assertion? When in your life have you wanted a map? What lay behind this demand?
4. The author asserts that it is important to pay attention to "hidden prompting or gut feelings." How have you seen God change the direction of your life in tiny incidents? What hidden prompting have you experienced that need to be verbalized and explored?

Paraclete Press

P.O. Box 1568 - Orleans, MA 02653 - (508) 255-4685 - Fax (508) 255-5705
World Wide Web: <http://www.paracletepress.com> - E-mail: mail@paracletepress.com

Chapter 3: Acceptance

1. The author is quick to point out that the “suffering” referred to has nothing to do with being in physical pain. Rather it means, “being-done-to” and it is when things happen in your life that are completely beyond your control. List three events in the last year that have caused you to feel out of control? How did you react to them?
2. Reflect on one time recently when you had to wait and endure something that was done to you? How did you respond? How did you relate to God during this time?
3. How have you experienced the reality of aging in your life? In those around you? How do you react to your own growing older?
4. On page 34, the author talks about a type of “floating” prayer or “wasting time with God.” This type of prayer does not ask God to do something for us. Instead it enables us to learn to just relax and be in his presence. How does this type of prayer appeal to you?

Chapter 4: Laid Aside

1. Reflect on a time in your life when you felt you were indispensable. Why did you feel as you did? Where do you presently hold on to this perception?
2. When have you found yourself “laid aside” from doing something that was very important to you? What did you learn from that experience?
3. The Chinese character for “crisis” has two simple characters: “danger and opportunity.” How are these characters instructive to you in a time when you felt laid aside? Where was the danger? The opportunity?
4. To be laid aside reminds us that there are no circumstances on this earth that are meant to be permanent. On page 47, the author ends by saying that “Abandonment means listening each moment for God’s new call.” Reflect on how do you react to knowing nothing is permanent except God’s call and voice?

Chapter 5: Status

1. The author reminds us that the dark side of the American Dream is that “This is America, where anybody can be Somebody. And if you are not Somebody, then you’re nobody and you have nobody to blame but yourself.” In what ways have you bought into this dream?
2. In defining our status, we are reminded of Mary and her example when she said, “Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” (Page 54) To our secular world, this is a radical statement. In what ways do you embrace or hold at arms' length her declaration?
3. Reflect on a time recently when you took yourself so seriously that you could not see the humor in a situation. What happened? How did you realize that you had an inflated view of yourself?
4. On page 60, the author concludes by saying that, “Humility is not putting ourselves down or

Paraclete Press

P.O. Box 1568 - Orleans, MA 02653 - (508) 255-4685 - Fax (508) 255-5705
World Wide Web: <http://www.paracletepress.com> - E-mail: mail@paracletepress.com

hating ourselves, but rather putting ourselves right where we belong as God's (often fairly-useless) servants. How does this definition clarify or clash with your definition of humility?

Chapter 6: Emptiness

1. The author equates being full of God's Spirit with being emptied of those actions and attitudes that reflect the deeds of darkness and the world. Reflect on a time of your life when God seemed to be revealing your shortcomings so that something better could take their place? What happened? How did you feel about the process? About the end result?
2. On page 70, the author describes the maturing process of purging or emptying, illuminating or being filled with God's love, and finally a deeper union with God in his love. Write briefly about a time in your life when each step of this process occurred?
3. As we follow God, we go through periods where we are "blessing junkies" who seek after God solely for new spiritual experiences. Then God calls us to love him not just for an experience but instead just for who he is. On a scale of one to 10 with the lowest being the most addicted to a spiritual experience, where would you say you are in this maturing process? Explain.
4. Reflect on a time when you felt empty or desolate in relation to God. What did you learn from that time?

Chapter 7: Addiction

1. Americans are continually confronted with advertisements to purchase items which promise to make our lives fulfilled. Which ads are particularly appealing to you? Why?
2. On page 82, the author asserts that, "The things to which we remain attached tell us about the needs we still seek to satisfy through things rather than through God." To what things do you still remain attached? How do these things take the place of God in your life?
3. This chapter talks about cravings for input into decisions, for success and accomplishment, or for gratification so that we know some measure of achievement. List one craving that drives you. What would it mean to surrender that craving?
4. On page 82, Thomas Merton is quoted who said, ". . . We are afraid of our own helplessness . . . better to hurry and do something than to be still and face our helplessness before the god of the marketplace . . . THE PAIN OF NOT BEING GOD!" In what ways can you see yourself in this quote? What is one way you might do to change?

Chapter 8: Yielding Everything

1. If someone were to ask you if God were trustworthy, how would you answer? What would your testimony be? In what area of your life are you uncertain?

Paraclete Press

P.O. Box 1568 - Orleans, MA 02653 - (508) 255-4685 - Fax (508) 255-5705
World Wide Web: <http://www.paracletepress.com> - E-mail: mail@paracletepress.com

2. The author state on page 93 that, “Abandonment means the surrender of our will to God’s will, as well as detachment from anything that is not God.” What is one area where you surrendered yourself to God? Where is one area that you are still trying to negotiate terms of surrender?
3. John Wesley exhorted his people to “. . . gain all you can, save all you can, and give all you can.” What about this exhortation appeals to you? Confuses you? Frightens you?
4. On pages 96-99, the author discusses Bernard of Clairvaux and his four degrees of love. In looking at each stage, where are you now? Why did you answer as you did? What is one barrier that stands between you and the next stage?

Chapter 9: In Conclusion

1. In quoting from the Westminster Catechism, the author reminds us that our goal in life “. is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.” What does this mean to you?
2. On page 107, various pictures are employed to give a sense of what it means to calm our anxieties and find rest or intimacy with God. Think of an instance recently when you were at rest in God’s presence. What did you do?
3. For God to ratify something in heaven means that our best intentions are never sufficient unless God undergirds them with his constant support. Where in your life do you need to trust his presence to bring about something that you are trying to accomplish?

Pray: I am not longer my own but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me b employed for thee or laid aside for thee. Exalted for thee or brought low for thee. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou are mine and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it ratified in heaven. Amen.

Pray this prayer slowly to yourself. Pray it slowly, phrase by phrase, out loud. How does this prayer reflect your present desires to God? How can it be a framework for the ongoing growth of your relationship with him?

Surrendering to God Living the Covenant Prayer

Keith Beasley-Topliffe

ISBN:

Price: 13.95, Trade paper, Nov, 2001

To Order: Call 1-800-451-5006, also available online at www.paracletepress.com .

Paraclete Press

P.O. Box 1568 - Orleans, MA 02653 - (508) 255-4685 - Fax (508) 255-5705
 World Wide Web: <http://www.paracletepress.com> - E-mail: mail@paracletepress.com