

## Chapter 4 Taking on the Devil

The message of surrender is not one that is heard very often. It involves dying to self. This is not a popular theme in this era of self-help, positive thinking, and esteem-building Christianity. Among these positive-sounding solutions, surrender sounds, well, negative. But, in reality, in matters of the heart, the only victory for a Christian comes through surrender and dying to self.

How often are we admonished to STRIVE to be better Christians? Striving can change our outward behavior, true. But when we strive to change our hearts, one of two things happen. If we strive and succeed, we become proud of our spiritual accomplishments. If we strive and fail (which is most always the case), we are self-condemning. In both instances, self is at the center. But when we surrender, there is no victory for us, nor is there failure.

It is like being in a boxing ring with the devil. When we strive to overcome in matters of the heart, we attempt to do battle with the devil. Win or lose, we have fought the battle. We will bask in the victory or wallow in defeat. Either way, the devil wins because he knows that we did it in our flesh and our flesh is at enmity with the Spirit of God. We are the focus of our efforts—win or

lose! However, when we surrender, we say to the devil, “You’re right; I can’t change my heart. I am too weak to fight you. Instead I surrender. But not to you. Rather, I

surrender to Christ, my Advocate, who will fight my battle for me.” All of a sudden, the odds shift. Satan is no match for Christ. As we surrender our worst to Christ, it no longer becomes a tool of Satan to be used against us.



To illustrate this point, imagine when you were a child and you did something really bad. Your father knew you did it. He was just waiting for you to admit the truth. Finally, because the guilt was overwhelming, you went to your father and admitted to your bad deed. He wrapped his arms around you and said, “I already knew you did it. I was just waiting for you to tell me the truth, so I could help you make it right.” Oh, the relief when you realized that he knew all the time and he loved you anyway. Then along came your sister. She also knew what you had done and decided to get some personal

benefit out of it. She tried to blackmail you with her knowledge. What freedom to look her in the eye and say, “Go ahead, I already told Him, and he still loves me, and he made it right.” God KNOWS what is in our hearts. The Bible makes this very clear in Hebrews 4:12–13, where it states: *“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”* God knows every rotten thought, every hurt, insecurity, jealousy, and hateful or prideful thought. He is just waiting for you to be honest with yourself and to give these burdens to Him. He will make it right.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Taking on The Devil**

If you know the story of the Israelites under Moses' leadership in the wilderness, you see a parallel between their wandering and our Christian walk. They saw God do amazing things and rejoiced and trusted Him. Then things got tough and they grumbled, doubted and turned back to their old ways. The following is one of those times.

Exodus 14

*10 And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So, they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord. 11 Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? 12 Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."*

*13 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. 14 The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."*

1. Write the last verse (14) here:

Imagine what the Israelites were feeling. They had seen God bring the ten plagues to Egypt and through them, bring Pharaoh to his knees. He had finally let them go. How excited and jubilant they must have been. And then...there they stood on the banks of the Red Sea watching the terrifying sight of soldiers in chariots descending on them with no way to escape.

2. What was Moses response? (vs. 14)

3. Do you think they were afraid to trust Moses?

4. Why?

5. When you are facing issues of the heart (anger, guilt, hate, unforgiveness, anxiety, fear, etc.) and you think of surrendering them and trusting God, what emotions do you experience?

Notice God did require something of the Israelites. He required that they cross the waters that He parted. One foot in front of the other they moved forward on the sea bottom with water on either side. When we surrender and allow God to fight our battle, we may need to DO something, but it will be out of the right motives. Surrender makes our heart right with God. It makes us open and willing to do His will. It makes us able to be honest about ourselves and with God. Our actions will reflect our heart.

6. Look up Proverbs 4:23 and write it here:

**MEMORY VERSE**

*Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today.*

Exodus 14:13

## Chapter 5

### The Painful Truth

I'm afraid I have made surrender sound simple. And you may be saying, "Yes, I get it—I see what you mean." But, in reality, it can be terribly painful. The pain comes from honestly facing your sinfulness. It hurts to admit that you are not the ideal Christian woman. That you are, in fact, stuck in the same muck and mire of wretchedness that we like to pin on the other person. It hurts to dismantle our illusions of ourselves and wrestle with the truth. The surprising thing is, when you start to seriously surrender, you may be shocked to find that you DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT, MUCH LESS SURRENDER your honest feelings.

I remember sharing surrender with a young man. I knew him as a teenager when he often came to our home to escape an emotionally abusive father. We had long, honest talks. But when he became an adult, he lost that honesty. Although he was very involved in church, he was also involved in some sinful behavior that could have only led to devastating emotional, spiritual, and social consequences. When faced with the truth, he refused to acknowledge it.

One day we were talking, and he made the statement that he had prayed and prayed but God just would not take away his bad feelings toward his father. I shared with him that the path to forgiveness came through acknowledging his sins of bitterness and hatred and surrendering these feelings to God. In the end I invited him to pray with me, asking specifically if he was willing to surrender his hatred toward his father. He looked at me and said, "I guess I really don't want to quit hating my dad. I don't want to surrender it."

"If that's the case," I replied, "don't blame God for not doing His job. You *enjoy* your bitterness and *want* to hate your father." Sadly, he agreed. He has continued to live his life in bondage to his hatred. It continues to affect all of his relationships, both with God and with others. Yet when he was shown the path to freedom, he chose bondage.

Contrast this with another young woman with whom I shared this message. Karen had a similar reaction to my

message of surrender but with a totally different outcome. I first met Karen when she scribbled me a note after I had given a speech against abortion at a local church. It said,



"I have had an abortion, and my two-year-old son was born out of wedlock. Let's talk." Afterward Karen gushed about how she used to be wretched, but now God had worked everything out in her life and she was so happy. It took only a few visits with her, however, for me to realize that this was not true. She was very bitter. Her cynicism and sarcasm were masking deep, unresolved wounds.

One day as we were talking, I said to her, "Karen, you're really bitter. Your bitterness hangs around you like a shroud." She told me later that she thought to herself, *Go to hell, lady, I'm not bitter!* Her defensive response, however, betrayed tremendous inner turmoil. As we continued talking, she broke down and cried. "Yes," she said. "I am bitter. I have a reason to be bitter." The fact was, she was filled with hatred. The father of her unborn baby had talked her into an abortion, had driven her to the clinic, and dropped her at home afterward, never to return. He did not deserve forgiveness! I shared the path to peace through surrender, but she wasn't interested. She said, "I will NOT surrender my hatred! My hatred is like a wall around my heart, protecting it. If I quit hating, I can be hurt, and I will never be hurt like that again!" I think

even she was startled by her own admission! But it was honest. Not very noble—but honest. I agreed that she couldn't surrender her hatred because she didn't want to. The first step is a willingness to do so. I asked her if she could surrender her *desire* to keep her hatred—to protect her heart. She agreed that she could do this. So, she prayed, “God, I want to keep this hatred. I want to enjoy it. I want to be protected by it. This is what I give to You.” She laid this at the foot of the cross and, for the first time, gave Jesus something He really wanted—that walled-off part of her heart. As she surrendered her desire to hang on to her hatred, God began to soften her heart. A wedge of grace started shining light in the dark corners. Soon she was able to give God the hatred itself. When Satan reminded her of her rejection and pain, she had a choice. She could either entertain it or surrender it. With each choice to surrender, it became a little easier. After the hatred, she was able to surrender the rejection, the bitterness, and then the guilt of killing her unborn child. From there God allowed her to look honestly at her upbringing and her relationships and so many other things that had shaped her life. Her healing for her abortion was total and complete. And the prayer of surrender that was so begrudgingly offered in the beginning has become a way of life for her.

## **Chapter 5**

### ***The Painful Truth***

1. Reading about the young man who, when he was honest, did not want to give up his feelings about his dad why do you think his choice is described as “bondage”?

2. The young woman, Karen, found herself in the same situation as the young man preceding her when she was faced with the reality of surrendering. What was the difference between her response and his?

This is a good time to go before the Lord in a quiet time and honestly assess what you need to surrender. Prayerfully ask God to show you the truth and make a list.

3. What I need to surrender

Let this list rest for now as you finish the book. You will return to it.

**MEMORY VERSE**

*And you shall know the truth, and the truth  
shall make you free.*

John 8:32