

## Taking on the Devil

The message of surrender is not one that is heard very often. It involves dying to self:

**[Dying to self: surrendering the hurtful, selfish desires of the heart to God and putting His truth first.]**

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 negative. But, in reality, in matters of the heart, the only victory for a Christian comes through surrender and dying to self.

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 (opposed to) with the Spirit of God.

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 battles for me.”

## 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 Can’t Forgive Myself

Dinah shares, “God has brought many post-abortion Christian women across my path. Often, they find it difficult to heal from their pain and find forgiveness for their sin because of the attitude they encounter within the Church!”

**Only God can change your heart.** All you can do is admit what is really inside your heart and surrender THAT to God. You then simply accept HIS forgiveness in its completeness and rest in that forgiveness with no condemnation of self or others.

The very essence of forgiveness is that sinners move from bondage of sin to freedom in Christ. It is a forgone conclusion that the person asking forgiveness is forgiven and set free from the sin.

Yet, there is another aspect to our sins that makes these verses so hard to accept. Being forgiven for our sin is different than facing the consequences of our sin. With true repentance comes the spiritual consequence—forgiveness and freedom. But there are still the physical/situational consequences we must live with:

- With abortion, there is always an awareness that a child is missing.

- With addiction, relationships are permanently broken.
- With adultery, there may be physical consequences like HIV or pregnancy, even though the marriage is restored by God's grace. Or, the marriage may end, and the children will live with the emotional damage.

**The ripple effect of sin is undeniable.**

Facing the wreckage of our sin can be overwhelming. *But when we choose TRUTH about the sin, we choose CHRIST.* And because He died on the cross, the bondage has already been broken. We just need to leave it there.

**Read the following verses about being forgiven:**

**Acts 3:19** Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out.

**Hebrews 9:26** If that had been necessary, Christ would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But now, once for all time, He has appeared at the end of the age to remove sin by his own death as a sacrifice.

**2 Samuel 12:13** Then David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "Yes, but the LORD has forgiven you, and you won't die for this sin.

**Psalms 32:5** Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the LORD." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

**Isaiah 38:17** Yes, this anguish was good for me, for you have rescued me from death and forgiven all my sins.

**Isaiah 43:25** I—yes, I alone—will blot out your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again.

**Hebrews 4:12–13** 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."