

e-devotional

A weekly devotional focusing on the spiritual formation of Christian workers

Focus: Christian Spiritual Formation threshold two—Surrender, consecration and submission to Jesus as Lord

Scripture: Romans 6:13; 12:1; 1 Peter 3:15

Task: Read through these Scriptures out loud. Define the word “lord” using your Greek and theological resources. List in bullet points the why this is an essential threshold for Christian spiritual formation, what is required for a person to experience it as a crisis, and the behavioral dynamics and changes that result from a total surrender and consecration to Jesus as Lord.

Word Insight

Romans 6:13 “offer” (*paristanō*); the first instance is in the present imperative with the negative, which carries the meaning of “do not continue.” The present refers to continued, on-going action. The second instance is in the **aorist** imperative and indicates the beginning of a new life, a definitive moment, not an option. Both occur as imperatives removing the optional consideration. Rienecker: “The aorist calls for an immediate decisive new action as a break from the past.” A. T. Robertson says it means “do it now and do it completely” [see Rienecker, p 362, and *The International Critical Commentary*, Vol. 1, page 317; A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. IV (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931), 363]. Rienecker points out that the term could be understood in a military sense with sin functioning as a commander. This agrees with Paul’s metaphorical reference to the members of our physical body as weapons (KJV) or instruments (NIV). John Murray: “The tense that is used in this instance indicates the once-for-allness of the dedication involved in the presentation of ourselves and of our members. We are regarded as presenting ourselves and our members once for all to God for his service and the promotion of righteousness” (*The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. 1, p. 228).

Romans 12:1 “offer” (*parastēsai*, aorist inf. of *paristēmi*); Rienecker: “to present,

a technical term for presenting a sacrifice, literally meaning ‘to place beside’ for any purpose.” Again the aorist indicates a definitive act, a threshold that is crossed once for all. Munzer wrote in *The Dictionary of New Testament Theology*: “*Paristēmi* is a sort of code-word for changing the form of one’s existence by changing one’s lord. The justified recognize that Jesus is *Kyrios*, Lord, and practice submission. Moreover, they live in sanctification in view of his presence and the coming perfection.”

1Peter 3:15 “set apart”; [*hagiazate*, aorist active imperative of *hagiazō*: to make holy, that is, (ceremonially) purify or consecrate; (mentally) to venerate:—hallow, be holy, sanctify]. The sense of veneration is translated in the NLT as “worship”, extending the understanding of worship as far more than singing songs of exaltation with emotion and uplifted hands. Worship demands a life of separation from sin and unto God in all areas of experience. This is collaborated in the NIV translation of Romans 12:1 that offering our bodies to God in surrender and submission is our “spiritual act of worship.” The context of Peter’s statement is specific to the believer’s response to adversity and presenting a testimony to the watching world.

Comments

Calvin on Romans 6:13: “He now bids us to present ourselves wholly to God, so that restraining our minds and hearts from all wanderings into which the lusts of the flesh

may draw us, we may regard the will of God alone, being ready to receive his commands, and prepared to execute his orders; and that our members also may be devoted and consecrated to his will, so that all the faculties both of our souls and of our bodies may aspire after nothing but his glory. The reason for this is added—that the Lord, having destroyed our former life, has not in vain created us for another, which ought to be accompanied with suitable actions” [*Romans*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1955), 231].

By using the military portrait with the physical members of our bodies as weapons utilized by one side or the other, Paul clearly states the battle with sin in a spiritual battle. William Barclay comments: “When a man goes out into the world he is confronted with an awesome situation. As Paul thinks of it, both God and sin are looking for weapons to use. God cannot work without men. If God wants a word spoken, He has to get a man to speak it. If God wants a deed done, He has to get a man to do it. If God wants a person cheered, encouraged, strengthened, helped, He has to get a man to do the lifting up. God, as it has been said, is everywhere looking for hands to use. And it is the same with sin. Every man has to be given the push into sin. The invitation to sin has to be offered to every man. Sin is looking for men who will by their words or example, seduce and invite others into sinning. It is as if Paul was saying: ‘In this world there is an eternal battle between sin and God; choose your side.’ We are faced with the tremendous alternative of making ourselves the weapons in the hand of God, or the weapons in the hand of sin” [*The Letter to the Romans* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), 87-88].

In the contemporary impatience with Iraq and the war on terrorism, we need to be reminded that our battle with the terrorist attacks of the flesh will never be definitively won until we are in the presence of God. The threshold of sur-

render is a definitive submission to Jesus as Lord that then must be consistently, daily, hour by hour reaffirmed and maintained if we are to live victoriously. Christian spiritual formation will not get to first base without this consecration to Jesus as Lord.

Simpson on Surrender

In his classic work, *Wholly Sanctified*, Simpson wrote that the root meaning of sanctification meant separation. A double separation is involved. “Sanctification then means our voluntary separation from evil. It is not the extinction of evil, it is the putting off, the laying aside of evil, the detaching of ourselves from it and placing an impassable gulf between...(14). This is the first decisive step in sanctification, an act of will by which we renounce evil in every form in which it is made manifest to our consciences and brought into the light, and not only evil in its manifestations, but the whole evil self and sinful nature from which each separate act has sprung” (15-16).

Sanctification is not only a separation from but a separation to the Lord. “This is what the term consecration properly means. It is the voluntary surrender or self-offering of the heart, by the constraint of love to be the Lord’s. Its glad expression is, ‘I am my Beloved’s.’ It must spring, of course, from faith. There must be the full confidence that we are safe in this abandonment, that we are not falling over a precipice or surrendering ourselves to the hands of a judge, but that we are sinking into the Father’s arms and stepping into an infinite inheritance” (19).

Implications

If Jesus is Lord in reality and not simply in mental affirmation or words, then...

- Time will be spent with the Lord and his Word to get his directions for life.
- There will be service to him in some consistent way.
- **All** of the moral and ethical commands in the Word will be taken seriously and not weakened through rationalizations. Obedience is essential to spiritual formation and that must be inclusive of all aspects of life.

How To

It is fully within the realm of possibility that a person completely surrenders every aspect of their lives to God at the time of conversion to Christ. However, it is more likely that the absorption with guilt, sin and forgiveness are the front-burner issues. Surrender and consecration of oneself to the Lord is an act of will expressed in a prayer of surrender and dedication. It is important that we hear ourselves state to Jesus that all we are and have are his. Because of our natural bent to deceit and selfishness, we need to name the specifics of our bodies, possessions, ambitions and relationships. This is primarily for our benefit, not God's. He already knows the true condition of the heart, but we are easily self-deceived.

Tozer on Jesus as Savior and Lord

In an editorial reprinted in *The Root of the Righteous* (83-86), Tozer exposed the error of dividing Jesus as Savior from Jesus as Lord. A pivotal statement is the last sentence of the article. We cannot "believe on His saviourhood while rejecting His lordship." The error "goes like this: Christ is both Saviour and Lord. A sinner may be saved by accepting Him as Savior without yielding to Him as Lord. The practical outworking of this doctrine is that the evangelist presents and the seeker accepts a divided Christ.... It is altogether doubtful whether any man can be saved who comes to Christ for His help but with no intention to obey Him.... There is no intention here to teach that the earnest believer may not go on to explore ever-increasing meanings in Christ, nor do we hold that our first saving contact with Christ brings perfect knowledge of all He is to us. The contrary is true."

There is not conflict of position between the threshold of surrender and consecration and the initial submission to Jesus as the Lord when coming to him for salvation. Rather, it is a further and more complete expression of that submission in which a believer consciously

devotes every part of his or her life to the Lord with a verbal and willful commitment to obey and serve him in all of life.

The flip-side of this is the filling of the Spirit. The two issues must go together and we'll unpack this some in our next devotional.