

Englewood Assembly of God
July 12, 2026 SAM

**CULTIVATING
A
GRACEFUL HEART**

INTRODUCTION

Preliminaries

- ' **Introduce** myself
- ' **Welcome** visitors & members
 - ' **Visitors**
 - ' **Members**
- ' **Pray**
 - ' Service
 - ' Bloods
- ' **Pause** for possible **WORD**

VOW HAZARDS

Lyrics of “*I Surrender All*” **sounds** like a **vow**

- ' Vows = **Biblical** but **dangerous**

- ' If you **make** one

- ' Have to **keep** it

- ' Wisdom **dictates** caution

- ' If we **don't** make one **won't** have to keep it

- ' Need to **figure** out what we will have to **do** to keep a vow if we **make** one

- ' E.g. a **rash** vow (*Judges 11*)

- (30) *Jephthah made a vow to the LORD: “If You give the Ammonites into my hands,*

- (31) *whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD's and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.”*

- ' Oops: Teenage daughter!

- ' **Solomon's** recommendations

- ' *It is a trap to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider one's vow (Proverbs 20:25)*

- ' *It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it (Ecclesiastes 5:5)*

- ' **Jesus' own take on vows**

- ' (33) *You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, “Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.*

- (34) *But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all . . . (Matthew 5:33-34)*

- ' **Dad's admonition – Sta Cruz**

- ' My edit: *I surrender everything I have the heart give up right now*

- ' Doesn't scan

- ' Sooths my conscience

“Surrender” Vow **Implications**

- ' **WHAT** have we pledged to

- ' *Give up?*

- ' *Undertake?*

- ' **1st Level:** Bible's **rules**

- ' **Commands** don't do that

- ' *Gossip*

- ' **Exhorts** do this

- ' *Rejoice*

- ' **2nd:** Holy Spirit **guidance**

- ' **Tab**

- ' **3rd:** extended **agape** applications

- ' **Paul** surrendering to other believers' **weak faith** & over scrupulous **consciences**

- (**13**) *If what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall (1 Corinthians 8:13)*

- ' Takeaway: **decreasing clarity**

Cutting Surrender Vow Different Way

- ' Surrendering **STUFF?**

- ' Does God ask us to give up our stuff?

- ' Sometimes

- ' A rich young ruler asked (20) *“What do I still lack?”*

- (21) *Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.” (Matthew 19:2-21)*

- ' St. **Francis** of Assisi

- ' Does God want all of us to take Franciscan vows of poverty?

- ' Usually not. . . but. . . !

' Surrendering **ACTIVITIES**

- ' Is God that interested in what
 - ' We DO?
 - ' We FAIL to do?
- ' Scripture plainly forbids certain activities
 - ' Fornication / murder / slander
- ' Bible specifically demands we do certain things
 - ' Pray / give thanks / love neighbor
 - ' This leave a large gray area
- ' Might Gpd object about
 - ' Our music?
 - ' Eating habits?
 - ' Our hobbies (fasting)?
 - ' Peter / J / J had to abandon their nets

' Surrendering **RELATIONSHIPS**

- ' Does *surrender all* include who we hang with?
 - ' Often He does
- ' We're forbidden to associate with reprobate believers (***I Corinthians 5:9***)
- ' Then Jesus went & said this:
 - (16) *If anyone comes to Me, and does not HATE father and mother, WIFE and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even their own life – such a person cannot be My disciple (Luke 14:26)*
- ' Then Paul comes along & commands:
 - husbands LOVE their wives just as Christ loved the Church (Ephesians 5:25)*

Going Deeper Into The Gospel

- ' Can't **quit** now: too **many**
 - ' **Gray** areas
 - ' **Contradictions & paradoxes**
 - ' **Legalism** traps
- ' Digging **deeper** looking for **upside**
 - ' God **truly**
 - ' Doesn't **want** our **stuff**
 - ' **Blase** about our **behavior**
 - ' Seeks to **enhance & harmonize** our **relationships**
 - ' He's . . .
 - ' **Less** about **CONDUCT** (what)
 - ' **More** about **CHARACTER** (why / motives / attitudes)
- ' **HEART** surrender = **ALL**

Unpacking Whole Heart Surrender

- ' Hearts **composed** of our **connected**

- ' **SPIRITs**

- ' **SOULs**

- ' God wants **ALL** of **both**

- ' **Reclaims** them **differently**

- ' **Regenerates** our **spirits**

- ' **Transforms** our **souls**

- ' Spirit **regeneration**

- ' **Instantaneous** spirit **transplant** **upon** our **accepting** Jesus

- ' God unilaterally **fused** our & Christ's **spirits** at **rebirth**

- He who unites himself with the Lord is one with Him in spirit (I Corinthians 6:17)*

- ' **Crucified** sinful self-centered spirit **inherited** from Adam

- (6) For we know that our old self was crucified with Him (Romans 6:6)*

- (20) I have been crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)*

- ' **Replaced** old spirit with Christ's **Holy** spirit on **Resurrection** morning

- If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (II Corinthians 5:17 KJV)*

- ' Would love to **camp** out here

- ' **Revel** in awe at the **wonders** of **REGENERATION**

- ' **Moving** on

Cultivating A Grace-Ful Heart

- ' Soul **surrender** is bit-by-bit
 - ' **Lifelong & Incremental**
 - ' **Restructuring our character**
 - ' **Character** *is what we think, say, and do spontaneously when we think no one is watching us*
- ' It's a **collaborative** effort
 - ' **Us** (using our **faith**)
 - ' **Holy Spirit** (using His **grace**)
 - For it is by GRACE you are saved through FAITH (Ephesians ??)*
 - ' **Together** we **undertake** a **character retrofit**
 - ' **Employing** a **grace-based process**

The Process

- ' Holy Spirit astutely identifies a character defect in action (**cataloging**)
 - ' *We. . .*
 - ' *. . . honked . . .*
 - ' *. . . overate. . .*
 - ' *. . . fill in the blank*
- ' He brings defect to our attention by activating our conscience (**conviction**)
- ' He waits patiently until we quit self-justifying ourselves & admit we have a problem (**confession**)
- ' He waits patiently for us to wear out trying to fix the problem ourselves and let Him bring the unlimited power of God's grace to bear on the defect (**conceding**)
- ' He saturates the defect in the all-purpose, sin destroying grace power of Jesus' blood to obliterate the defect & remove its source (**cleansing**)
- ' He uses His grace power to fill the emptied space in our soul with His holy character traits (love, goodness, humility, mercy) (**construction**)

- ' As John the Beloved puts it: (9)When *we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness: (7) the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin (1 John 1:9, 7)*
- ' Abundant grace is the key:
 - ' More room for grace to operate leads to faster / more thorough soul sanctification
 - ' Thus our goal should be to maximize heart grace

The Tragedy of Voiding Grace

- ' Many Christians undergoing a Holy Spirit character retrofit secretly or overtly resent Holy Spirit spotlighting their deficient motives & attitudes, etc.
- ' Massive mistake
 - ' Since cultivating a grace-ful heart is our goal, we should welcome His detecting something that has gotten in the way of grace abounding
 - ' The more trash Holy Spirit removes from our hearts, the more room there is for God's grace to function & fill us
 - ' The more grace flows into our hearts, the faster and fuller the renovation of our character proceeds
- ' Rather than resenting what we deem fault finding, we need to see it as His loving effort to remove something rotten in order to replace it with something whole and sound
 - ' We need to thank Him for detecting the defective character flaw
 - ' We need to encourage Him to point out & tear out what's defective from its roots
 - ' Then rejoice that He is conforming us to the pattern Jesus exemplified
- ' God doesn't want soul clones
 - ' He cherishes each of our personalities
 - ' He longs to unleash the holy wonderfulness of our unique

personality and bask in their glory.

CONCLUSION

Father God's parenting plan

- ' Spirit **REGENERATION**

- ' **Rebirth** thru spirit **transplant**

- ' Old spirit **crucified** in Christ

- ' Holy Spirit **replacement**

- ' **Instantaneous** new **creation procedure**

- ' **Permanent** spirit **fix**

- ' Soul **TRANSFORMATION**

- ' **Convince** soul to **submit**

- ' Eliminate old spirit's unrighteous & self righteous ways

- ' Accustom soul to Holy Spirit's righteous ways

- ' Vaccinate against World System infections / influences

- ' Reconstruct a God shaped character

- ' Heart transformation driven exclusively by Holy Spirit administered grace

- ' He distributes all we will permit

- ' More grace is better

- ' A grace full heart is the goal!

Excised bits