

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM HANDBOOK

UNIT III Key 6

SURRENDER

Purpose of this Key:

- 1) Recognize the difference between slavish fear and reverence for God.
- 2) Recognize the distorted thinking that prevents us from surrendering to God's will.
- 3) Recognize that our ability to reason also needs to be redeemed by Christ.
- 4) Recognize that when we are redeemed by Christ, our ability to reason can confront our distorted thinking.
- 5) Recognize how our fantasies reinforce our distorted thinking.
- 6) Recognize that we become stronger when we surrender our fantasies and love ourselves and others as we really are.

Proverbs 16:16

Common responses:

- 1) Wisdom is more important than material things.
- 2) Some note that wisdom is more important than attractive sexual partners.
- 3) We should continue to seek out God's wisdom, which lasts forever.
- 4) God's wisdom helps us struggle against sin and leads us into what He intends for us.
- 5) We gain wisdom from the Word, prayer, and Christian fellowship.
- 6) The Holy Spirit works on our minds and makes us wise.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Every distorted thought needs to be confronted with the Word of God and replaced by truth from the Word of God.
- 2) The more we surrender self-will, the more opportunities we have to confront distorted thinking.
- 3) Wisdom exposes hidden motivations, secret agendas, and prideful thoughts.

- 4) As we confess these as sins and accept God's forgiveness, our faith grows, and we become more willing to obey.
- 5) Confessing sin makes us wiser.

Mark 14:27-31

Common responses:

- 1) Even people who had walked with Jesus for three years failed.
- 2) We still sin no matter how determined we are to do right.
- 3) Our sinful flesh tempts us to be prideful.
- 4) God will forgive us if we repent of our failures.
- 5) Sometimes people we love abandon us when we need them.
- 6) Jesus loved His disciples even though they would soon abandon him.
- 7) Peter was no better than anyone else.
- 8) Peter would later remember this moment and repent.
- 9) Peter intended to surrender, but when the time came, he failed.
- 10) Jesus does not deny us.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Peter and the disciples fantasized about being stronger and better than they were.
- 2) They did not even ask Jesus to make them stronger.
- 3) Peter did follow at a distance as far as the courtyard, as did only one other disciple, but then he denied knowing Jesus (John 18:15-27).
- 4) His confidence should have been in God and not himself.
- 5) If we confess our prideful fantasies privately to God and receive His forgiveness for them, we are less likely to be humiliated in front of others.
- 6) We never know what we will do in a given situation until we are actually tested.
- 7) Jesus warned Peter, and He will warn us if we are prideful.
- 8) God will humble us either the easy way or the hard way (Hebrews 12:5-11).
- 9) Every test is an opportunity to examine ourselves, confess our failures, and receive forgiveness.
- 10) Every test is an opportunity to surrender more self-will.

- 11) The more honest we are with God and ourselves about our weaknesses, the more we can pray against the chinks in our armor (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Mark 14:66-72

Common responses:

- 1) These verses sometimes remind people of their own failures and situations when they were tempted to give up.
- 2) Tests expose our weaknesses.
- 3) We can love those who hurt us if we look at them like Jesus did.
- 4) We need to heed God's warnings, because He knows more about us than we do about ourselves.
- 5) Shedding tears of remorse over our sins is a good thing.
- 6) We need to rely on God for strength.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) After 3 years with Jesus, Peter might be tempted to think he had gained nothing, had not changed, would never change, could not change, was hopeless, was unworthy to be a disciple, and should just go back to his old life.
- 2) Instead, he runs to the tomb on Easter morning (John 20:3-6).
- 3) All 4 Gospel writers give an account of Peter's failure. He must have been willing to talk about it later, so it would get written down to edify the whole Church on earth.

John 21:15-22

Common responses:

- 1) We are to be restored to Christ no matter what others do.
- 2) If we love Jesus, we love others.
- 3) We cannot earn Jesus' love or forgiveness.
- 4) We show love to others to reflect God's love.
- 5) Peter needed to learn something about forgiveness, love, humility, and surrender.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Jesus' forgiveness led Peter to greater surrender of self-will.
- 2) He had denied Jesus 3 times, so he needed to confess Him 3 times.
- 3) Jesus had told Peter he would become a fisher of men, and He intended to keep His word (Luke 5:10).
- 4) Peter was obviously feeling shame. Jesus was not trying to humiliate Peter with a shameful memory. He was showing Peter unconditional love and forgiveness, and restoring him.
- 5) Peter understood Jesus' point, but he still wanted to focus on another disciple's sin (verses 20-22). Jesus will not be drawn into a discussion of another person's sins. The other one's sins lay between Jesus and the other.
- 6) Sometimes when we fall into sin, after we repent, we get the same temptation again, not to earn any merit, but so that our faith can become stronger and show fruits of repentance.
- 7) Many times it is after someone's greatest failure that he/she does his/her greatest work for God.
- 8) When we commit sins that lead to major changes in our lives, after we repent, God can give us a new direction and calling.
- 9) A few weeks later, Peter would preach his Pentecost sermon (Acts 2) and then be persecuted the rest of his life. Never again did he deny Jesus.

Acts 21:10-14**Common responses:**

- 1) If we follow Jesus, we might suffer.
- 2) We should be willing to give our lives for the Gospel.
- 3) We need to stick with God's plan for our lives.
- 4) Paul is fully surrendered to Jesus and is fearless.
- 5) Some acknowledge just how hard it has been to give up the ssa/ma/tx lifestyle.
- 6) Their new lives under God's mercy are much better but have not been easy.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Paul knew exactly what would happen to him, but he obeyed God anyway.
- 2) In prison, he would write several of his Epistles, which took the Gospel from the Roman Empire to anywhere in the world where people could read them.
- 3) The more we surrender, the more God can use us.
- 4) Be sensitive to the pain of what they are surrendering, even though it was sin. They need you to understand. Please see the Additional Points at the end of Handbook Unit III Key 7.
- 5) The surrendered life can feel like death (I Corinthians 15:31 & Galatians 2:20).
- 6) Our fellowship with Jesus makes it all worthwhile (2 Corinthians 3:17 & 4:16).

1. What does surrender mean, in light of how Jesus was surrendered for you (Philippians 2:5-11)?

Common responses:

- 1) Intentionally and joyfully living according to God's will.
- 2) Trusting Jesus enough to give up control over our own lives.
- 3) Being willing to ask His help when it is needed.
- 4) Having faith that we will be blessed for surrendering.
- 5) We are no longer slaves of sin, but slaves of righteousness.
- 6) Putting our lives completely in God's hands.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.
- 2) Emphasize the servanthood of Jesus and His Atonement on our behalf.
- 3) Most people comprehend surrender by now. Those who do not have usually dropped out of the program.

2. In what ways has your attitude about surrender changed since you started the program?

Common responses:

- 1) Some are more aware of what they have surrendered and what they still need to surrender.

- 2) Some say setbacks no longer upset them; they have learned to look for the hand of God when things seem to go wrong.
- 3) Some realize that the more we surrender to Jesus, the more we can overcome our sins.
- 4) Some have seen dramatic changes in their lives as they surrendered.
- 5) Many are feeling calmer, more at peace, and less anxious.
- 6) Some judge others less now that they have surrendered their own self-will.
- 7) Some report a stronger faith and more trust in God.
- 8) Some have become better at putting others' needs ahead of their own.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.
- 2) Affirm that surrendering is easier than trying to force things to go our way.
- 3) Apparent setbacks are opportunities to learn greater surrender.
- 4) Every slip into sin is an opportunity to learn greater surrender, after we have repented and received the offered forgiveness.
- 5) Feeling less anxious is a common experience. When people are less anxious, they are less likely to become depressed. People who overcome ssa/ma/tx often overcome depression also.
- 6) The more we surrender, the more our faith grows; the more our faith grows, the more willingly we surrender.

3. In what ways has surrender brought you closer to God?

Common responses:

- 1) Some realize how much they need God.
- 2) Many trust Him more and therefore love Him more.
- 3) Some report an improved prayer life, more consistent contact with God, and more joy. They lift up more praise.
- 4) Some note that when they try to force things to go their way, they are less likely to succeed.

- 5) Some express awe at how much they have changed, and how joyful and alive they feel now that Jesus is at the center of their lives.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.

4. If you do not know what to say or do in a given situation, what should you do (James 1:5-7)?**Common responses:**

- 1) Trust God for the right response.
- 2) Ask in faith.
- 3) He is glad to give us His wisdom.
- 4) Listen for His voice.
- 5) Sometimes one should say nothing at all.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Jesus became our wisdom, in addition to becoming our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (I Corinthians 1:30).
- 2) We can ask Him to make truth clear to us, and to show us how to handle a situation or person.
- 3) If we are willing to obey, God is willing to talk to us, but any sense of being led needs to be checked against the Word of God.
- 4) We can still be caught off guard by sudden temptation (Psalm 19:12-13), but Jesus said He would be with us to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20).
- 5) If our faith is weak, we can ask Him to make it stronger (Luke 17:5).
- 6) If we think of something later that we wish we had said, we maybe should not have said it. God might not have wanted us to say it even if it sounded good.

5. In what ways have you used your ability to reason to defend and justify your sins?**Common responses:**

- 1) Answers will vary.

- 2) Ssa/ma/tx people make the same excuses for sin as other people.
- 3) They used to accept their excuses as valid but no longer do so.
- 4) Many used to think they were born ssa/ma/tx, that God made them that way, and that change was impossible.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Encourage them to thank God that they now realize those were just excuses.
- 2) They now realize what their excuses were, because the Holy Spirit through the Word has brought conviction of sin and assured them of God's forgiveness.
- 3) Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 10:5 are becoming real for them.
- 4) Without Christ in our lives, we use our ability to reason to excuse our sins.
- 5) Our ability to reason has been corrupted by the Fall.
- 6) As we are sanctified, our ability to reason can be used to expose our excuses, confront ungodly "logic", and speak truth against distorted thoughts. Our ability to reason can be restored to the use for which God intended it.
- 7) Encourage them to waste no more time making excuses but to practice self-examination and repentance instead.
- 8) Sometimes religious language is used to justify sins. Both men in Luke 18:9-4 use religious language, but only the tax collector uses it rightly and is justified.

6. In what ways have you used your ability to reason to expose your sins and confront your own defenses?

Common responses:

- 1) Some realize how much they have hurt others.
- 2) Most now check what the Word of God says about their sins.
- 3) Some say the Word, more than human reason, has exposed their sins and excuses.
- 4) Some seek accountability partners.
- 5) Some are learning to catch themselves before they sin.
- 6) Most examine themselves and repent.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm self-honesty and any Biblical response.
- 2) Seeking accountability partners is a sign of greater spiritual maturity.
- 3) Give encouragement for being mindful of their thoughts. Deliverance from ssa/ma/tx involves letting the Holy Spirit renew one's mind (Romans 12:2) and taking thoughts captive to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).

7. What have you found the easiest to surrender to the Lord?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Many mention anger, anxiety, negative attitudes, selfishness, pride, or sinful thoughts.
- 3) Some will say the sexual pleasure was easy to give up, but changing their attitudes was harder.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm any surrendering they report.
- 2) Give encouragement. No surrendering comes easily.
- 3) A peaceful and orderly mind is a great blessing.

8. What have you found the hardest to surrender to the Lord?

Common responses:

- 1) Sexual temptations may have diminished but are not completely gone.
- 2) Some still struggle with sexual fantasies.
- 3) Many wonder about the future.
- 4) Some are still dealing with emotional issues.
- 5) Some have concerns about reconciling with loved ones.
- 6) Some still struggle with confrontation fantasies regarding the ones who hurt them.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Give encouragement. Overcoming sexual temptations is unusually difficult.

- 2) Never criticize any difficulty they are having. You want them to tell you about their difficulties, not hide them from you.
- 3) Fantasies need to be confronted with memorized Scripture and the Emergency Prayer.
- 4) Sometimes concerns about the future need to be surrendered often. They may have AIDS or are serving a long prison sentence.
- 5) Refer to 2 Corinthians 4:7, which acknowledges that we are earthen vessels. Acknowledge that things may seem to get worse before they get better.
- 6) Refer to God's promises in Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 8:28, and Joel 2:25.
- 7) Counsel regarding emotional issues based on what you have learned about them from doing the Keys with them. By now, most have made a lot of progress and will continue to do so as their minds are renewed.
- 8) Counsel regarding reconciliation with loved ones based on what you have learned about them from doing the Keys with them. They may have done all they can to bring reconciliation, and if there is no response, they may have to grieve the loss.
- 9) Be aware that not every problem has a solution in this life. Romans 8:18 is always true. Some hurts and problems will only be resolved in heaven. No pain can compare to rejection by family.
- 10) Sometimes the pain of rejection is the cross they will have to carry (Matthew 10:38 & 16:24).
- 11) Sometimes when we least expect it, God comes through on our behalf in amazing ways.

9. On a scale of 1-10, how much have you surrendered to the Lord? Please explain your answer.

Common responses:

- 1) Numbers are usually high at this point.
- 2) Some acknowledge there are still things to surrender.
- 3) Some state that they have surrendered all that they can for now.
- 4) Some still have resentments.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm any surrendering they report.
- 2) Nobody gets to total surrender in this life (I John 3:2).
- 3) Every time we surrender something, the Lord puts some other challenge in our path that calls for more surrender (John 15:2 & James 1:2-4 & 12).
- 4) Give encouragement. Most have come along way. They will surrender more as their faith grows.
- 5) If resentment is still an issue, suggest they review the material on forgiveness. Broken relationships are painful. We are carrying our cross when we accept the pain without seeking revenge (Matthew 10:38 & 16:24).

10. On a scale of 1-10, how much have you surrendered your fantasy life to the Lord?

Please explain your answer.

Common responses:

- 1) Numbers are usually high at this point.
- 2) Comments reveal a lot of progress and also some degree of struggle.
- 3) Most see the dangers of sexual fantasies, but some still allow themselves other kinds of fantasies.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Commend getting rid of sexual fantasies. Such fantasies often lead to sin.
- 2) Heroic fantasy can set us up to imagine we are stronger or more virtuous than we really are. We more easily fantasize about a virtue than act upon it.
- 3) Fantasizing about real people can lead to relationship problems, because we are tempted to get angry with people when they do not act in real life the way they do in our fantasies.
- 4) Memorized Scripture is helpful for blocking fantasies. The Emergency Prayer is helpful and should be followed with Scripture as soon as the mind clears.
- 5) During unoccupied stretches of time, we can ask God what He wants us to be thinking about, where our attention should be directed, or if we ought to be praying about something.

- 6) Ssa/ma/tx people often grew up in circumstances where fantasy was the only way to feel good. It helped them get through a painful childhood. In adult life, however, it became a problem (I Corinthians 13:11).
- 7) Some people have the gift of writing Christian fiction. Their fantasy life brings glory to God and blesses others.
- 8) When one needs to think something through, one can set up a dialogue in one's mind and take numerous sides. This process can help us see all sides of an issue and what might be fair for everyone.
- 9) The mind seems to need stimulation during unoccupied stretches of time. Prayer is the first line of defense of the mind. (The author acknowledges that she does not have the last word on the subject; these are just some guidelines gained through experience.)

11. On a scale of 1-10, how victorious have you been lately? Please explain your answer.

Common responses:

- 1) Most are doing well.
- 2) Those who have slipped into sexual sin notice that a) the feelings are not as strong as they used to be, and b) they feel worse afterwards than they used to.
- 3) Some are more concerned now with other sins, such as ungodly talk or negative thoughts and attitudes.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise to God for any victory gained.
- 2) If the number is high because they have had very little temptation lately, encourage thanks and praise to God.
- 3) If the number is high because they have had to fight a lot of temptation and were successful, encourage thanks and praise to God.
- 4) More tests will likely be put in their way, but future tests should not spoil their enjoyment of the victories they have had so far.

- 5) Avoid criticizing a low number. Try to find out the reason for it. Ask about their thoughts, attitudes, stressful situations, how they are using their time, or if anything unexpected has happened.
- 6) If they sin less frequently than before, assure them that God has been working in their lives. Encourage progress, not perfection.
- 7) If they slipped into sin but noticed that the feelings were not as strong, that is a sign of God at work in their lives. Encourage them to confess it, accept God's forgiveness, and get back on track.
- 8) If they feel worse after sinning than they used to, that is a sign that God has made their consciences more responsive to His will. They can be thankful for their awakened consciences; they used to be dead in their sins (Ephesians 2:1).
- 9) Remind them that I John 1:9 and Romans 8:1 always apply.
- 10) Encourage them to retrace their steps and ask the Holy Spirit to give them insight into what weakness led to the fall.
- 11) Encourage them to confess sins of thoughts (Romans 12:2) in order to more easily avoid sins of words and deeds.
- 12) Continue to encourage them to use memorized Scripture to block tempting and negative thoughts. Encourage use of the Emergency Prayer.
- 13) If they view themselves as making very little progress, keep their focus on God's mercy rather than their own failures.
- 14) New Christians do not always understand the difference between temptation and actual sin. Some give themselves a low number, but while the temptation was great, they may not have fallen into sin. Explain the difference to them.
- 15) If they have not had temptation in a long while, they might need to be aware that the devil does not give up easily and may be preparing a major attack. This possibility should not prevent them from enjoying their progress now.
Overcomers commonly experience a major attack of temptation before getting the final victory over a besetting sin. If they withstand a big temptation, which can go on for days or weeks, they will usually find themselves that much stronger once it is over. Encourage them to pray for rescue immediately when tempted.

12. Did you use any memorized Scripture to battle temptation lately? What was the result?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) By this time, most have learned to use the Word effectively against temptation.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Affirm any Biblical response.

13. How is your spiritual life in general, how are your private devotions, and how are things at your church/fellowship group?

Common responses:

- 1) Answers will vary.
- 2) Most report that things are going well.

Points to emphasize:

- 1) Encourage thanks and praise to God for whatever is going well.
- 2) If things are not going well, try to find out the reason.
- 3) Counsel based on your knowledge, experience, and what you have learned from working with this person.

Plan of Action:

- 1) Affirm any Biblical responses..
- 2) Give lots of encouragement. Surrender is never easy.

Additional points:

- 1) Any secret sin is like leaving the door of your house standing open.
- 2) If you leave your door open, a snake, skunk, or dangerous person can come in at any time.

- 3) Something might come in the first night. Something might not come in for two years. Your neighbor might be leaving his door open also, and nothing happens to him for 20 years.
- 4) So when some night a snake, skunk, or dangerous person comes in, we blame the snake, skunk, or person for the problems that are caused.
- 5) We overlook the fact that we left the door open. We got so used to leaving the door open that we no longer notice that we left it open.
- 6) So it is when our sins bring consequences. We blame other people or circumstances or “bad luck” for the consequences.
- 7) We overlook the fact that our sins led to consequences.
- 8) We need to first repent of the sin that held open the door for the consequences to come to us.
- 9) Repentance and accepting forgiveness as a free gift in Christ are the first steps to cleaning up the messes caused by our sins.
- 10) When we receive forgiveness, the Holy Spirit changes our self-will so we can begin to shut those doors.
- 11) Sometimes the door left open is a part of our lives that we have not yet surrendered, God is putting His hand upon it, but we are determined to hold onto it.
- 12) To clean up our messes, we need to surrender to God’s will and to clean up the messes under His direction.
- 13) When we try to clean up our messes our own way, we often make bigger messes.
- 14) God cannot bless us if we will not accept blessings on His terms.