WOW: Word Of the Week

Surrender

March 11, 2026

Our brief series is concluding. Next week I will put a capstone on "radical discipleship." Maturity (completeness), conformity, nonconformity, character, holistic (comprehensive), surrender. My love for alliteration suggests concede, but I prefer surrender.

Surrender. Better yet: surrender to what matters. Yield also catches the sense, thinking of Romans 6.

"You will never be worth much to God in your Christian life until you learn to surrender to what counts." That saying has stuck with me. It is based on a statement from Harvey Young, an elder I worked with 35 years ago.

Discipleship must include surrender. Discipleship without surrender is not radical discipleship; in fact, it does not look much like discipleship at all. I place surrender last, as a summary. In reality, surrender or submission is the foundation. Surrender is the ultimate expression of thinking like Jesus (Philippians 2:5). Until we learn the lesson of complete surrender, we will continue to think the Christian life is about us and that success depends on us. Until we learn the lesson of complete surrender, we will not likely become effective servants (slaves) in Jesus' kingdom.

Do not be confused. I am not talking about surrendering to the minutiae, trivial, or urgent. These are hardly worthy of being a focal point in our lives. Surrendering to what counts is not easy—because a plethora of tasks, good projects, and commendable activities call for our attention. We invest and devote our lives to matters of the moment—our kids, sports, entertainment, leisure, things we enjoy. The choice of the best over the better or the good is seldom seen or done without extraordinary effort.

Can you see yourself clearly? What is really #1 in your life? That is the only thing worth giving our lives for. Surrendering to what counts will cause us to discard as unimportant things this world teaches us to value. Cross-carrying: that is how Jesus defines surrender. Cross-carrying as Jesus describes and demands will demote self, possessions, reputation, and the accolades of others. Surrendering to what counts opens new doors of genuine service and effectiveness as a "kingdom disciple," because all that matters is the business of the King.

Paul describes this as yielding. This is trust. This is what/who we rely on. Conflidence, conviction, faith. Surrender sets priorities and values.