

Surrender: The All-In Process of Being a Christian

Romans 12:1–21 · Pastor Chris Brown · Message #71

The big idea: Surrender is a response to God's mercy, not a way to earn it. And we don't do it alone: it takes all of us to make one living sacrifice.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Plain text

= your group's guide. Same questions your group has in their hands.

Grey boxes and Leader Extras

= for you only. Tips, extra questions and background your group doesn't see.

THIS WEEK IN 30 SECONDS

The passage

A one-week timeout from Matthew.
"Therefore, in view of God's mercy": eleven chapters of what God has done, then one call to give him our whole selves. Matthew picks back up next week.

Watch for

- **The one who feels behind:** one step lit, or no app at all
- **The veteran:** every step lit, "this is for the new people"
- **Something big:** surrender landing on a child, a dream, a marriage

A win this week

Everyone sees surrender as a **response to mercy**, and your group knows each person's next step and how to help them take it.

LEADER NOTES & LINKS

- **Social & Impact:** No date yet? This is a good week to pick one. [Social ideas](#) · [Impact Projects](#)
- **Leader podcast:** about 10 minutes on the questions, the tricky moments and what to say. northcoastleaders.transistor.fm
- **Monthly leader email:** behind-the-scenes news, stories and a recipe or two. [Subscribe](#)
- **Tell us:** a question, a win, or something great about someone in your group? [Send it here](#)
- **Post attendance:** northcoastchurch.com/attendance
- **Women's Gathering:** Tuesday, October 13, 6–9pm, for women from all campuses. Register in the North Coast Church app.

SERMON NOTES: OUTLINE

What does God truly expect from us?

Surrender begins and ends with God's mercy · Surrender means giving God our whole selves · Surrender means nothing is off limits or left out · Surrender is the only reasonable response to God · Surrender means refusing to live like the world · Surrender does mean losing everything in order to gain everything.

Passages: Romans 12:1–21 · Philippians 3:7–14 · Luke 9:57–62 · Mark 10:17–31 · Galatians 2:20 · 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 · 2 Corinthians 5:14–15

THE GROUP GUIDE *Exactly what your group has, with your leader notes*

These questions are designed to help groups discuss the weekend teaching while building relationships with each other and applying God's Word to our lives.

WARM UP

1. Following Jesus is different when we do it out of duty versus devotion. What's something you enjoy doing when you want to do it, but feels completely different when you have to do it?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: Keep it light: cooking on a free Saturday vs. dinner at 5:45 on a Tuesday. Same activity; the *why* changed.

For longtime believers: Devotion doesn't always *feel* like delight. In a dry season, choosing to show up anyway can be love too.

2. Surrender means letting go of control, and some things are easier to let go of than others. What's one small area of your life where you really like being the one in control?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: "Small" is the key word. The thermostat, the remote, how the dishwasher gets loaded. Save the heavy stuff for Share It.

3. This weekend we took a pause from the book of Matthew to truly understand surrender. What idea or point has stuck with you the most since hearing it?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: Listen for who heard surrender as *loss* and who heard it as *freedom*.

Optional extra: Try this week's Kinship Question (see Leader Extras).

KNOW IT

Take turns reading Romans 12:1–21.

LEADER NOTE

Tip: Have four or five people read four or five verses each. Make it easy to pass on reading aloud.

1. Paul starts with "Therefore, in view of God's mercy..." Why do you think understanding God's mercy has to come before surrender?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: "Therefore" points back to eleven chapters of what God has done. Surrender doesn't make us good; it's our response to what he's already done.

Ask: What happens when we flip the order and try to surrender *in order to* get God's mercy?

Read: Exodus 20:2 (rescue before the commandments) · 1 John 4:19 ("We love because he first loved us")

Watch for: "I need to be more surrendered so God will..." If you hear it, go back to verse 1. Mercy first.

2. Looking at the chapter, which instructions would be impossible, or at least very difficult, to practice without being in relationship with other Christians?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: Most of verses 4–16: one body, gifts used for each other, devoted to one another, honor, hospitality, rejoicing and mourning together. You can't do "one another" alone.

Aha: In verse 1, "bodies" is plural but "sacrifice" is singular. It takes all of us to make one living sacrifice.

Ask: Which of these does our group already do well? Which is hardest for us?

Remember: On the gifts in verses 6–8, keep the focus on "your gifts are for the rest of us." Owner/manager language is next week's message.

3. In the North Coast app, we've identified six steps of discipleship (attend church, decide, baptism, life groups, serving, giving). How is surrender involved in each of those steps? How do each of these steps benefit not just the individual, but the body of Christ?

LEADER NOTE

Most important note this week: The steps are an invitation, not a scorecard. An unlit step isn't a grade; it's a friendly prompt: "Is God inviting me here?" Nobody earns their place in this family.

Try this: Split into pairs or threes and give each one or two steps to report back on (Essentials: Small-to-Large). Six steps can eat your whole night.

A starting point: **Attend:** our time and preferences; we spur each other on (Hebrews 10:24–25). **Decide:** the throne (Romans 10:9); a new member joins the body. **Baptism:** pride and privacy (Romans 6:3–4); others are encouraged to take their step. **Life Groups:** independence; the "one anothers" actually happen. **Serving:** time and gifts; "each member belongs to all the others" (v5). **Giving:** what we hold most tightly; needs get met (v13).

No app? That's normal. Say the six steps out loud. Faith or baptism dates from before North Coast can be added under My Account at my.northcoastchurch.com.

Crawl, walk, run: Long-time groups can pull up their steps and celebrate. Brand-new groups: don't ask anyone to show theirs.

SHARE IT

1. Have you ever surrendered something to God expecting only to lose and then discovered that there was freedom or something better on the other side?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: You go first, with a real, specific answer (Essentials: I go / You go / We go).

Careful: Some surrenders still feel like loss. "Not yet" is an honest answer; don't force a happy ending. If someone names something big, thank them, don't let the room fix it, and follow up this week.

Read: Mark 10:28–30 (a hundred times as much, "along with persecutions") · Philippians 3:7–8

2. Think about the steps you've already taken in following Jesus. Which one are you most grateful for, and who helped you take it?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: This is the celebration question. Let the stories breathe. Almost nobody takes a step alone; most of us have a Barnabas (Acts 9:26–27).

Ask: Have you ever thanked that person? Could you text them this week?

LIVE IT

1. If everyone has a next step, regardless of how long we've followed Jesus, what's yours right now? How could this group help you take it?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: Push gently from intention ("I want to pray more") to application ("ten minutes before work, Tuesday and Thursday"). Write down what people say, with their OK.

Every step lit? Decades in, Paul wrote, "Not that I have already obtained all this... but I press on" (Philippians 3:12). Ask: what's a next step no app could ever track?

"I've never been baptized" or "I don't think I've ever decided": That's a holy moment. Celebrate it, talk this week, and connect them with your campus pastor. The next baptisms are November 7–8.

2. Romans 12 reminds us that this is not just an individual journey, but we are a part of a larger body. Like Proverbs 27:17 says, we sharpen each other. What would it look like for us to be a group that not only knows one another's next steps but celebrates them and helps each other take them?

LEADER NOTE

Tip: Make it concrete before you leave: keep a list of next steps, ask about them next week, and plan how you'll celebrate. "Rejoice with those who rejoice" (v15).

Close: Pray for each person's next step by name.

You don't have to have every answer. Create safety, guide reflection, point people to Jesus. Thank you for leading.

LEADER EXTRAS Not in your group's guide

OPTIONAL EXTRA: KINSHIP QUESTION

Who in your life really knows you, not just knows about you? How did they get there?

How: Ask it after the Warm Up. Go around the circle, 60–90 seconds each, and say out loud that passing is fine. Tried it? Tell us how it went

OPTIONAL EXTRA: MEMORIZE IT

Romans 12:2 "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

How: Say it together at the end of the night, and again to open next week.

BE READY: WHAT TO SAY

"I only have one step." One step is worth celebrating. No app? That's fine too. "Nobody earns their place in this family. Which step do you think God might be inviting you toward?"	"I've done all six. Now what?" Paul hadn't "arrived" either (Philippians 3:12). "What's a next step for you that no app could track?"
"I've never been baptized." Celebrate, don't fix. Then connect them with your campus pastor. Next baptisms: November 7–8. "I'm really glad you said that. Could we talk about it this week?"	"That would cost too much." Don't solve it in the room. "Thank you for trusting us with that. Can I check in with you this week?"

SET THE ROOM

Bring a notecard and a pen. When people share their next steps, write them down (with their OK). Next week, open by asking about them.

GO DEEPER: FOR YOUR PREP

The biggest "therefore" Romans 1–11 is what God has done. Chapter 11 ends with mercy (11:32) and a burst of praise (11:33–36). Chapter 12 starts there.	Rescue first "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt" comes before the commandments (Exodus 20:2). Mercy, then instructions.	A living sacrifice Every animal sacrifice Paul's readers knew ended up dead. This one stays alive and keeps offering itself. Surrender is continual.
Bodies, sacrifice "Bodies" is plural, "sacrifice" is singular. It takes all of us to make one. "Each member belongs to all the others" (v5).	Reasonable service <i>Logikē latreia</i> : KJV "reasonable service," NIV "true and proper worship." Given what God has done, surrender is the logical response.	Metamorphosis "Transformed" is <i>metamorphoō</i> , the Transfiguration word (Matthew 17:2). In v2 it's passive and ongoing: keep <i>being</i> transformed.
Think, think, think, think Verse 3 uses the root for "think" four times. Not "think less of yourself," but see yourself accurately.	Chase it "Practice hospitality" (v13) uses <i>diōkō</i> , to pursue. "Bless those who persecute you" (v14) uses the same verb. Chase strangers with kindness.	Sharpening has friction Proverbs 27:17's chapter also says, "Wounds from a friend can be trusted" (27:6). Sharpening includes honest words from people who love you.