

# COMPELLED: Surrender

Judges 6-7:18

**MPS:** Christians live compelled by God's love to surrender to the Lord Jesus and walk in God's will.

**OBJ:** Every person can understand surrender by three phases of surrender.

**INTRO** The last three weeks we've discovered how God's full devotion grows a life of full devotion in the way we live unto Him. Today we begin by considering what it means for Christians to live fully devoted, a life compelled by God's love in every way. Compelled simply means that we "live as we've been loved." **A life of full devotion is COMPELLED to live SENT.**

I want to use the letters of the word SENT as an acrostic of four postures of life by which the love of God compels our life. The first posture for our consideration is Surrender.

**Christians live compelled by God's love to SURRENDER to the Lord Jesus and walk in God's will.**

## Background Judges 6

The book of Judges covers a period of time for the Israelites when a King had not yet been established over the nation. The Lord was teaching them to trust in Him, to listen to His Word.

When we come to Judges 6, the Israelites are oppressed because of their sin (.1), and cry out to God (.7). The Lord sent a prophet to remind them of His faithfulness and commands. And, the Lord is working for their salvation. Verse 11 introduces Gideon, a chosen servant of God.

**OBJ** I want to look at the life of Gideon and see **three phases** of surrendering our all to Jesus.

## .11-40 God calls. Gideon freaks (excuses, then submits).

The Lord appears to Gideon. Gideon is less than responsive. **READ Judges 6:11-18**

*11Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. 12And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor." 13And Gideon said to him, "Please, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian." 14And the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?" 15And he said to him, "Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." 16And the LORD said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man." 17And he said to him, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. 18Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you." And he said, "I will stay till you return." **Judges 6:11-18***

Gideon's response is not as happy as the Angel's high introduction. Honestly, the angel's approach was more true of how God would use Gideon than it was of the reality of his present situation. Gideon's first reaction is to show what's really in his heart. Jesus is right when he says, *"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."* <sup>Matt12:36</sup> Gideon is more focused on his situation than God, even to the point of blaming God, and that's always a recipe for 'bitter-stew'. **But God is not afraid of our bitterness because he heals the broken-hearted.** <sup>Psa147:3; Isa61:1</sup>

The Lord commands him to go, and sends him. (.14) Gideon realizes his bitterness will not stop God, so he defaults to excuses, straight out of Moses' playbook. He hides behind his excuses to protect his comforts. (.15) But again, God is not thwarted by excuses. There's nothing about us that God cannot use for His glory. **God made us for His glory, and He remakes us by His power that we might be displays His majesty.** <sup>2Ptr1:16; Eph2:10</sup>

The Lord promises his presence and provision. (.16-18) Gideon now takes a different tactic. He tests the Lord to know His will. This is not wrong, unless of course we use the test to avoid obeying God. This was not Gideon's intention. [We are instructed to test the spirits<sup>1John4:1</sup> to affirm that God's work through the Spirit aligns with His Will revealed through His Word, Jesus Christ, to the praise of our eternal, Triune God.](#)

Gideon uses his test to confirm and obey God. (.19-24) He prepares cakes, meat and a broth. The Angel has him place them on a rock. Fire springs up from the rock and consumes it all. The angel disappears. Gideon recognizes this is the Lord, and bows down in awe. The Lord comforts him, and he worships by building an altar and naming it, "The Lord is Peace". [There is no peace like God's presence that comforts all fear and leads us to defining glory in worship.](#)

When God confirms his presence, He reveals himself because we are called to trust in Him, not our work for Him. (.25-27) The Lord purifies Gideon's life. He purges the idolatry, false worship and cleanses him from the fear of man. Gideon discerns God's will that is now clarified out of the purity of His life. (.36-40) [All of God's work to fulfill His will displays God's glory through His fuller presence in the life of His children.](#)

**TRANS** The first phase of surrender to God brings us to a line of decision where we must choose.

### **Phase 1: Surrender begins by submitting to God's will for your life.**

God works in two critical ways to reveal His will. He purifies us to strengthen our faith. Then, He clarifies our path, or work, that we may follow Him in obedience. The answer to "God, what do you want me to do with my life?" always starts with what God is doing in your life. God has no Kingdom work FOR you that doesn't begin from His Kingdom work IN you. [Clarity to know how to obey God only comes from a refined purity of God working more deeply in you.](#)

**God calls us to Himself before He sends us to work for Him.** He wants our service for Him to be an overflow of our intimacy with Him. He wants us to delight in Him before we do for Him. God orders our steps when we first delight in Him.

*The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way* **Psalms 37:23**

God reveals His will to lead us to worship. He exposes our false sources of strength to strip all confidence in self so all you have is Him. [When you submit to God's will, knowing He is all you have, He will prove sufficient.](#)

### [Surrender begins by submitting to God's will as He reveals Himself for your life.](#)

**TRANS** Once he knows God's will, Gideon gets busy for God. But this doesn't always prove as the best, next step.

### **7:1-8 God works. Gideon sacrifices.**

The Lord tells Gideon there are too many people, his army is too big. [One key reason sacrifice is central to surrendering to God is because He wants our service to demonstrate His strength, not ours, for His glory and none other.](#)

Gideon likely agreed initially, but never to the extent God would show. I'm not sure how much time passed at the end of v.3, but Gideon must've felt destroyed. And, how often we look at our lives and think, "[What more could be expected?](#)" [But God's understanding of our sanctification is always perfect.](#)

**The Lord tells Gideon the people are still too many.** (7:4-6) We should never forget; the Lord does not see our problems or our situations the way we do. He's never confused, intimidated nor dumbfounded by them. Gideon thought, "there are too many of them for us." God looked and said, "there is still too many of you for me." Losing 22,000 was hard, but 10,000 was still a great number. But when God works, He shares no glory. His work is never dependent on our ability or wisdom.

When God finished his purifying work only 300 remained. Any hope that was left after the first cut was gone after this round, leaving Gideon and his men feeling hopeless. God's righteous work in us needs nothing of us to be accomplished. And

when God works through us, He shows the same sufficiency to accomplish His will. [All of God's work in and through us always gets competed to perfection.](#) <sup>Phil1:6</sup>

The Lord leads Gideon out to battle and promises victory. (7:7-8) **READ Judges 7:7-8**

<sup>7</sup>And the LORD said to Gideon, "With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home." <sup>8</sup>So the people took provisions in their hands, and their trumpets. And he sent all the rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the 300 men. And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

The 300 had to be deflated, but took their provisions and trumpets. Trumpets?! This makes we think, "people, you are going to battle, not a band competition." But God does not work in the same way we think.

**Warning** Be careful not to think wrong about "who" God sent out as well. Gideon had not refined his number down to a few, rare valiant warriors. This is not the epic war tale of the Battle of Thermopylae, where King Leonidas leads 300 Spartans into battle against the Persian King Xerxes and his army of 300,000. That's a different 300 with a lesser glory.

**Gideon's army is the story of different kind of 300 men.** The phrase, "*but retained the 300 men*" (v7), expresses a strong urge by them that they wanted to leave too. Gideon and his 300 were hounded by hesitation, and a cowardly fear. The difference here is more distinct, though, because this story has a different God leading and working.

**God's little is always more than our unlimited.** God's prevailing peace consumes and commands all of life when you surrender to the Lord, submitting to His will to sacrifice for the way He is working. The more we hold on to selfishness, to the things of the world that we want, the less we can take hold of God. [God empties our life through sacrifice so He call fill us to overflow with His all sufficiency.](#)

**TRANS** The second phase of surrender to God demands that we remain completely submitted to His Will.

**Phase 2: Surrender leads to full sacrifice for the WAY God works to lead in His will.**

*The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps. Prov 16:9*

**ILLUS** **Signing first lease for LPC.** | First Core Group meeting. | First public service.

I have learned, and am learning a new, that when I am seeking the Lord with all my might, heart and mind, but things still don't make sense, I can only trust Him. When things seem so overwhelming and out of sorts, I can rest in His sovereign hand. He is working, and that's all I need to know. I can rest. I can trust. I can release. I can freely submit and sacrifice as He leads. It doesn't make the situation easier, but it does make the goal more hopeful. I can pray with certainty, "Lord, ruin me or rule me. But either way, use me."

Sacrifice only serves us when we see the emptiness of our own ability and the full dependence that we have on God. When we look at God's purifying work in us, we don't look at it the way He does. A little sacrifice gets made, a little work of God is done and we think, "I've made this sacrifice for God. That's enough" But God is not impressed with sacrifice. Sacrifice is not the goal. [God works for unhindered intimacy with us, a heart that is completely empty of self and the world, wanting and waiting to be filled with Him.](#)

When God leads you to sacrifice in your life, He's leading you to deeper intimacy with Him. He's working for an ALL-consuming peace to fill you, a joy that abounds from you and a strength by faith that is greater within you. God wants no trust in self to remain in us so He can consume us. [God strips all our self-reliance of strength and ability to demonstrate His power and show His might and glory.](#)

[Surrender leads to full sacrifice for the WAY God works to lead in His will.](#)

**7:9-18** God leads. Gideon obeys.

The Lord now commands Gideon and his army to move out into battle. (.9) God is gracious and compassionate toward them, recognizing their fear and giving his continued promise. He wants them to know that He sees, hears and understands. (.10-11) [God doesn't ignore our fears, but works to dissolve them by His promise and presence.](#)

Fears often remain even when we move forward by faith in obedience. When they looked on their enemy, the Midianites, v12 says, "they looked like *locusts in abundance, and their camels were without number, as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance.*" Our fears can seem endless in describing the possibilities of what can and will go wrong. [Often, our fears are little more than a right assessment of reality when we try to obey in our own strength.](#)

Gideon hears a dream interpreted that tells Him exactly what God promised Him. When Gideon listened to God's word coming through this man, his fears were overcome with God's encouragement. His army affirmed this too, knowing the Lord had done this work. (.14) [God overcomes our fears not by removing them, but by overcoming them with His encouragement.](#)

### **ILLUS Prayerful confirmation of God's Call.**

Very early on as Christin and I were talking about God's call to plant a church, we were confused by all that was going on. We received confirmation one night in a very powerful way in a prayer meeting. We had discussed the possibility of church planting, but were more confused by it than feeling like we were supposed to do it. While worshipping the Lord with several hundred people, a lady began to speak from the other side of the room. I couldn't hear her very well at first, but then her voice became crystal clear to me. She identified fears that had arisen in my heart, in the exact way my heart held them. She said, "You worry about taking the wrong path and failing, but God is leading you and you will not fail. You are worried about what others will think, but God says not to fear them. You are worried about what this means for your future, but God says He is there and drawing you to Himself. You see the work as a mountain and have no idea how you will move it, but God is telling you that He will move it for you. This word is for you. God is calling and you need to trust and follow Him." I was frozen in my skin. Did everyone know she was talking to me? I did, and that's all that mattered.

**Gideon commands his "band" of troops to arise for war.** I must admit, I want to question his tactics. It doesn't seem that a trumpet and a candle will strike fear into the enemy's heart. But what Gideon knew remains true for us today. [When you serve the Lord's work, it never ultimately depends on what you've got in your hands but who's ruling in your heart.](#)

**TRANS** The third phase of surrender to God culminates in faithful service through filling.

**Phase 3: Surrender culminates in faithfully serving the Lord by His presence filling you.**

**ILLUS** When I look around at all God has done at LPC, I laugh at my fears. Literally, I mock them. And I mock them not because they are gone or were never real, but because they are never ultimate. My fears have never proven right even one time against God's promise and power.

**What God wants to accomplish through us is as much for us as it is for anything else.** This is important because God doesn't work the way we work. [God clothes us for service with righteousness and joy to accomplish His work.](#)

**There's nothing about this passage that shows Gideon's ability.** Neither Gideon nor his army ever demonstrate greatness. All that is done in this story happens through them, but never because of them. They are scared, tired, deflated and defeated throughout. [Our inability never inhibits God's willingness to use us nor limits His ability to accomplish His will.](#)

**Courage to follow the Lord in your life does not mean fear is gone, but overcome.** Serving the Lord doesn't mean the enemy or obstacle will seem smaller. God strengthens us for His work NOT by shrinking our enemy or obstacle, or even by making us bigger in proportion. [God strengthens for His work by being BIGGER IN us so He becomes more glorious to us!](#)

And hear this, friend, it is the same for us today. Gideon told the army to get up and go to war because God had given them the victory. We never serve with an uncertain future or an unknown outcome. God is never uncertain in what He will do, or whether He will accomplish His purpose. When we serve the Lord and His work, we serve from His victory.

**Surrender culminates in faithfully serving the Lord's work by His presence filling you.**

**TRANS** A life that is compelled by God's love begins in surrender. The real difficulty of surrendering to God is never because He is not worthy or able. The difficulty in surrendering to God is always that we are more committed to me and things of my will, wanting me to be sovereign. **We will only trust the Lord to surrender fully to Him when we are emptied of me and He fills us.**

**Christians live compelled by God's love to surrender to the Lord Jesus and walk in God's will.**

**CLOSE** How / where is the Lord leading you to surrender?