

SMALL GROUPS

Begin your group time by asking God to help each person identify areas where they're struggling to surrender control and to open hearts to His leading.

Ice Breaker

Question: Share one thing you like to have "just so" in your life (how the dishwasher is loaded, your morning routine, how your workspace is organized, etc.). Keep it light and fun!

Key Scripture

Matthew 26:39 - "Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'"

Main Takeaways

1. What you attempt to control the most often reveals where you trust God the least.
2. You don't always have the power to control, but you always have the power to surrender.

3. Jesus doesn't invite us to a life of comfort and ease, but to a life of sacrifice and surrender.
4. Surrender isn't just a one-time decision, but a daily choice to follow Jesus.

Discussion Questions

Understanding Control

1. Pastor Mack mentioned several areas people try to control (schedule, money, relationships, people's opinions, environment). Which of these resonates most with you? Why do you think you gravitate toward controlling that particular area?
2. Read Matthew 26:36-42. Jesus was "overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," yet He chose surrender. What does Jesus's honest expression of His feelings teach us about how we can approach God with our struggles?
3. Jesus prayed the same prayer multiple times in the garden. What does this tell us about the process of surrender? Have you experienced something similar in your own life?

The Three Questions

The sermon presented three questions to ask when tempted to take control:

- Is it worth my concern?
 - Is it mine to control?
 - Is it for God alone?
4. Think of something you're currently trying to control. Walk through these three questions together as a group. How does this framework help you gain perspective?
 5. Share an example of something you thought you needed to control but later realized was "for God alone." What happened when you finally surrendered it?

6. Read Proverbs 3:5-6. The passage says to trust God with "all your heart." Why is it so difficult to move from partial surrender to complete surrender? What holds us back?

Living Surrendered (20 minutes)

7. Pastor Mack said, "I can't change my spouse, but God can. I can't heal my body, but God can. I can't control my children, but I'm praying that God would speak to them." Which of these statements speaks to your current situation? How does shifting responsibility from yourself to God change your perspective?
8. Peter tried to take control in the garden by cutting off the soldier's ear, but Jesus rebuked him and healed the soldier. When have you tried to "help God out" by taking control? What was the result?
9. The sermon emphasized that surrender doesn't mean a "perfect" life — Jesus's night wasn't perfect after He surrendered. How does this truth challenge the cultural message that we should be in control of our own destiny?

Personal Application

10. During the service, people were asked to write down what they're trying to control and symbolically surrender it at the cross. If you didn't attend or didn't participate, take time now to identify one area you need to surrender. Share it with the group if you're comfortable.
11. What's the difference between healthy responsibility and unhealthy control? How can we tell when we've crossed that line?
12. Read Matthew 10:39 - "If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it." What does it practically look like to "give up your life" in the area you're trying to control?

Practical Applications

Choose 1-2 of these to commit to this week:

Daily Surrender Practice

- Each morning this week, pray: "Lord, not my will but Your will be done today." Identify one specific area you'll surrender to Him that day.

The Three Questions Journal

- When you feel anxious or the need to control something, write it down and work through the three questions:
 1. Is it worth my concern?
 2. Is it mine to control?
 3. Is it for God alone?

Scripture Meditation

- Memorize Proverbs 3:5-6 or Matthew 26:39. Write it on a card and place it where you'll see it multiple times daily.

Accountability Partner

- Choose someone from the group to check in with this week about the area you're trying to surrender. Give them permission to ask you how you're doing.

Control Audit

- Make a list of all the things you're currently trying to control. Next to each item, write whether it's something you should be involved in or something you need to release to God.

Prayer of Relinquishment

- Each night before bed, physically open your hands as a symbol of releasing control and pray, "God, I'm surrendering [specific thing] to You."

Closing Activity

Surrender Circle:

- Provide index cards and pens
- Have each person write down one thing they're committing to surrender this week (they don't have to share what it is)
- Go around the circle and have each person pray for the person on their right, asking God to give them the strength to surrender what they've written down
- Keep the cards as a reminder throughout the week

Closing Prayer

Pray together:

"Father, we confess that we often try to control things that are beyond our power. We recognize that our need to control reveals where we struggle to trust You. Like Jesus in the garden, we want to surrender everything to You —not just once, but daily. Help us to release our grip on the things we're clinging to. Give us the courage to pray, 'Not my will, but Your will be done.' Thank You for the blood of Jesus that was shed so we could be forgiven and made new. We surrender our lives, our relationships, our futures, our fears, and our control to You. In Jesus's name, Amen."

For Next Week

- Challenge: Keep a journal of moments when you were tempted to control something but chose to surrender instead. Note what happened and how you felt.
- Reflection Question: How has your relationship with God changed when you've surrendered versus when you've tried to maintain control?
- Encouragement: Remember, surrender is not a one-time event but a daily choice. Be patient with yourself and with God's timing.