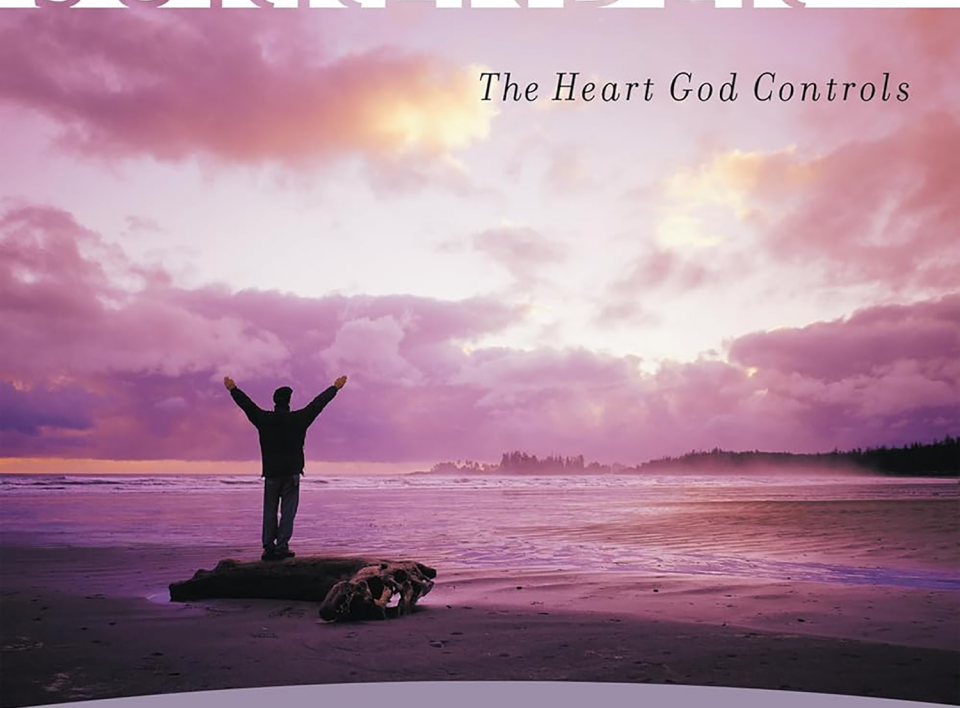


FOREWORD BY PASTOR JIM CYMBALA

# SURRENDER

*The Heart God Controls*



NANCY DEMOSS WOLGEMUTH

Bestselling author of *Lies Women Believe*

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STUDY GUIDE INCLUDED

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O God whose will conquers all,  
There is no comfort in anything  
    apart from enjoying thee  
    and being engaged in thy service;  
Thou art All in all, and all enjoyments are what to me  
    thou makest them, and no more.  
I am well pleased with thy will, whatever it is,  
    or should be in all respects,  
And if thou bidst me decide for myself in any affair  
    I would choose to refer all to thee,  
    for thou art infinitely wise and cannot do amiss,  
    as I am in danger of doing.  
I rejoice to think that all things are at thy disposal,  
    and it delights me to leave them there. . . .  
I can of myself do nothing to glorify thy blessed name,  
    but I can through grace cheerfully surrender soul  
    and body to thee.

—From *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of  
Puritan Prayers and Devotion*

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# FOREWORD



*I* will never forget that special visit to Lima, Peru. I was on my way to preach in Argentina but stopped for a few days to attend the annual conference of a national movement of churches dedicated to spreading the gospel of Christ throughout all of Peru.

The service that evening was a blessing, even though I had to depend greatly on an interpreter sitting next to me. In the middle of the meeting, the leadership called to the platform a young couple who seemed to be in their late twenties. As the leaders introduced them to the audience and prepared to pray for them, the congregation began singing a beautiful Spanish chorus of worship to the Lord.

Suddenly, the presence of the Lord descended on that service in a palpable and fresh way. I turned to

my friend and asked what exactly was going on. It turned out the young couple had been trained to minister God's Word and were leaving after much prayer to pioneer a church in a remote jungle area in Peru. I learned later that they had no church building or congregation waiting for them, nor a home prepared to live in.

With only the few dollars the conference gave them, this man and his wife were stepping out in faith and total surrender to God's purpose for their lives. A hundred and one things we might worry about were as nothing to them. I still remember their shining faces and the tears of joy in their eyes. I also can never forget how God melted and ministered to my own heart through their surrender to Jesus.

The highest possible worship and service to God is when we obey the apostle Paul's plea in Romans 12:1 (NIV, italics added): "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to *offer your bodies as living sacrifices*, holy and pleasing to God—*this is your spiritual act of worship.*"

Christianity without this principle of heart surrender to our living Lord is a contradiction of the very essence of following Jesus. It produces spiritually bankrupt lives and churches that are listless and impotent. It does require grace to sing "Hallelujah"



to God, but far more grace is needed to sincerely sing “I Surrender All.”

Many years ago, a young Methodist minister was struggling with his calling and a severe attack of discouragement. He was hoping his assignment from God might change, but his superiors reappointed him to the same difficult place of ministry. As the spiritual crisis deepened within him, he came to the breaking point of *surrender to God’s will* no matter what that might mean. That day, he also wrote a hymn that is one of the first I remember hearing in church as a child:

*Would you have Him make you free,  
And follow at His call?  
Would you know the peace  
That comes by giving all?  
Would you have Him save you  
So that you can never fall?  
Let Him have His way with thee.*

*His power can make you what you ought to be,  
His blood can cleanse your heart  
And make you free,  
His love can fill your soul,  
And you will see  
’Twas best for Him to have His way with thee.*

—“His Way With Thee,” C. S. Nusbaum

I am so happy that Nancy Leigh DeMoss has written this powerful book on surrender to God and its implications for each of us and the kingdom of God. May the Lord use it around the world for His glory!

—Jim Cymbala, Senior Pastor  
The Brooklyn Tabernacle

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



*Like* all new births, every book has its own gestation, labor, and delivery process, with a variety of professionals and friends supporting and assisting along the way. This book is no exception. I owe special thanks to . . .

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- ❖ My “*praying friends*”—you’ll never know this side of eternity how much I need and count on your prayers and encouragement. You have helped me stay the course and have made me a far more fruitful servant than I ever could have been without you.

# INTRODUCTION



*There will likely be a time in our Christian journeys when, like Jacob, we will wrestle with God all night long. . . . But there must eventually come a dawn when we say, “OK, God, You win. . . . Not my will but Thine be done.”*

\* \*

GARY THOMAS<sup>1</sup>

\* \*



**On** March 10, 1974, almost thirty years after the end of World War II, Lt. Hiroo Onoda finally handed over his rusty sword and became the last Japanese soldier to surrender.

Onoda had been sent to the tropical island of Lubang in the Philippines in 1944, with orders to conduct guerrilla warfare and prevent enemy attack on the island. When the war ended, Onoda refused to believe the messages announcing Japan's surrender.

For twenty-nine years, long after all his fellow soldiers had either surrendered or been killed off, Onoda continued defending the island territory for the defeated Japanese army. He hid in the jungle, living off the land, stealing food and supplies from

local citizens, evading one search party after another, and killing at least thirty nationals in the process. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent trying to locate the lone holdout and convince him that the war was over.

Leaflets, newspapers, photographs, and letters from friends were dropped in the jungle; announcements were made over loudspeakers, begging Onoda to surrender. Still he refused to give up his fight. Some thirteen thousand men had been deployed in the effort before Onoda finally received a personal command from his former commander and was persuaded to give up the futile, solitary war he had waged for so many years.<sup>2</sup>

In his autobiography entitled, *No Surrender: My Thirty-Year War*, Onoda describes the moment that the reality of what had transpired began to sink in:

I felt like a fool. . . . What had I been doing for all these years? . . . For the first time I really understood. . . . This was the end. I pulled back the bolt on my rifle and unloaded the bullets. . . . I eased off the pack that I always carried with me and laid the gun on top of it.<sup>3</sup>

The war was finally over.

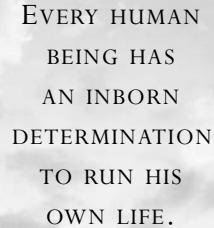
## OUR PERSONAL WAR

From our vantage point today, Hiroo Onoda seems to have been sadly mistaken at best, absurdly foolish at worst. The best years of his life—thrown away, fighting a war whose outcome had already been determined.

Yet, in a sense, Onoda's story isn't unique to him. It's our story as well. We all begin life as members of a rebellious race, fighting our own personal war against the Sovereign King of the universe. For most, that resistance unfolds into a lifelong story that could be titled *No Surrender*.

Some express their resistance overtly, perhaps through a lifestyle of unbridled lust and perversion. Others are more subtle—they are upstanding citizens and community leaders; they may even be active in church work. But beneath the surface, every human being has an inborn determination to run his own life and an unwillingness to be mastered by Christ, the King of Kings.


The decision to give up the fight is no small matter, especially after years of resistance. In Onoda's case, he had become accustomed to living as a lone guerilla soldier, moving from one jungle hideout to



EVERY HUMAN  
BEING HAS  
AN INBORN  
DETERMINATION  
TO RUN HIS  
OWN LIFE.



another, dodging all attempts to subdue him. By the time he was fifty-two years old, he scarcely knew any other way to live. Resisting, running, and hiding had become the *norm*—the way of life with which he was most familiar and comfortable. For Onoda, surrender meant nothing less than a radically altered lifestyle.



IT'S TIME TO  
HAND OVER  
YOUR SWORD.

Surrender to Christ as Savior and Lord is no less life-changing. Whether we first wave the white flag at the age of eight or eighty-eight, that surrender involves a

transfer of allegiance and a transformation of perspective that ought to affect every aspect of our lives.

I assume that most who are reading this book have come to that initial point of surrender that the Bible identifies as being born again: You have placed your faith in Christ's sacrifice for your sin, relinquished control of your life to Him, and been converted into the kingdom (the control) of God. My hope is that you will grow in your understanding of what it means to live out the implications of that surrender on a daily basis.

I have no doubt, however, that some who are reading these words have never come to that point: You may have made a profession of faith; you may have long considered yourself a Christian, and others may assume that you are a Christian, but you

have never truly been born into the family of God—you have never waved the white flag of surrender to Christ; you have never relinquished the right to run your own life.

My appeal to you is to recognize the foolishness and futility of further resistance and to believe and obey the gospel that *Jesus is Lord. The war is over . . .* it's time to hand over your sword to the King of Kings!

### A LIFETIME OF SURRENDER

You may be thinking, *I gave my life to Christ years ago; tell me something new.*

Here's what's new for many. That initial surrender to Christ (which we often refer to as the point of salvation) was not the end of the story. In fact, it was really the starting place.

That point of surrender simply set the stage for a lifetime of surrender. Having surrendered our lives to Christ as Savior and Lord, we must now learn what it means to live out a surrendered life—to continually say *no* to self and *yes* to God.

Many Christians live perpetually discouraged, defeated lives because they have never realized (and therefore are not living out) the implications of their initial surrender to Christ. Having once surrendered control of their lives to Christ, they have reverted to trying to manage their own lives. As a result, they are

living out of alignment with the Lord who created, redeemed, and owns them.

It may be that even at this moment you are living in a chapter called “Unsurrendered.” Oh, that may not describe your whole way of life—you can probably point to specific areas where you are obeying God. But could it be that there are some issues on which you are reserving the right to control your own life?

#### REASONS FOR LACK OF SURRENDER

At certain points in their journey, those who have professed faith in Christ may find themselves “unsurrendered” to God’s control in particular areas of their lives. The reasons for this may vary.

For example, though they may have truly surrendered their lives to God, they may have never realized some of the specific implications of that surrender—*You mean, my money belongs to God? My kids? My body? My time? I’d never thought about that!* As you read the pages that follow, I pray God will open your eyes to see the practical outworking of a surrendered life in ways you may never have considered.

In some cases, believers know what it means to live under God’s control, but they are afraid of what might happen if they surrender some particular area—*If I surrender my family to the Lord, what will happen to them? If I surrender my finances, will my*

*needs be met?* If you are wrestling with fears about the will of God, I want to encourage you with the promises of God and to help you understand that He is worthy of all your trust.

In a third scenario, some people claim to be surrendered to God, and may even believe that they are, but (perhaps subconsciously) they are justifying and rationalizing certain habits, values, attitudes, or behaviors that are contrary to the Word of God. *What about the stuff I watch on movies and TV? I don't think it's really that bad. OK, I admit I have a chronic struggle with overeating and with controlling my temper. But I'm just human. None of us is going to be perfect until we get to heaven.*

To some extent, we all find ourselves in this “deceived” condition at times. We so easily become desensitized to God’s standards or feel that compared to the world’s standards we are doing fine.

In fact, writing this book has forced me to face a number of matters in my own life that I had been overlooking, tolerating, or excusing that are really “surrender issues” at heart.

If you claim to be a follower of Christ while living in denial about certain areas of your life that are not pleasing to Him, my desire is to help you see the truth—that you are not living a fully surrendered life, no matter how many people may think of you as a “good Christian.” (A word of caution here: If,

over a period of time, you continue to be deceived and are unwilling or unable to acknowledge the truth, it may well be that your *profession* of faith falls short of *true* belief.)

Finally, some professing believers are living in willful rebellion against God's control in specific areas of their lives—*I know what God wants me to do, but I'm just not going to obey*. If that is true of your life, you are in one of two dangerous conditions:

(1) You are not really a Christian—you are deceiving yourself and others about the true state of your soul, and you are living under the wrath of God and facing eternal judgment, despite any profession of faith you may have made (Matthew 7:21–23); or

(2) You are a rebellious child of God, and you can expect to experience the loving correction and discipline of God until you repent or until God ends your life (1 Corinthians 11:27–32; Hebrews 12:6).

Either way, the consequences of persisting in willful rebellion are severe. To live in conscious resistance against God is no trivial matter. In fact, if that characterizes your lifestyle, it is likely you have never truly been born again. At best, you have no basis for claiming to be a child of God or for having assurance of salvation.

Genuine saving faith is always accompanied by repentance and must be followed by ongoing growth in obeying God (2 Peter 1:4–8); that does not mean perfect obedience, to be sure, but a desire to move from rebellion toward greater surrender to and satisfaction in God.

Whatever the reason for your lack of surrender (whether in isolated issues or as a way of life), you may have settled into that lifestyle for so long that you don't know any other way to live. Maybe you even think this is *normal*—after all, your life may not be so different from lots of other people you know. In fact, compared to many other professing Christians, you may seem like a spiritual giant.

However, regardless of what seems to be typical, *the fully surrendered life is intended to be—and can be—the norm for every one of God's children.*

### THE HIGH PRICE OF HOLDING OUT

Do you fear what a lifestyle of full surrender might cost you? Then consider the cost of holding out on God. I think of professing believers I know who have tragically wasted what could have been the most productive, fruitful years of their lives, much as Hiroo Onoda did. They have been satisfied to fend for themselves and forage off the land when they could have been feasting at His banquet table.

They have settled for wartime conditions when they could have been enjoying the blessings of peace.

As was true in Onoda's case, others' lives are invariably affected by our resistance. I have watched men and women whose refusal to surrender has left a trail of broken relationships—with parents, mate, children, friends, fellow church members, and others.

Onoda might understandably have feared the consequences he would face if he were to surrender. Would he be tried as a war criminal? Might he be sentenced to death? Imagine Onoda's relief when he finally turned over his sword and surrendered to President Marcos of the Philippines, and the president immediately issued him a full and complete pardon.

The truth is that resistance is far more costly than surrender. To reject God's gracious provision of salvation and to refuse His command to repent means eternal punishment for sin. For those of us who are followers of Christ, any resistance to the will of God will keep us from enjoying an abundant life and will create barriers in our fellowship with God.

But our God abounds in mercy and grace; He is willing to offer a full and complete pardon to those who lay down their weapons.

In eternity, knowing what we cannot see now or what we have refused to believe, any holding out on our part will appear no less misguided and foolish

than a Japanese officer spending three decades of his adult life holed up in a tropical jungle, living like an animal, fighting a war that had long since ended.

As we consider the meaning of Christian surrender, I pray that your heart will be captured with a compelling vision of the One who claims the right to run the universe. May you experience an irresistible sense of the joys and blessings that can be yours through relinquishing control to this God who loves you and who holds your very life in His hand.

#### NOTES

1. Gary Thomas, *Seeking The Face of God* (Eugene, Oreg.: Harvest House, 1999), 84.
2. "Old Soldiers Never Die," *Newsweek*, March 25, 1974, 49, 52.
3. Hiroo Onoda, *No Surrender: My Thirty-Year War* (New York: Kodansha International Ltd., 1974), 14–15.