

LIVING  
IT OUT



**DAILY  
BIBLE  
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

# Let it go (not you, Elsa).

August 3, 2020

I absolutely LOVE the TV show *Friends*. I most definitely identify with Monica! I have a need to know that things are being done correctly and are going in the right direction. I like to be in (cue the dramatic music) ... control.

Having control makes me feel as though I have a little power over how things turn out—letting go of that control is a tiny bit scary for me. For instance, before becoming a stay-at-home wife and mom, it was hard for me to let my husband take the lead in providing for our family. I was afraid that if I let him be “in control,” everything would go wrong—we would suffer financially, and our marriage would crumble. After a lot of prayer and God’s amazing intervention, I have been happily unemployed for three years, and it has been a tremendous blessing not only for me but also for our entire household.

Fear is rooted in the idea of surrender. Letting go and allowing someone else to take the reins is not an easy task for many of us. As a parent, it is not easy to allow our children to make their own decisions. As a spouse, it is not easy to allow our mates to take on tasks that they may have never done before! Likewise, moving in an uncomfortable direction out of obedience to the Lord isn’t an easy thing either. Releasing our grip on anything can cause serious anxiety and fear. But God has given us assurance when we do!

## **Job 23:14**

*So he will do to me whatever he has planned. He controls my destiny.*

## **Jeremiah 29:11**

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”*

God has remarkable plans for us, but we have to surrender to him for his plans to unfold in our lives. Over the next few days in the LIO, we will examine what it looks like to surrender.

## **Questions:**

How does the idea of surrendering your control to God make you feel? What has the Lord asked you to surrender for him?

**Next Steps:**

Ask the Lord to prepare your heart for surrender. Study the Gospels and search for a devotional on the topic to learn why surrender is so important and how to achieve it.

**Prayer:**

*Dear Lord, thank you for surrendering for us! Thank you for giving us your word to teach us how to surrender to you. Open our hearts to be more sensitive to your desire and to allow us to see that your plans are always perfect! In Jesus' name, amen.*

# Let God Be God

August 4, 2020

I loved the weekend message! Sarah Bucher did an amazing job. I laughed when Sarah modified the title “control freak” to “control expert” because she thought control expert had a much better connotation. It may very well sound better, but the reality is that control experts drive others and themselves crazy.

I know this because I am a recovering control expert. (My loving husband just told me I’m still a control freak. He will be punished!) When things aren’t going the way I think they should, I try to “fix” it. I usually end up getting stressed and irritable. It seems like the more I try to control things, the more I feel like I am hitting my head against a brick wall. I wish I would learn that controlling and manipulating only tend to worsen the situation. I remember reading somewhere that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome—GUILTY!

The last several months have been a real eye-opener about how much control we truly have in our lives. COVID-19, stay-at-home orders, the economy, violence, and political unrest have rocked our world. I have spent a lot of time pondering, worrying about, and trying to solve these difficult issues. I wish I could say I was successful. Instead, I feel tired and overwhelmed.

When it comes to trying to control aspects of life, Sarah encouraged us to ask the questions:

Is it worth it?

Is it mine to control?

Is it God’s alone?

Using these questions as a filter to deal with life's issues could save us from unnecessary worry and anxiety and lead to peace and rest in the midst of difficult circumstances.

## **1 Peter 5:7**

*Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.*

Sarah defined surrender as trading fear for freedom. God can handle all our worries and anxieties. Jesus wants us to surrender everything to him. He does not want us to be burdened. He wants to give us rest and freedom.

### **Matthew 11: 28 and 30**

*<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ... <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."*

When you are overwhelmed and feel the need to control and fix things—pause, take a deep breath, and pray. Ask God to give you faith that he is in control and that he has a perfect plan. You need to trust that God is God, and then you need to totally surrender your burdens (real or imagined) to him.

### **Proverbs 3:5-6**

*<sup>5</sup> Trust in the Lord with all your heart, do not depend on your own understanding.*

*<sup>6</sup> Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.*

I praise God that he is in control. I don't have to fix anything—I just need to trust him and surrender to him because Jesus came to give us life in abundance.

Please make the decision to let God be God.

### **Questions:**

What things do you try to control? What do you need to surrender to God?

### **Next Steps:**

Read and meditate on [Psalm 23](#). Journal the ways God has provided for you. Praise God for these blessings and reflect on them during difficult times.

### **Prayer:**

*God, I praise you that you are such a loving God. Help me to cast all my cares on you. I am so grateful that you have a perfect plan and I can trust you. Jesus, I praise you that you came so that I may have life in abundance. Help me to surrender my fears to you and live in your total peace, joy, and hope. Amen*

*This post was written by Marsha Raymond, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# Seek, Surrender, and be Steadfast

August 5, 2020

I met my best friend in high school, but we weren't best friends until years later. In high school, we hung out with a lot of the same people and had some fun times (sleepovers, going to dances, etc.), but it wasn't until college that our friendship really grew. We didn't go to the same university, but what time we spent together was meaningful. We played catch-up via phone calls (landline phones, ha!) and eventually email. We got to a point that no matter how much time had passed since seeing one another, we could pick up right where we left off. Our friendship was, *and is*, deep.

In our 20s, our friendship was vital as we walked through a very painful season together following her husband's death from cancer. Because of the trust and love we had built over the years, she was able to share honestly about her struggles with losing her spouse, especially at such a young age. Since then, she is the one (besides my husband) with whom I can fully share the GOOD, the BAD, and the UGLY of life without judgment. And to this day, we still talk each other out of pits, point each other to Christ, and have some fun along the way.

She is my best friend, and I *trust* her.

This week, we have talked about surrender. In order to surrender to someone, you need to *trust* them. It's hard to trust someone you don't know. And while Tonya is my best friend, my bestest friend is God. I learned a lot about God for 24 years, but May of 1997 is when I surrendered to him.

The first step of being on the adventure with God is *knowing* him. If you don't know God or anything about him, I encourage you to "***seek*** and you will find" ([Matthew 7:7](#) NIV). He's not hiding but actually wants a relationship with you. In fact, the Bible says "come close to God, and God will come close to you" ([James 4:8](#)). Go to a church service or attend online. Start reading the Bible (the book of [John](#) is a good place to start) to know him more.

If you already know *about* God, maybe it's time to ***surrender***.

- ❖ Believe that "God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners" ([Romans 5:8](#)).

- ❖ Declare that “Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead” and “you will be saved” ([Romans 10:9](#)).
- ❖ Give up your way and seek to follow HIS way. “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think” ([Romans 12:2](#)).

Finally, if you’ve known God for a while, continue ***steadfastly*** and give yourself “completely to God” ([Romans 6:13](#)). Just like I got to know Tonya more intimately over the years, the more time and effort you take to know God, the more you can trust him. “Those who *know* your name *trust* in you” ([Psalm 9:10](#)).

*“This is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth”* ([John 17:3](#)).

### **Questions:**

Do you know God? What steps can you take to know him more?

### **Next Steps:**

The more time you spend with someone, the better you will get to know them. Carve out time to spend with God. If this is not a daily habit for you already, start with a doable commitment (reading this LivingItOut Bible Study every day, for example). If you’ve known God for a while now, take steps to know him more. Spend time studying the Word, talk with him in prayer, and surround yourself with others that are also seeking to know him more. As you know God more, you’ll be on a path of *finding freedom, discovering your purpose, and making a difference* in lives around you.

### **Prayer:**

*Dear God, I want to know you more. As I walk along the path of knowing you more, increase my faith and help me to trust you. God, I surrender myself and my way to you. Help me to know you more and give myself completely to you. In Jesus’ name, amen. (P.S. I pray that my daughter’s wedding goes well this weekend and that you’re glorified throughout their wedding day and in their marriage.)*

*This post was written by Kendra Grubinski, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# God's Got This

August 6, 2020

During the weekend message, Sarah Bucher shared some practical ways to surrender ourselves to God by “requesting, releasing, and receiving” from him. God loved us when we were yet sinners, and his desire for us is to surrender our lives to his love and will. Unfortunately, we resist turning over that false sense of control we all love so much, even to God.

As we go through life, many of us depend on certain things or people to find our purpose, happiness, satisfaction, and peace. Clinging to these false earthly saviors (idols) are pointless and cannot provide the true love we long for. The love only God can give us.

Jesus gives us an example of this on the night he was betrayed by Judas. He knew his Father's will, and feeling his soul's anguish, he went off to pray alone.

## **Luke 22:42**

*“Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”*

This distress did not come from any lack of desire to do the will of God, nor was he a victim to circumstances beyond his control. To Jesus, having obedience to the Father (God) and his divine plan for reconciling God and man was more important than his own desire—avoiding the physical suffering and temporary separation from his Father that would occur when he accepted the sins of the world upon himself.

## **1 Timothy 2:5**

*For, There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus.*

So Jesus opened his hands in full surrender and placed the situation completely under God's control, knowing that God's perfect will can be trusted. *God's got this!*

Jesus received supernatural strength in his time of weakness in order to receive God's plan. When we open our hands in surrender, God fills them up with his strength, peace, and presence. He gives us everything we need.

Because we live on this side of heaven, pain is a part of our story, even as it was for Jesus. In [Romans 8:28](#) we read, "God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." When you trust in God, you can trade your fear for freedom and confidently rest in your surrender to him.

### **Proverbs 3:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> *Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.*

<sup>6</sup> *Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.*

Jesus' example teaches us to make our **request** to God and **release** our own desires to **receive** God's plan. The good in Jesus' story was that his surrender redeemed the whole world, providing a bridge for us to God.

### **Psalms 84:11**

*For the Lord God is our sun and our shield. He gives us grace and glory. The Lord will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right.*

### **Questions:**

Do you want to know and do God's will for your life? Can you take the step to surrender your will today? What's holding you back from giving up control and trusting in God?

### **Next Steps:**

You can search all your life, but you will never find what you are looking for outside of God. So, raise your hands and surrender your life and your will to him today.

### **Prayer:**

*Father God, you love us so much that you sent the only one who could save us from our sinful nature to pay the price demanded for our choosing sin and self over you—Jesus Christ—the perfect Lamb of God, the flawless sacrifice for our sins. Please forgive me, Lord, for playing god. Help me to release my own grip*

*from my problems and plans and turn them over to you. In Jesus' name I pray.  
Amen.*

*This post was written by Gary Schnabel, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# Let Go and Let God!

August 7, 2020

This past weekend, Sarah talked about the opposite of surrender. She talked about an issue so many of us deal with. The issue of being a control freak, or more nicely put a “control expert.” I have to admit, I tend to like to control stuff (Maybe you do too?), but I’m not crazy about the word “freak.” I definitely prefer “expert.”

Although, “freak” makes me think of the musical, *The Greatest Showman*, written about P.T. Barnum, the founder of the Barnum & Bailey circus. Barnum was the penniless child of a tailor but had the imagination and vision to create “show business.” He searched for those that society had labeled “freaks” and transformed them into “The Greatest Show on Earth.” He knew he couldn’t change the appearance of the performers, but he could probably change society’s opinion of them.

In Barnum’s adventure to make his dreams come true, he encountered pushback from many in society. He didn’t let that stop him from his dreams though. He pushed forward, solved problems, and failed at times, but he continued chasing his dream.

There is freedom in stepping in and doing what we can, but we all have situations that are *beyond us*. Beyond our education or expertise. Beyond our ability to manipulate. In those situations, we need to surrender what is beyond our control. In Barnum’s case, he surrendered and allowed others in his life to step in and help. (At least in the movie portrayal.) As a Christian, we need to also surrender control to God.

During her weekend message, Sarah Bucher spoke about understanding the difference between knowing if it’s *ours to control* or *God’s alone*. Another way to ask this is, “Have I done all I can?”

You may have heard of the “Serenity Prayer.” It is a prayer of surrender and emphasizes Sarah’s points.

**“Serenity Prayer” by Reinhold Niebuhr (emphasis added)**

*God, grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,*

***courage** to change the things I can,  
and **wisdom** to know the difference.*

When we face difficult circumstances in life, let's learn all we can about it. Let's Google it! Let's use it. Let's get counsel. Let's pray about it. Let's lead ourselves well, our families well, our teams well. Throughout it all though, let's give it to God, and when we have done all we can, let's get out of God's way and surrender it to him. **Let Go and Let God!**

**Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)**

*"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*

**Philippians 4:6-7**

*Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.*

**Questions:**

What have you surrendered to God, knowing you cannot change it?

Where have you stepped up and had the courage to change something?

Where have you had the wisdom to let go and let God?

**Next Steps:**

Tell God what you need and thank him for all the things he has done.

**Prayer:**

*Dear Heavenly Father, help me surrender to you and not be a control freak! Help me understand that happiness depends on happenings, but joy depends on Christ. Thank you for loving me and teaching me! Amen.*

*This post was written by Pam Haynam, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*