



Surrender Your Will

Andy Stanley

Scripture: Romans 12:1; 6:13; Luke 9:23, 25

Idea: To safeguard your soul, surrender your will.

[Here's something we've all thought or said after someone is found out once it's discovered they've been living a double life, harboring a secret sin, or lying to the folks who depend on and love them...]

“How could they **live with themselves?**”

[How could they carry on for so long without melting down? How did they keep up the charade? How could they show up for dinner? Or show up at church and preach!?!]

[When the truth comes out, the story breaks, the family is devastated, their career destroyed, and reputation tainted, we think...]

“I couldn't live with **myself.**”

[My conscience or integrity wouldn't let me. But the truth is, you could. You couldn't live with your current self. But if left unattended or neglected, your current self...]

I couldn't live with **myself.**

[... may not be your future self. Left unattended, your future self could be someone you wouldn't recognize or a version of you that could, in fact...]

Live with **yourself.**

[... in spite of the unhealthy version of you that you had become.]

[The reason this happens is nobody thinks this could happen to them. The best way to keep it from happening to you is to assume it could and take steps to ensure it doesn't. That's what this series is about.]

Graphic: Title slide for *Living with Yourself: Three Habits to Safeguard Your Soul*



[They are three habits to ensure that the self you're living with is the self that is on display. They're habits to ensure that what people see is what they're actually getting.]

[Life is hard on our souls and our inner selves. Healthy souls, if unattended to, become unhealthy. Nothing gets better when left unattended.]

[It's why we wake up, look in the mirror, and start attending to things. We attend to our appearance, performance, and reputation. We're quick to attend to our exterior lives because people are watching, and we're competing for approval.]

[But there's only one person who has the ability or responsibility to be attentive to your soul and monitor the condition of your heart—you. And here's why this is so important:]

The health of your **soul** determines your **capacity** for **duplicity**.

[Duplicity is: I'm one person on the outside but a completely different person on the inside. How you care for your soul determines how much duplicity you can live with. It's your ability to live with yourself when you're no longer the self you used to be, want to be, or that people see.]

[It determines how wide the gap between who you are and who you pretend to be can expand before you finally crack, confess, and unravel or before your conscience just won't let you pretend any further, assuming there's any conscience left.]

[A healthy soul has very little tolerance for duplicity. The health of your soul determines your capacity for compartmentalization, hypocrisy, lying, posturing, or pretending. It determines whether you choose to...]

Close

[... the gap between who you actually are and who you should be or merely manage it.]

Manage

[Managing eventually breaks down, and the truth eventually breaks out. Don't kid yourself.]

You have the potential to **become** someone you would **despise** if you met them.

Living with Yourself

3
HABITS TO
SAFEGUARD
YOUR SOUL

[You could become the unimaginable, do the unthinkable, and live with yourself. People do it all the time because they think it could never happen to them. The difference between those who avoid this and those who don't is the health of their souls.]

[In this series, we're looking at three habits to ensure that doesn't happen to you. They're three habits to safeguard your soul.]

[To set up the first habit, I want to read something Paul wrote to Christians in Rome. He asks them to consider doing something that, on the surface, sounded unreasonable. But he goes on to explain that nothing was more reasonable. But it would require a shift in their thinking. Most of us have heard this before, but it's easy to miss the twist.]

Romans 12:1 (Paraphrased by Andy Stanley)

Therefore, I **urge** you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's **mercy**...

[Not in view of God's authority. That's the shift/twist. He just spent the first eleven chapters describing God's mercy. In light of all God through Christ has done for you...]

to **offer**...

[Choose to present, yield, submit, and place at God's disposal.]

your **bodies**...

[Yourselves inside and out, everything about you...]

as a living **sacrifice**,

[To which we say, "Offer my entire self to God? Surrender? Give him a blank check with my life? That's too much to ask!" "How about I just call on God when I need God?"]

[That approach leads to needing God more because you'll make more bad decisions. You keep doing the same sin over and over. I can prove it. Your greatest regret took place during an...]

"I'll call on God when I **need** him" season

[You thought you could pray your way out of something you behaved your way into. Then God didn't come through. You wondered, What's up with God? God thought, What's up with you?]



[Then, Paul assures us that presenting ourselves to God and surrendering our will to God is not unreasonable.]

Romans 12:1 (Paraphrased by Andy Stanley)

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercies, to offer you bodies as a living **sacrifice**...*

[It's just the opposite. Here is a literal translation of what Paul writes next:]

*... offer you bodies as a living **sacrifice**...*

[This is the Greek word for logical or reasonable service.]

[It's the most logical and reasonable thing you can do. Why? God loves you, and he's for you. Why wouldn't you surrender your life to your heavenly Father, who loves you and invites you to life that he's willing to direct, but he's not going to force his will on you. Love doesn't operate that way.]

[Jesus's one-another-ethic benefits you and the "one anothers" around you. It's the best way to live.]

[This is the paradigm or framework for the Christian life. We respond to God not to gain something but because he has given us so much. In light of all God has done for us, what other response is there but to bend our knees and submit?]

[Paul teases this out earlier in Romans, in chapter six, but states it in the negative.]

Romans 6:13 (Paraphrased by Andy Stanley)

*Do **not offer** any part of **yourself** to **sin** as an instrument of unrighteousness...*

[Apparently, we're going to offer ourselves up to something or someone one way or the other—God or sin. The best way to understand sin is it equals selfishness. It's my way and my appetites met at your expense.]

*but rather **offer** yourselves to God as those who have been brought from **death to life**;*

*and **offer** every **part of yourself** to him as an **instrument** of righteousness.*



[Surrender all of you to his intent and agenda. Here's the good news. It's one of my favorite New Testament statements. If you do this...]

Romans 6:14

For **sin** shall no longer be your **master**.

[When you say yes to sin, it becomes your master. I'll make it more practical and less theological. When you say yes to...]

Selfishness

[... selfishness becomes your master. Do you know where Master Selfishness takes you? Sends you? Orders you? It takes you to the land of...]

Self-centeredness

[Master Sin will order you to say yes to you every chance you get. Master Sin defines that as liberation. Ultimately...]

Self-centeredness liberates you from you!

[You're divided. You wake up as two different people—the you people see, and the you that you're forced to live with.]

[Do you know what anyone who has been there, done that, and came back would tell you? I don't know what their exact words would be. But it would sound something like this:]

Romans 12:1 (Paraphrased by Andy Stanley)

*I urge you, in view of God's **mercy**...*

[Master Sin offers no mercy. Sin and selfishness always bait you to the threshold of disaster, then shame you once you step across that threshold of what it lured you to do.]

[Paul says, "Do you want sin to be your master?" That's why surrendering yourself to your heavenly Father is the way to actual freedom because God loves you.]

*to offer your body as a **living** sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—that is the most logical, reasonable thing you could do.*



[Then, Paul continues. Again, these are probably familiar words:]

Romans 12:2

Do not **conform** to the pattern of this world,

[If sin is your master, it will split you in half. It will increase your capacity for duplicity. It will put you in the center of your life and make you small. Self-centeredness makes you small.]

but be **transformed** by the **renewing** of your mind.

Then...

you will be able to **test** and **approve** what God's **will** is...

[If the notion of God's will scares you, it's probably because you've never surrendered to it. If you're more afraid of the will of God than the potential of what sin will do to you, then you've been seduced and deceived. You've reduced God to a...]

Sin-Forgiver

Back-Up Plan

[... or a last resort. But the surrendered folks around you? They would assure you that God's will for you is exactly as Paul describes it:]

—his **good**, pleasing and **perfect** will.

[And that brings us to the first of our three habits:]

Habits to Safeguard Your Soul

1. **Surrender** your will.

[Here's the catch—every day at the beginning of the day. Here's how Jesus said it:]

Luke 9:23

“Whoever wants to be my **disciple** must deny **themselves...**

and take up their cross **daily...**

[To follow Jesus requires a decision every day. The cross symbolized the end of independence.]



and **follow** me.”

[Jesus said, “I want you to declare your dependence and follow me daily. After all, he concludes:]

Luke 9:25

What good is it for someone to gain the whole **world**, and yet lose or forfeit their very **self**?

[So, I want to encourage you to pray something along these lines every morning:]

Heavenly Father, I surrender **myself to you**.

My hands, my feet.

My eyes, my ears.

My thoughts and desires.

My hopes and dreams.

My talent and opportunities.

I **surrender** all.

Thy will be done through me **today**.

[Daily surrender sensitizes your conscience. If you do this, you will be more sensitive to and less tolerant of duplicity.]

[One last thing... If you're thinking, Andy, I'm currently living with a version of myself that's miles away from the self I intended to be. What do I do? These three habits are the way forward for you. They will take you from where you are to where you want to be.]

[I need to warn you—the moment you surrender to your heavenly Father, he will nudge you to come out of hiding and reveal the self you've become to the people you've hurt and deceived. It'll be messy and might be expensive.]

[Why would he nudge you in that direction? Because God is love, and you're his image-bearer created to love and be loved. Neither is possible as long as your soul is in damage control, and you cannot love and receive love because no one really knows you.]

[Will it be worth the mess and the embarrassment? It may not feel worth it initially, but it will be eventually. Here's why: Selfishness and sin are terrible masters. Sin does nothing for you. It takes what's most important from you.]



[Surrendering to and following Jesus will make your life better because he will lead you to close the gap between what people see and who you really are. He will lead you to peace with yourself. You'll finally become a self you're happy to live with.]

[We will pick it up there next time with habit two in Part 2 of...]

Graphic: Title slide for *Living with Yourself: Three Habits to Safeguard Your Soul*

Prayer

FOR DISCUSSION

1. When was the last time you heard a story and thought, *How do they live with **themselves**?*
What does that response assume about **you**?
2. What does the following statement bring to mind?
*"The health of your **soul** determines your **tolerance** for **duplicity**."*
3. What emotions does the idea of **unconditional surrender** to God surface in you? **Why**?