

## Surrender and Commitment

My wife was playing some tunes from her iPad over our Bose wireless speakers. The song playing was "I Surrender All." She was at the other end of the house working and the wireless speaker was in the room where I was reading.

Not hearing the song, she took a quick break from chores to play a game "Word Scramble" from her iPad. She is very good at that game. For you that play it, you know that it commends you when you make good and great words. Unbeknown to her, it also was coming over the system concurrently with the song.

What I was hearing was... "I surrender all. *Good!* I surrender all. *Excellent!* All to Jesus I surrender. I surrender all. *Incredible!!!*

I enjoyed the unplanned heavenly humor. It piqued my interest for thought and study.

There is a difference between surrender and commitment.

Allan Bloom in his book *The Closing of the American Mind*, makes this point from a secular perspective.

"*Commitment* is a word invented in our abstract modernity to signify the absence of any real motives in the soul for moral dedication. Commitment is gratuitous, motiveless, because the real passions are all low and selfish."

Josef Tson, a Romanian pastor who faced much persecution in his native country by one of the most repressive Communist regimes in history, was exiled to America in 1981 and for ten years witnessed Christianity in America. He explained the difference between surrender and commitment this way:

“Christian *surrender* means that a person lifts his or her hands and says to God, “Here I am; I surrender, You take over; I belong to You; You dispose of me!” But this is America, the country of the independent people! This is the place of “Nobody should command me!... I belong only to myself!”

A call to surrender, and even more, to full surrender, simply doesn't go well with such people. Therefore, the preachers, who wanted “results,” and wanted them in big numbers, felt (and gave in to) the temptation to soften the demand, to reduce the cost, to make the message more “palatable.” And they hit the word “commitment.”

You see, *commitment* means “I engage myself to do something for you,” or, even lighter, “I promise to do something for you, but I remain myself and I may keep my promise or not.”

We can speak of weaker or stronger commitment, but be it as strong as possible, it is still my independent self that engages itself in a tentative promise.

-RWT