

SURRENDER

SERMON NOTES

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ABOUT THESE NOTES

The purpose of these notes is to aid you in developing sermons on the subject of surrender based on the content of *Surrender: Secure God's Best for Your Life*. These notes are not complete sermons but are templates that will enable you to develop your own, personalized messages that clearly communicate the call to surrender.

Calling believers to surrender fully to God is the heart of holiness preaching and is the thrust of discipleship more generally. By preaching on this subject, you will lead others to experience the fullness of the Spirit. Lives will change. Your church will be impacted. The kingdom will grow as a result of your faithful call to the deeper life.

Yet this subject can be difficult to present because of our inherent selfishness and the desire to hoard control of our lives. Here are some things to remember as you engage in these messages.

PREACHING SURRENDER

Be Personal. Listeners appreciate hearing about the reality of the struggle to submit oneself fully to God. One key aspect of the book *Surrender* is the openness with which the author discusses his own inner life and struggles to more deeply submit himself to God through his “offering plate moments.” Do not fear to share appropriately your own surrender moments, both the struggle to surrender and the joy discovered through submission to God’s will. Doing so will help readers accept the call to a deeper life.

Be Positive. The call to surrender fully to God is a call to freedom, not the imposition of a burden. Though you will be calling others to sacrifice themselves, the result of that sacrifice is a life more abundant than they have yet experienced. Present this message in positive, confident

tones. Be sure to include the benefits of surrender, including receiving more of God's grace, power, and the fullness of the Spirit (also see the chart on p. 45 of *Surrender*).

Offer Invitations. Each message should include a warm invitation to surrender to God more fully in some aspect of life. Be creative in your approach to this invitation, but include some call to action. These messages should call for a decision, backed by action, to engage the Spirit more deeply and surrender to his will more fully. Preach for a decision each time, and offer some opportunity for listeners to put that decision into action.

ELEMENTS OF THE SERMON NOTES

The material that follows is sermon notes, not complete sermons. These notes provide a template that will allow you to construct a message of your own design that will clearly communicate a key biblical concept on surrender and call listeners to respond. Each set of notes contains the following elements.

Message Summary. This section is written for the preacher; it is not part of the sermon per se. The purpose is to give you an overview of the content of the message and the intended outcome in the life of the hearer. Each summary includes a clear statement of the message's purpose and key point.

Introduction. The suggested introduction for each message is a personal story or illustration that bears on the key concept. This will establish your own credibility in speaking on the subject of surrender and lead listeners to accept the call to a deeper life. As an alternative, you could summarize the author's surrender experience or provide another relevant story. Each introduction lands on a *punch line* that clearly states the main idea and intended outcome of the message.

Why This Matters. Listeners need to understand what is at stake with the subject of surrender. This section is a brief paragraph, which you may use or expand, that creates a sense of urgency about the subject.

Key Points. This is the body of the sermon. Each concept or main point is stated clearly then briefly expounded, along with some key ideas for communication. Develop your manuscript or outline based on these key points.

Invitation. This section specifies the choice that you are asking the listener to make and gives some ideas for presenting that call for a decision.

ABOUT THE TEXT

These messages are drawn from Romans 12, a classic text on the concept of surrender to God and living the holy life. Though all of the text is used in the series, special attention is given to Romans 12:1–2, which serves as the text for several of the messages. These are incredibly rich verses, loaded with insight into the deeper life. Take care to point this out to your listeners. Though there is much repetition of these verses, they are able to yield fresh insight for multiple weeks of preaching. Consider having your congregation memorize these beautiful verses as a corporate exercise. Also, because this text will be read frequently as the preaching text, consider using creative means to inject the Scripture into your worship experience, such as guest readers, reading in different languages, reading in various translations, or unison readings.

May God bless you, preacher, as you call his children to experience a fullness of joy and peace such as they have never known.



A NEW DEFINITION OF SURRENDER

Romans 12:1

MESSAGE SUMMARY

We resist surrendering fully to God because we think of surrender in negative terms and we see it as a contest of wills between ourselves and God. The purpose of this message is to cast a positive vision of surrender so that listeners will embrace it as a spiritual victory that produces a deep sense of peace and sets the stage for future fruitfulness.

Key Idea: God has my best interest at heart.

INTRODUCTION

Share a personal story that recalls some relationships in which you learned the value of putting another person first. This could be your spiritual struggle to surrender to God, or it could be drawn from everyday life, marriage, or other relationships.

Punch Line: In the world, surrender spells defeat. But in your spiritual life, surrendering fully to God is a victory. Today you'll discover that God has your best at heart.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This matters so much because every occasion where God calls for surrender is an invitation to move forward. When we resist these opportunities, we actually fall back spiritually. Surrender is a pathway to spiritual purpose and power. Don't miss this opportunity.

KEY POINTS

1. Surrender is where faith and feelings collide.

Explain that when God calls us to surrender, we resist because we fear the result. This struggle is typical; even Jesus faced this in his garden prayer. Point out that surrender is the moment when faith triumphs over feelings. Consider using the illustration on page 19 of *Surrender* to illustrate this basic conflict.

2. Surrender is an opportunity for growth.

Make the point that surrender may seem like a conflict but it's actually a growth opportunity. God calls us to surrender our best for his best, and his best is always better. Call listeners to believe that surrender is a pathway to positive change.

3. Surrender to God depends on trust.

Make the point that trust is always an act of surrender. Remind listeners of the various ways they have trusted God already—for example, for salvation. Challenge them with this question: “Do you believe that God’s best is better than your best?”

INVITATION

To believe that God’s best for us is always better than our best is the essence of surrender. This is likely a decision that will have to be reaffirmed often in life as new challenges arise. Call listeners to reaffirm that choice today.

Possible Call to Action: Ask listeners to come to the front of the auditorium for prayer in order to make the statement, “I am putting both feet in with God.”



WHEN SURRENDER HAPPENS

Romans 12:1

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Surrender occurs when our level of urgency (“I urge you, brothers and sisters”) is combined with understanding (“in view of God’s mercy”) and results in sacrifice (“present your bodies”). The purpose of this message is to lead listeners to a fresh act of surrender, giving more of their selves to God.

Key Idea: God is calling you to new surrender.

INTRODUCTION

Share a personal experience in which you found that your low expectations led to poor results—or when your high expectations were rewarded beyond what you’d thought possible. This could be an experience of spiritual surrender, or it could be drawn from ordinary experiences such as a course in school, buying a new vehicle, or dealing with customer service.

Punch Line: Today I want to lead you into the power zone—that’s where your expectation of God’s grace combined with your act of surrender to him releases God’s power into your life.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This matters so much because most of us are living underpowered lives. We are not as effective as we’d like to be in our ministry. We struggle with besetting sins sometimes for years. We live at the level of doubt rather than victory. And we could be living power-filled, victorious lives that are characterized by trust, freedom, and fruitfulness. Don’t settle for an anemic spirituality.

KEY POINTS

1. God responds to us based on our faith.

Make the point that when we expect little from God, we receive little. When we expect much from God and combine that with action, we receive much. Consider using The Power Zone illustration on page 37 of *Surrender* to illustrate this dynamic. Challenge listeners with this question: “Is your expectation of God high or low?”

2. New moments of surrender lead to a greater measure of grace in our lives.

Emphasize that surrender is not a once-for-life event. God continually calls us to surrender. Though we may struggle or fall back, we should grow in faith and grace. Ask listeners, “Is your experience of God growing or plateaued?”

3. Spiritual struggle precedes fresh surrender.

Explain the Growth Cycle (see p. 48 of *Surrender*). Consider using the diagram of this cycle from the book. Talk about the elements of denial, discomfort, and discovery, leading to greater devotion. Ask, “Where are you right now in the Growth Cycle? Is it time for a new moment of surrender?”

INVITATION

Invite listeners to move to a new level of devotion. Urge them to listen to God at whatever point he is challenging them, and to expect great things from God as they consecrate themselves fully to him.

Possible Call to Action: Distribute note cards and ask listeners to write one word that describes their expectation for what God will do in their lives as they surrender to him. Allow an opportunity to place the cards on the altar or in a container as a demonstration of their intention to surrender fully to God.



THE PATHWAY OF SURRENDER

Romans 12:1

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Surrender begins with the spirit, but it does not end there. Surrender must progress outward to encompass the mind and body. Entire sanctification is holiness in spirit, soul, and body. The purpose of this message is to help listeners move beyond attempting to change their behavior through willpower or self-power to experience holistic surrender—of spirit, mind, and body.

Key Idea: Surrender must begin in the heart and work its way into our actions.

INTRODUCTION

Share a personal story that illustrates the limitations of willpower. This could be a humorous occasion where you tried and failed to develop and exercise routine or keep a New Year's resolution. The point to emphasize is that you cannot change your behavior by willpower alone; a deeper reorientation of the heart is needed.

Punch Line: True surrender begins in the heart. Today I'm inviting you to turn your life inside out—by giving your whole self to God—spirit, body, and mind.

WHY THIS MATTERS

We may try to surrender to God through our will only, trying to change behavior by willpower alone. We soon discover that it doesn't work. Or we may spiritualize our surrender, trying to convince ourselves that because our heart belongs to Christ, it's somehow okay to continue having sinful thoughts or actions. In reality, we are only half surrendered. That half-surrendered life will

leave us feeling powerless and miserable. Surrender must begin with the heart and radiate outward to encompass the whole self—body, mind, and spirit.

KEY POINTS

1. Willpower is not the same as surrender.

Call attention to the futility of trying to suppress the heart by mastering behavior. Point out that our attempts at behavior modification are short-lived because they work from the outside in. Surrender must include the whole person, including behavior. While we can begin with behavior by “presenting our bodies” as sacrifices, surrender must go deeper.

2. Surrender starts with the heart.

Note the aspects of self in Romans 12:1. Consider using the Worship Well image from page 67 of *Surrender* to point out that surrender may begin with an outward sacrifice but must penetrate to the heart, then well back up into renewed living. Make the point that surrender must be rooted in the heart in order to be a lasting sacrifice.

3. Surrender is an urgent matter.

Convince listeners that surrender is not an optional or advanced form of Christianity for those who are more devoted, but is the goal for all believers. Jesus made that clear in his strong statement about practical holiness in Matthew 5:29–30. Talk about positive aspects of surrender, such as pursuing healthy behaviors. And mention that sinful behaviors must be avoided. Make the point that one is a “slave” to either sin or to God.

INVITATION

Ask listeners to identify their current point of struggle, either in behavior, thought life, or the heart. Remind them that the inner and outer aspects of our lives are directly connected, and challenge them to surrender their whole selves to God.

Possible Call to Action: To indicate the desire to be wholly surrendered to God, invite listeners to raise a hand pointing one finger upward, thereby making the statement, “I am one person, and I belong to God in body, mind, and spirit.”



WHERE SURRENDER STALLS

Romans 12:2

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Nearly everyone who has attempted complete surrender has found that one level of our being nearly always becomes a roadblock. Though we have surrendered our heart to God and we desire to bring our behavior into obedience, something stands in the way. That something is what we have labeled the soul—our will, thoughts, and emotions. Paul refers to this as “your mind” in Romans 12:2. Between your heart (your capacity to love) and your senses (your capacity to act), stands your soul (the capacity to think, feel, and choose). That’s where surrender often gets stuck. The purpose of this message is to lead listeners to experience renewal of the mind, will, and emotions.

Key Idea: You must renew your mind.

INTRODUCTION

Begin by talking about a personal experience in which you observed a child discover a new ability. Some examples of this are learning to walk, learning to speak, or even throwing a temper tantrum. Make the point that all people have a desire to be independent; we have a free will and want to make choices, and that can become a barrier to surrender to God.

Punch Line: You are more than meets the eye. You have a mind, will, and emotions. And each one of these elements of your being can be a roadblock to surrender. Today, we’ll discover practical ways of surrendering your inner life to God.

Visual Idea: Consider using the diagram Where You Get Stuck from page 88 of *Surrender* to set up the basic elements of soul surrender. Be sure to note that the term *soul* is used as a synonym for the term *mind* in Romans 12:2.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This matters so much because the inner life of thoughts and emotions can be deceptive. We may even deceive ourselves about our true motives or our true level of surrender. That will leave us feeling frustrated about our lack of spiritual progress. To grow in grace, we must identify the roadblocks to surrender in the inner life.

KEY POINTS

1. Renew your mind.

Define the mind as the ability to think and reason, a basic element of personhood. Note that both thought and reasoning can be flawed and need renewal. Offer suggestions for renewing the mind through learning, spiritual disciplines, and taking part in community.

2. Renew your emotions.

Define emotions as our capacity to feel. Note that while emotions can be tremendously positive and useful, they also have the power to derail our lives and dethrone our reasoning. Offer practical advice for renewing the emotions based on choosing to love the right things and practicing self-awareness.

3. Renew your will.

Define the will as the capacity to choose. Observe this is a great gift but it is often used thoughtlessly or selfishly. Offer suggestions for renewing the will by subordinating our ambitions to God, selecting positive challenges, and seeking accountability.

INVITATION

Nearly everyone has a soul strength in the area of mind, emotions, or will. Some people are thinkers, others feel deeply, still others are decisive people of action. Those can be great strengths but also significant roadblocks to surrender. Invite listeners to identify their soul strength and surrender it to God.

Possible Call to Action: Ask listeners to visually demonstrate the surrender of their soul strength by either bowing the head (to symbolize surrender of the mind), placing a hand over the heart (to symbolize surrender of emotions), or lifting their hands (to symbolize surrender of the will).



SURRENDER REQUIRES SELF-AWARENESS

Romans 12:3

MESSAGE SUMMARY

It is tempting to think of surrender as a purely individual exercise. It is not. While surrender begins as a transaction between God and the individual, it is ultimately a communal matter. Our lives are intertwined with others' lives; therefore, our surrender to God cannot be complete until it spreads outward to envelope our relationships. In order for this to happen, we must become more aware of ourselves. Love for others must accompany love for God, and that love is moderated by self-knowledge. This echoes Jesus's Golden Rule, "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31). Right treatment of others depends on a right assessment of ourselves. We can't have one without the other.

Key Idea: Self-awareness is vital to the surrendered life.

INTRODUCTION

Begin with a lighthearted story about your own lack of self-awareness in a particular situation. Make this anecdote self-revealing, but keep it humorous or positive. Make the point that we don't always see ourselves clearly.

Punch Line: You cannot love others fully until you see yourself clearly. Today I'm going to ask you to take a hard look at yourself and see what God sees.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This message is important because everybody has blind spots that can be barriers to spiritual growth. Often, it is those closest to us that must point out our blind spots. When we are unwilling or unable to admit our own faults, we cannot grow.

KEY POINTS

1. Self-awareness is vital to surrender.

Consider using the Holiness diagram on page 112 of *Surrender* to illustrate the link between surrender, self-awareness, and love of others. Point out that love of self is implicit in Jesus's command to love God and others (Matt. 22:37–40). Mention that most people tend to err by either examining themselves too much (which leads to paralysis) or too little (which results in ignorance). Call readers to the practice of self-awareness.

2. Self-awareness must be practiced intentionally.

Point out that practicing self-awareness is not an end in itself but should lead us into deeper relationships. Introduce the idea of emotional intelligence. Challenge readers to be involved in small groups or other relationships that can aid in developing self-awareness. Ask listeners what they will do to increase their self-awareness.

3. Self-awareness leads us to greater surrender.

Talk about the ABCs of surrender, which begins with awareness. When we have “sober judgment” of ourselves, we are able to implement our gifts. That leads to Becoming, which we see throughout Romans 12, where knowing ourselves leads to serving others. Finally, we arrive at Connecting. When we are self-aware—but not self-absorbed—we are freer to connect with others.

INVITATION

Challenge listeners with this question: “If you have a blind spot in your spiritual life, how will you find out about it?” Call them to a thorough practice of self-awareness that will reveal the truth about themselves so that they can love both God and others more deeply.

Possible Call to Action: Consider placing a mirror or mirrors in the room and asking listeners to go to a mirror, look themselves in the eye, and say, “I will not hide from you or from God.”



SURRENDER DEEPENS RELATIONSHIPS

Romans 12:9–10

MESSAGE SUMMARY

As we are changed through our surrender to God, that surrender changes the way we relate to others. We become more transparent and more honest, and we relate to others in a deeper way than before. The purpose of this message is to challenge readers to engage in more authentic relationships through the practice of integrity, sincerity, honesty, and priority.

Key Idea: When you surrender to God more deeply, you will love others more fully.

INTRODUCTION

Begin with a self-revealing story about a relationship that grew (or failed) because of the practice of honesty. Transition to making the point that surrender leads to an accurate self-assessment and a willingness to embrace community (Rom. 12:3–8). In other words, we see ourselves more clearly, and we are willing to invest in others more fully. That change of heart in turn changes the way we relate to others on a practical level.

Punch Line: When you surrender to God more deeply, you will love others more fully. Today we'll see four ways to deepen your relationships with others.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This matters because holiness cannot be experienced in isolation. It's tempting to spiritualize our surrender to God, believing that it is purely a matter between him and ourselves. In fact, that isolated version of holiness is incomplete. To experience the fullness of the Spirit, we must engage in relationships with others.

KEY POINTS

1. Surrender to God produces integrity with others.

Point out that integrity is a hallmark of relational depth. To have the relationships Paul describes in Romans 12:10–17, we must be whole persons. This wholeness is God’s work in us, though we reinforce that work with accountability. Challenge listeners to identify roadblocks to integrity, such as insecurity or hidden sin, and surrender them.

2. Surrender to God produces sincerity toward others.

Mention that sincerity is a second hallmark of relational integrity. Sincerity is the opposite of hypocrisy, which is pretending to be something we are not. Sincerity means not dealing falsely with others or acting in self-interest. Lack of sincerity manifests itself in role playing. Challenge listeners to identify any insincerity or hypocrisy in their relationships and surrender it.

3. Surrender to God produces honesty with others.

State that honesty is a third hallmark of relational depth. Describe the fact that this results from a thorough self-knowledge. When we are honest with ourselves, we can be honest with others. Explain that while love is kind, it is not blind. Loving others requires being honest with them in loving ways. Challenge listeners to identify any points at which they are not being fully honest with others and to resolve to practice honesty in those relationships.

4. Surrender to God leads to placing a priority on others.

Mention that priority is a fourth hallmark of relational depth. Paul urged us to “be devoted to one another in love” and to “honor one another above yourselves” (Rom. 12:10). Remind listeners that this prioritization of relationship is not based on attractiveness or desirability but on love. Mention the barriers to relationships that affect our lives, such as busyness and selfishness. Challenge listeners to identify relationships in their lives that should be given higher priority and to make changes accordingly.

INVITATION

Challenge your listeners with a “what if” question. Ask them to consider how their lives would be different right now if they had made relationships a higher priority in the past, or if they had been more honest or open to others. Ask also how their lives might be different in five years if they resolve now to practice integrity, sincerity, honesty, and priority in their

relationships. Call them to identify the one relationship they could invest new energy in, then challenge them to do it.

Possible Call to Action: After praying for the courage to engage in deeper relationships, ask listeners not to leave the auditorium without telling one person about their resolve to invest in a relationship. The person they tell about this resolve does not have to be the person who is the object of their resolution.



SURRENDER WIDENS RELATIONSHIPS

Romans 12:13–16

MESSAGE SUMMARY

God's love is expansive, and our love for others must be broad as well. It isn't enough to have deeper relationships with a few people. If my deeper love for God is to mirror his love for me, then it must widen to include others—many, many others—people who think and act and speak and dress and look and worship much differently than I do. We must navigate the uncertain territory that lies beyond our comfort zone. We must get beyond our need for familiarity and similarity, and beyond our desire to avoid difficulty. And all begins with getting beyond our primary obstacle to love: ourselves. The purpose of this message is to call listeners to stretch themselves beyond similarity, familiarity, and even difficulty to form authentic relationships with those who are different from themselves.

Key Idea: To love God fully, we must love those who are different from us.

INTRODUCTION

Share a self-revealing story about a time when you were forced to go beyond your comfort zone in forming a relationship. Present this as a positive experience, making the point that you were personally changed for the better by a relationship that was challenging at first. If you have difficulty thinking of such an encounter, you could share any experience when you were changed for the better by trying something new.

Punch Line: When you are fully surrendered to God, no person is outside his love—or your comfort zone. Today I'm calling you to get over yourself and get involved with others.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This matters so much because we are constantly in danger of defining God on our own terms. We may come up with a “god” who thinks like us, looks like us, and acts as we do. When we do that, we miss out on experiencing the fullness of God’s character and his love. Extending ourselves include those who are different, forces us to confront hidden areas of our lives that are not surrendered to God. It drives us to know God more fully and reflect his love in our lives more completely.

KEY POINTS

1. Love takes us beyond familiarity.

Point out that we usually want to stick with what’s familiar, our comfort zone. However, when we love others as God loves, that will cause us to enter into their lives—even when they are messy or challenging. Remind listeners that fellowship (or sharing) is not simply about resources but about sharing in the lives and circumstances of others. Talk about hospitality, and point out that welcoming others is an expression of love. Ask listeners to consider who they might be overlooking or avoiding showing love to because they are different.

2. Love takes us beyond similarity.

Note Paul’s use of the word *harmony* in Rom. 12:15 and point out that harmony requires blending different tones to make a pleasing sound. Mention that we create harmony by identifying with people in a variety of situations and rejoicing or supporting them. We also create harmony by identifying with people in a variety of positions, both higher and lower than ourselves. Ask listeners to consider what they might contribute to the lives of those who are different from them, and what those others might contribute to your listeners.

3. Love takes us beyond difficulty.

Point out that extending love in broken or strained relationships may be the most challenging aspect of broadening ourselves. Admit that these relationships cause wounds and can lead us to be defensive. However, remind listeners of Paul’s instruction in Rom. 12:17–19 that we should aim to live in harmony even with those who have wronged us. Ask listeners to consider what broken relationships they might mend, or to identify grudges that they might surrender.

INVITATION

Ask listeners to consider what their “relational range” might be. Begin by wrapping your arms around yourself to illustrate a closed posture toward others. Extend your hands a foot or two apart to indicate some openness toward others. Then extend your arms as wide as you can to illustrate the expansive love of God. Challenge them to make the choice to love others as God does.

Possible Call to Action: Invite listeners to come forward for prayer if they would like God to stretch the boundaries of their love for others, or perhaps ask listeners to lift both hands into the air, palms up, as a symbol of their openness to God and others.



SURRENDER ESTABLISHES THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT

Romans 12:2

MESSAGE SUMMARY

True surrender originates from a heart fully devoted to God. This establishes the Spirit-to-spirit connection that Paul described in Romans 8:16: “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” Such people are “led by the Spirit of God” (Rom. 8:14), not living in fear (v. 15) but enjoying the full confidence of favored children (v. 17). This deep connection with God enables us to know and do God’s will in all aspects of life. This is what Paul meant when he wrote, “Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (12:2). Surrender makes that possible because surrender establishes a deep connection with the Father. The purpose of this message is to lead listeners to seek a deep, Spirit-to-spirit connection that will enable them to walk in daily communion with God.

Key Idea: When you are filled by the Spirit, you are able to live in obedience to God.

INTRODUCTION

Begin by sharing your journey to experience the fullness of the Spirit, if you feel you can do so authentically. Or you could begin by recounting Wayne Schmidt’s personal journey in Chapter 15 of *Surrender*, or the story of a biblical character who grew to live in step with the Spirit, such as Peter, Paul, or John. Make the point that walking in step with the Spirit becomes a lifestyle that includes thought and behavior that is transformed to do the will of God.

Punch Line: Surrender is more than a choice. It becomes a lifestyle as we learn to walk in step with the Spirit. Today I’m inviting you to establish a deep connection with the Holy Spirit.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This matters because many believers experience episodes of contact with the Spirit rather than the fullness of the Spirit in their lives. They may have periods of victory followed quickly by seasons of spiritual defeat. This is frustrating and discouraging. By surrendering fully to the Spirit, we are able to live a truly transformed life in which the Spirit guides our thoughts, words, and actions.

KEY POINTS

1. When we are led by the Spirit, we experience conviction.

Point out that Romans 12:2 describes our ability to know God's will for our lives. Point out that the conviction of the Spirit is one of the principal ways we can discern God's will. Define conviction as a clear sense of God's prohibition of something in our lives. Conviction is God saying no to sin or to a course of action. Also mention the importance of collective conscience, in which we allow ourselves to be led by others who have a clear sense of God's will. Ask listeners what they could do to be more aware of the Spirit's conviction.

2. When we are led by the Spirit, we experience affirmation.

Define affirmation as the flip side of conviction. This is God saying yes to some action or ambition. Mention that many people have difficulty discerning God's affirmation because they hold a distorted view of God as angry or vindictive. Ask listeners to consider what God may be giving permission to do or release from doing in their lives.

3. When we are led by the Spirit, we stay in tune with the Spirit.

Describe the idea that God communicates with us through subtle means as we read Scripture, pray, or seek his voice. While we have "guardrails" of Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason to guide us, God does speak individually to us. Mention that many people are cynical about this aspect of spirituality, but that it has been experienced by both biblical heroes such as Moses and Mary, and by ordinary people today. Ask listeners to consider what the Spirit may be speaking to them now.

INVITATION

Point out that experiencing the fullness of the Spirit requires openness. Mention the concept of spiritual deafness, and urge listeners to remain in touch with the Spirit through spiritual disciplines, especially daily prayer. Invite listeners to practice the “Ten Second Rule” by responding with action within ten seconds when they are reasonably sure that God has asked them to do something.

Possible Call to Action: Invite listeners to pray aloud—all together at the same time—professing their openness to tune in to the Spirit’s voice. Mention that though the practice may seem awkward at first, listeners will quickly feel a sense of being “alone in the crowd,” speaking personally with God amid many voices.