

Study Series: Absolute Surrender

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Lesson Title: “Impossible with Man, Possible with God”   
(pp. 132-143)

Session 11

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The main point of this lesson is: Absolute surrender means acknowledging we cannot accomplish in our lives what God expects—only He can do that work—and living accordingly.

Focus on this goal:To help adults discard the myth they can do what God expects from them and allow Him to do in them what they cannot

Key Bible Passage: Luke 18:27

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Invite volunteers to identify things they absolutely cannot do. Ask: Do you find it negative, positive, or neutral that you simply can’t do some things? Declare: Absolute surrender means acknowledging we simply cannot do what God expects of us, and it also means regarding that impossibility as positive.

Step 2. Man Cannot, Part 1

Identify from Day One (p. 133) the two lessons every person needs to learn. State those two lessons are obvious in Jesus’s interaction with the rich young ruler. Read Luke 18:18-27.

Explore why the ruler was crushed. Explain the disciples were confused because their culture taught wealth was an indication of God’s blessing. Evaluate why Jesus required absolute surrender from this man (refer to Session 7, Day One, activity 2, p. 84). Consider how Jesus demonstrated confidence in God’s power.

Explain learning the two great lessons from Luke 18:27 comes in stages in the Christian life. Identify those three stages (listed in Day One, activity 2, p. 134).

Ask: Does the adage, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again” work in the Christian life? Why? How does that adage describe the first stage of fighting the impossibility of serving God?

Determine what happens when a believer finally submits to, but doesn’t accept, the truth that it’s impossible to serve God (refer to the last paragraph of Day One, p. 133). Declare: We don’t want to stop at this stage of defeat and despair, but move on to the third stage of joy and victory.

Step 3. Man Cannot, Part 2

Request adults consult the first paragraph of Day Two (p. 134) and state how both God and the believer play a role in moving to that third stage.

State that Romans 7 teaches that a person can delight in God’s law and determine to obey it and yet fail miserably. (Romans 7 will be explored in-depth in the next session, so just refer to it here.) Determine what more is needed beyond a love for and a desire to obey God’s Word.

Draw attention to the pull quote in Day Two (p. 135). Read Philippians 2:13.

Discuss Day Two, activity 2 (p. 135). Remind participants a life of absolute surrender is a life filled with the Holy Spirit.

Invite a volunteer to read the Day Two paragraph (p. 135) beginning with “This is the first great lesson . . . .” Ask: How can it possibly be to our glory to be helpless?

Invite volunteers to share some thoughts they may have had about being absolutely surrendered to God over the course of this study. Encourage them with the author’s words (p. 135), “If you felt you could not do it, you are on the right road, if you let yourselves be led.”

Step 4. God Can, Part 1

State: Once we work through the three stages of the first lesson, we’re ready to learn the second lesson. Read that lesson from Day Three (p. 136). Discuss Day Three activity 1 (p. 136).

Invite a volunteer to read the pull quote in Day Three (p. 136). Remind participants this book was first published in 1897 and although the truths are timeless, some vocabulary might be outdated. Determine words that better fit in the place of “religious” in that quote. Assert the Holy Spirit should flow out of us in every aspect of our lives, and that can only occur when we recognize and rely on God’s omnipotence.

Discuss Day Three, activity 2 (p. 137). Declare God will train us to trust Him as the omnipotent One just as He did Abraham. Use the last paragraph of Day Three (p. 137) to briefly detail that training.

Step 5. God Can, Part 2

Analyze how many believers tend to live a “Bootstrap Christianity.” Acknowledge we want to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps, asking God for a little help along the way, but relying primarily on ourselves. Ask: In contrast to that mentality, what must be our attitude if we want a life of joy, strength, and victory?

Read the Day Four pull quote (p. 138). Consider what it takes to reach the point of making that declaration (reference Peter’s story from Session 10).

Discuss Day Four, activity 2 (p. 139). Examine how these scriptural truths can energize and encourage us as we pursue sanctification. Add to the discussion with remarks from the last paragraph of Day Four (p. 139).

Step 6. God Can, Part 3

Read Ephesians 3:16-19. Ask: How might absolute surrender be less daunting and far more exciting when we recognize it’s simply the means of having the fullness of Jesus within us? How is that absolute surrender possible?

Read Ephesians 3:20-21. Invite a volunteer to read the last paragraph of Day Five (p. 141). Discuss Day Five, activity 2 (p. 141).

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Challenge participants to pause several times throughout each day this week to worship God as good and omnipotent, then to declare, “God, I can’t, but You can.”

Close in prayer.

