

Do the Opposite

The reason why I am going to share this lesson with you is because a deep sense of honesty and community is appealing to me.

And I have a feeling it is appealing to all of us. We just don't know how to go about getting there.

So let's talk about it....

How many of you will be honest this morning and say you have turned a situation over to God, and then in a day or two taken it back again?

Imagine....It's 6:20 in the morning..... I'm drinking my coffee, walking around our living room, tears are streaming down my face..... and I'm praying....

God, I give you my future..... I abandon the need to have my own way. I'm not trying to control other people. Lord, I have placed everything in your hands.

A few seconds later, I'm thinking..... But what if this happens? Or what if that occurs?

I had surrendered it to God, but now I've taken it back. And I don't just do that with circumstances. I do that with my behavior.

I ask God to make me a conduit of his love.... I am deeply sincere about this.

Then you go to the grocery store and buy a different brand than what your wife wanted and when she asks why you bought that brand..... You find yourself saying, you couldn't find your brand.....but you really didn't look. It was a lie.

Earlier you had surrendered your mouth to God.... but now there is this lie coming out.

It's like the little girl in Sunday School when she was asked what a lie is: "A lie is an abomination unto the Lord and a very present help in the time of trouble."

Here is another example, you try to return something and the person tells you that you can't return it....and you get angry.

But earlier that morning you prayed to God, grant me peace to accept the things I cannot change.

But now I'm angry with a person behind the desk because they are following the rules.

There was a TV character named George Costanza (Pic on Screen) who was such a loser that one day he realized, every decision he'd ever made has been wrong. His life was the complete opposite of everything, he wanted it to be. Every instinct he ever has, in every aspect of life, be it something to wear, something to eat.....it was all wrong.

He landed on a new life strategy called Do the Opposite. When it came to work, relationships, conversations or decisions, whatever he would normally do or say he would just do the opposite. And it worked out remarkably well. For one episode.....but he was unable to keep doing it daily.

How many understand that surrender isn't a one-and done-action----we must do it daily. So what if we took the approach of doing the opposite and acted against our automatic responses. And did it daily.

Look at **Luke 22:39 CSB "He went out and made his way as usual to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he told them, Pray that you may not fall into temptation...**

(45)....When he got up from prayer and came to the disciples, he found them sleeping...

(49) When those around him saw what was going to happen, they asked, Lord should we strike with the sword? Then one of them struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear.... (51) But Jesus responded, No more of this! And touching his ear, he healed him.

Notice....the disciples slept....Jesus did the opposite, he prayed...

Simeon struck Malchus with a sword. Jesus did the opposite, He healed him....

Peter lied....Jesus did the opposite....He told the truth.....Peter cursed..... Jesus did the opposite. He stayed silent. Peter ran away....Jesus did the opposite He stayed... Simon Peter spared his life.....Jesus did the opposite and gave up his life.

Jesus didn't fight his way to victory, He did the opposite; he surrendered his way to victory.

Jesus did not use a Sword to defeat his enemies orhe did the opposite.....He used Fruit...

Do not walk after the flesh but walk according to the Spirit" means to not follow what you are naturally inclined to do....instead do the opposite live by the Holy Spirit,

People naturally use war and conflict to settle disputes..... Jesus did the opposite; he used peace. People complain, and use anger to control the situation....Jesus did the opposite and used patience. People are self-indulgent. Frank Sinatra sang I did it my way!!!Jesus did the opposite and used self-control. nPeople are prideful, look at what I'm doing, Look at what I've done.... Jesus did the opposite and used meekness.

People are disrespectful.....People cut in line....People will push and say get out of my way..... Jesus did the opposite and used gentleness.

People are rude.....I just tell it like it is....Jesus did the opposite and used kindness.

People feel hopeless and despair.....Jesus did the opposite and for the joy set before him....endured the cross. Hope despite the hardship.....

He looked beyond the pain and saw the birth of the NT church....

People are distracted....they might spend their time watching TV or scrolling through social media to avoid confronting the difficult reality.

Jesus did the opposite and used hope. Hope keeps your attention on a desired outcome rather than letting it wander to irrelevant things.

People are disobedient....Jesus did the opposite and used faith. True faith leads to obedience.

People are selfish.....Jesus did the opposite and used love.

Jesus conquered Self, Satan, and Sin by doing the opposite of everyone else.

For example, if we're depressed and feel like staying in bed all day, get up and get moving.

- If we are anxious and want to avoid people, start a conversation.
- If we're angry and in attack mode, remove ourselves to calm down.
- It turns out that no one ever taught this more consistently than Jesus.
- If we want to be exalted, do the opposite and humble ourselves.
- If we want to be great, be a servant.
- If we want to truly live, die to ourselves.
- If we want to be rich, give.
- If we want to be free, surrender.
- If we want to take revenge, forgive.
- If we want strength, acknowledge our weakness.
- If we have sin and want to hide it, confess it.

If we want credit for something, keep it secret.

Do the opposite...

Don't know if you remember but two weeks ago we talked about Alcoholics Anonymous and the Twelve Steps. It turns out that at the core of the Twelve Steps involves doing the opposite.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — (anger, pride, unhealthy sites, ego, money, S.E.X. work....that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We're entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

For instance, when we think we need to try harder, we admit our helplessness.

When we think we are too far gone.... Do the opposite and believe God can restore us.

When we want to control our circumstances and other people.... Do the opposite and surrender it.

When we are pierced by guilt or shame and we want to numb ourselves by consuming a drink, or a drug, or an unhealthy web-site.... Do the opposite and take inventory of ourselves instead.

When we feel naked and ashamed and we don't want anyone to know the full truth about ourselves.... Do the opposite and confess it to God, and to another person.

The twelve steps are doing the opposite of our human inclination.

Look at how it works.. God brings good out of evil.....

Resurrection out of crucifixion. Light out of darkness.

Hope out of despair.

The way of Jesus is to do the opposite..

Let me wrap this up..... **In authentic surrender we give up ego and selfishness but not initiative and courage.**

Jesus took initiative to go to the temple and drive out the money changers.....

Jesus had courage; he didn't run from the cross.

So Jesus had initiative and He had courage.....what He surrendered was ego and selfishness.

Let's pray this prayer together....

God, grant me the serenity (calm, peace)

To accept the things I cannot change,

The courage to change the things I can,

And the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,

Enjoying one moment at a time

Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace,

Taking, as he did, the sinful world as it is,

Not as I would have it,

Trusting that he will make all things right

If I surrender to his will—that I may be reasonable happy

In this life and supremely happy with him forever.