



Week 7
NO MORE HALF STEPPING

All in. God wants your entire commitment, dedication, focus, and effort. Ever heard of a professional athlete who shows up for only half of the practices all season long? Me either. That athlete would either be released or be reminded that giving his full effort is part of the deal. Giving our full effort to the advancement of God's kingdom agenda is part of our deal too. Far too many men offer God a half-stepping approach to spiritual development and then expect God to show up and secure the victories they need. It doesn't work that way.

What would happen if you did your job at only half the effort required?

What would happen to a professional sports team if its players showed up for only half of its practices?

If you want to be a man of great impact and spiritual significance, you need to go all in. Effort. Consistency. Dedication. Hard work. Diligence. These are the markers of a kingdom man who lives with no more excuses. Let's learn together what it means to go all in for God.

Ask someone to pray before watching the video teaching.

WATCH

Use these statements to follow along as you watch video session 7.

The missing key to seeing God move in the life of a man is surrender. It is when we place all of our strength at God's disposal. It is when we take all God has given us and place it under His control.

We will forever be giving excuses when we do not allow ourselves to be owned by the Master.

Holy: to be set apart as unique or special

God says, "Do not let this system that leaves Me out become the dominating influencer in your life as a man."

You can't think like the world thinks if you want to get what heaven has to offer.

Every day you get up, you've got to let God know He owns you.

We can't be the real deal unless we are really surrendered and we give God everything we have got. We allow our strength to be submitted to His direction. We allow Him to define our identity.

God will feel comfortable hanging out with you because He knows you are surrendered to Him.

If you will give God the key to your life, give Him ownership of your existence, put your strength under His supernatural control, get up every day and say, "Own me, God," He will invade your manhood and your masculinity.

MAN UP

Use the following questions to discuss the video teaching.

Read the following verse together.

*I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies
a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your
spiritual service of worship.*

ROMANS 12:1

When the Titanic struck the iceberg, one important tool was missing from the lookout crewman's possession—the binoculars. Without the binoculars the lookout crewman wasn't able to detect the iceberg and warn the captain of the upcoming danger in an adequate amount of time. As a result, when the ship struck ice, a hole was ripped open in its side, allowing water to enter and sink the massive vessel. One missing tool created a catastrophe. Similarly, when men seek to live their lives apart from the wisdom and security of full surrender to God, catastrophes ensue. Surrender allows each of us to live our lives in alignment with God's will.

Dr. Evans defined *surrender* as "placing all of our strength at God's disposal." How would you explain the concept of surrender in everyday, practical terms to a friend?

During Old Testament times the priests made regular animal sacrifices as acts of worship on behalf of the people. These sacrifices included the killing of an animal on an altar. In no situations did the animal die on the altar, only to get back up, hobble down, and head back out to pasture. Once dead, always dead.

Yet that's exactly what most of us do with our spiritual sacrifice of surrender to God. We crawl onto the altar and tell God we're fully His, only to return later to our own thoughts, ways, and desires. We crawl back down off the altar when we want to, only to hop back on it when it's convenient, when we attend church, or when we have a crisis in which we need God to intervene.

Why do we so often give half-hearted effort in our sacrifice to God?

When Paul instructs us to present our bodies as "a living and holy sacrifice," what percentage of our time, talents, and treasures is he talking about? Explain your answer.

On the video Dr. Evans said if you surrender, "you'll discover that [God] will invade your manhood and your masculinity at a level that will blow your natural mind as a man. And now you will be the man you need to be." In other words, God will show up and work in and through you to influence others for His kingdom purposes. Not only that, but you'll experience what it's like to fully actualize all you can and should be as a man who's surrendered to His plan for your life.

When has God shown you that His ways are far superior to your own?

Dr. Evans used the example of dishes that are set apart for special use. Unlike everyday dishes, these dishes sit in a cabinet or remain on display, awaiting a holiday or special guests before they're used. This example illustrates what it means to be holy and set apart by God for His special, unique purposes.

What are some ways men disqualify themselves from special use by God?

Many shortcomings disqualify us from God's use. First and foremost is a lack of surrender to His will and purposes for our lives. There's no such thing as half surrender. God has a great plan for you, but you hold the key to whether He will carry out that plan in your life. That key is called surrender.

What's one small step you can take this week to increase your level of surrender to God?

PRAYER

Close the session with prayer.

Father, in a world full selfishness, You ask us to surrender. You ask us to lay down our ambitions, dreams, and desires and to replace them with Yours. We want to do that, but at times it's hard. Will You guide us in the process of learning how to surrender more fully to You in every area of our lives? In Christ's name, amen.

HIT THE STREETS

The Blessings of Being All In

Jesus pronounced an eightfold blessing on people who live authentic, committed lives of faithfulness and obedience to Him (see [Matt. 5:3-12](#)). We call these blessings the Beatitudes. They arise from three distinct attitudes toward ourselves, God, and others. Let's look at all three.

1. A Proper Attitude toward Self

Kingdom men who are blessed by God maintain a proper attitude toward themselves. They're "poor in spirit" (v. 3). They recognize their complete dependence on God. To be poor in spirit is the opposite of being rich in pride. The happiness that comes to those who see their spiritual poverty is that "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (v. 3). They're the ones who have their prayers answered, who see God intervene in life's circumstances, and who enjoy their Christian walk.

Kingdom men not only see themselves as poor in spirit but also mourn (see v. 4). When Peter was confronted with his sin, he broke down and wept (see [Mark 14:72](#)). When Paul recognized his sin, he cried out in spiritual pain (see [Rom. 7:14-24](#)). When we feel the pain of God over our sin, we experience His comfort.

2. A Proper Attitude toward God

Kingdom men are also meek, or gentle (see Matt. 5:5), and they “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (v. 6). Meekness isn’t synonymous with weakness. The term referred to bringing wild horses under control. A trainer took an uncontrollable, rebellious horse and broke it to the bit and bridle. When the process was finished, the horse was said to be meek. The horse didn’t lose its strength, but its strength was under the control of the trainer. The blessing for men who are meek or gentle is that “they shall inherit the earth” (v. 5). Only meek Christians will see God take the earth and make it work for their benefit.

Kingdom men also have a deep appetite for the priorities and purposes of God. The blessing God has for hungry and thirsty Christians is that “they shall be satisfied” (v. 6).

3. A Proper Attitude toward Others

Kingdom men who are blessed by God possess a proper attitude toward others. Men who are merciful (see v. 7) put grace into action. Just as God looked down and pitied us in our hopeless, sinful condition, we must also show pity to others. The blessing for givers of mercy is that they’ll also be receivers of mercy. If we’re too busy to help others, God will be, so to speak, too busy to help us.

Kingdom men are also “pure in heart” (v. 8). They don’t have to edit their lives. With pure men, what you see is what you get. The blessing for the pure in heart is that “they shall see God” (v. 8). That is, they’ll see God operating in their lives.

Kingdom men are also peacemakers (see v. 9). They pursue unity, not divisiveness. They seek to pull people together, not tear them apart. God will ensure a strong, vital testimony for men who keep “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3).

Finally, kingdom men are “persecuted for the sake of righteousness” (Matt. 5:10). The idea here is to look so much like Christ in our actions and attitudes that what happens to Christ happens to us and for the same reason it happened to Him. The blessing for men who are persecuted and insulted for identification with Christ is a great reward in heaven.

BIBLE STUDY 1

The Chicken and the Pig

A chicken and a pig were walking down the street one day and came to a grocery store. A sign in the window said, "Bacon and eggs needed." The chicken looked at the pig and said, "Let's help the grocer."

The pig responded, "You must be crazy. For you that's just a contribution, but for me that's a total commitment!"

That's the way a lot of men feel about kingdom life: "Hey, I don't mind contributing a little here and there. But let's not go overboard. Let's not go as far as total commitment." Total commitment to God and His kingdom sounds a little too risky for a lot of men, as if the kingdom life will cost them too much. So they give a part of themselves to Christ but hold back the rest in case kingdom life gets too demanding.

Read the following verses and answer the questions.

One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

MATTHEW 22:35-39

What are some reasons we stop short of loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind?

List practical, everyday examples of loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

Which of these two commands do you find hardest to obey, loving God or loving other people? Explain your answer.

Paul calls us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to God:

*I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies
a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your
spiritual service of worship.*

ROMANS 12:1

Paul is commanding whole-life devotion to God. By definition a sacrifice was killed, yet Paul calls us to remain living sacrifices. We're literally to be the walking dead. How is this possible? Paul's description of his own life offers insight:

*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live,
but Christ lives in me.*

GALATIANS 2:20

Crucifixion was a painful and shameful way to die. It was the Roman way of making sure someone was fully dead. When Paul said he was "crucified with Christ," he meant His desires, goals, and preferences were dead and had been replaced with God's will for Him. God's goals had become Paul's goals. God's desires had become Paul's desires. The only life Paul had was the life of Christ. That's why no one could intimidate this man (see Phil. 1:21-24).

Think about your desires, goals, and preferences. Are any of them out of sync with God's desires, goals, and preferences for you? If so, what are they?

What would it look like to crucify your will in these areas to pursue Christ wholeheartedly?

Which of these desires, goals, and preferences would you be most tempted to hold on to even though you know it's outside God's plan?

Notice that Paul never wrote in Scripture, “If you want to be committed, go to church.” Worship starts with the commitment of our lives, not with our church attendance or our small-group Bible study. Although we should go to church and participate in Bible studies, they, in and of themselves, don’t fulfill our commitment of total sacrifice to the Lord. It’s tragic that so many people worship God on Sunday or participate in small groups but ignore Him—or even worse, worship themselves—the rest of the week. When we’re living sacrifices, every activity of our lives becomes an act of worship. To worship means to ascribe glory. It’s what we think about, what we invest our time in, what we focus our lives on, and what we offer as attractive to others. Worship encompasses our whole lives. It isn’t limited to Sundays.

When we refuse to give God all of ourselves, whom are we really worshiping? How does that reality change the way you think about your devotion to your own desires?

What are some ways we worship ourselves in our secular society?

How can we counter this trend to surrender to God’s call to full life devotion?

The greatest men in the kingdom of God understand that life isn’t all about them. We’re on a team, and our owner is the Lord. We play for Him. We produce for Him. We create for Him. We invest effort for Him. After all, He owns us. He paid the price. He covers, protects, and provides. What better way to honor God than by giving Him everything we have?

The problem is that many of us have settled for half-hearted worship of God, which is actually fully devoted worship of ourselves. When we make ourselves the center of our lives, we miss out on the life God has for us. We make excuses and refuse to give God what He requires—all we are. In doing so, we settle for half a life. God has promised us a full, abundant life (see John 10:10), but to take hold of that life, we must surrender to Him.

How could a community of men like your small group help us remain fully devoted to God? Why do we need accountability?

Commitment is contagious. When one athlete works harder in the gym or plays better on the field, the other players often improve their performance as well. We need others to help us walk the Christian life. Many men suffer because they force themselves to be on an island. God has given us community to pursue Him together. Take advantage of it.

What's one way you'll display deeper commitment to God this week?

PRAY

Ask God to show you any areas of your life in which you're holding back from full commitment to Him. Ask Him to give you the desire to surrender your heart, soul, and mind to Him and to do whatever it takes to lead you to that commitment.