

Walk in the Truth // SWAP (Part 1)

2 & 3 John

I. INTRO

- A. Both 2 and 3 John contain much of the same material as 1 John
- B. John wants fellow believers to cling to the truth of Jesus as they obey Jesus and love one another. He summarizes this desire poetically in these two lines:
 - 1. 2 John 4 reads, *"I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children **walking in the truth**, just as we were commanded by the Father."*
 - 2. Similarly, 3 John 4 states, *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are **walking in the truth**."*
- C. As a parent of two daughters, and a pastor, I understand John's sentiment.
- D. I don't really care whether my kids are astronauts, zoologists, stay-at-home moms, or whatever it might be when they grow up
- E. What I do care about is that they are walking in the truth.
- F. I also feel this for our church family
 - 1. I want each and every person who comes through our doors not to learn religion or lots of Bible trivia, but to learn how to walk with Jesus
 - 2. I don't want to gauge Revolve's success by our size, budget, or anything else → I want you to walk in the truth, to walk with Jesus
- G. This isn't just John's desire. The Apostle Paul expresses similar desires...
 - 1. John speaks of "walking in the truth," Paul of "walking in the Spirit."
 - 2. Galatians 5:16 says, *"Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."*
 - 3. Then in verse 25: *"If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."*
- H. John and Paul are using different language, but they are painting similar pictures
 - 1. For John, an intimate life with Jesus is described as a life lived in the light and truth of who God is – living in response to truth
 - 2. For Paul, it's a life lived under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit
- I. Notice the word both of them use: walk → walk in the truth; walk in the spirit
 - 1. Walking isn't something you do once and then you're done
 - 2. It's one step, followed by another step, followed by another
 - 3. Walking WITH Jesus, WITH the Spirit, IN the truth
 - 4. Implies time... close proximity... a candle to the path... lock step...
- J. That's the Christian life. It is learning, moment by moment, to live with God. Learning to hear him, trust him, respond to him, and follow him
- K. So the question I want to answer today is practical: **How do you walk with the Spirit? How do you walk in truth?**
 - 1. Where do I start tomorrow morning?
 - 2. When I'm at work, raising my kids, sitting in class, making a decision, fighting temptation, or trying to figure out what God wants me to do... how do I actually keep in step with the Spirit?
- L. Almost ten years ago, I read a book called Spirit Walk (many of you have read it)

1. In it the author explained the process of walking in truth, walking with the Spirit using the acronym SWAP.
2. I want to take this week and the next to explain the SWAP process biblically as we learn to walk in truth together

II. What is SWAP?

- A. SWAP is an acronym that refers to swapping out YOUR will for GOD'S will
- B. *Romans 12:1, I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*
- C. To SWAP is to lay yourself on the altar of God as a living sacrifice
 1. Having received the mercies of God... in light of the mercies of God...
 2. the reasonable response (our spiritual worship) is not XYZ religious activity, but → laying yourself, YOUR OWN LIFE, before God
 3. YOU are the offering → made holy by Jesus, now on the altar
 4. The problem with **living** sacrifices is that they like to crawl off
- D. Although SWAP comes across as a 4 step process, that's really not true
 1. The 4 parts of SWAP sometimes happen sequentially, sometimes simultaneously, but they are each indispensable to walking with God
- E. So what does SWAP stand for?
 1. **Surrender** to His will and His every word
 2. **Wait** on God in prayer
 3. **Avoid** sin and let God root out all unrighteousness
 4. **Pursue** the promptings of the Spirit
- F. As we learn to walk more in step with the Spirit, as we walk in truth, we experience the fruit of the Spirit → love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

III. S = Surrender → the posture of surrender is a posture of ceding control to the LORD. Consider some of the illustrations used in the NT:

- A. In John 15, Jesus taught that the Father is the farmer, Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches. As a branch cannot produce if it is broken off, apart from him we can do nothing
 1. We cannot manufacture the life-giving sap of the vine
 2. The Father's job is to prune, weed, water, fertilize, and tend
 3. We must stay put, abide, dwell, stay connected to Jesus, remain
 4. A branch has to surrender to the fact that it is not the vine, not the farmer
- B. In 1 John, John said to walk in the light as he is in the light and the light of Christ cleanses us from all sin. We surrender the light and truth of Christ
 1. It illuminates truth about God, and we are called to fall in step w/ that truth
 2. It reveals sin in us and we are called to repent of that sin
 3. It blesses us with fellowship with God and one another
 4. In 1 John he unpacks "walking in light" as obedience, truth, and love
- C. In Ephesians 5:18, Paul says to not be drunk with wine, but instead to be filled with the Holy Spirit → e.g. Surrender to HS control instead of wine's control
 1. Wine shouldn't influence our decisions or behavior

2. We shouldn't be "under the influence" of anything but Jesus
 3. A person surrenders to whatever influences them
 4. To be under the influence of alcohol leads to sin; to be under the influence of the Spirit of God leads to the fruit of the Spirit, righteousness
 - D. Building off of Jesus' teaching, in Col 3, Paul says that we should let the Word of God dwell, or abide, in our hearts richly to the point that it overflows into our lives
 1. When we are filled with God, we are surrendering our space, our bandwidth to his truth and purposes → walking in his truth
 - E. Our goal is to be so rooted in Jesus (Jn 15; Ps 1), so full of his truth, so overflowing with his presence that it pours out of us and onto those around us
 - F. Surrender is all about CONTROL. **Who (or what) is in control of your life?**
 - G. Truthfully, we don't really like the idea of surrender as Americans. In Christian circles you often hear people talk about "commitment." People say things like:
 1. She's very committed to church
 2. He's very committed to his faith
 3. I'm committed to reading my Bible or to my Discipleship Group
 4. I just don't think I can commit right now. I have a lot going on.
 - H. The problem with commitment is that you are still in control
 1. You can be committed to God, the Bible, church, giving, etc, but you still call the shots. It allows wiggle room for you to shift gears.
 2. Commitment can even be self-centered b/c it is built on YOUR efforts
 - a) Lie: "God is blessing me b/c I am so committed. He owes me."
 3. Surrender, on the other hand, implies that you have ceded all control to someone else → God, have your way.
- IV. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
- A. *Luke 22:39–44, [39] And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. [40] And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." [41] And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, [42] saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." [43] And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. [44] And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*
 - B. Imagine what it would have been like to be Jesus
 - C. We read, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." and it's easy to read it without any inflection of your voice, without any emotion in your reading
 - D. But imagine what was going on in Jesus' heart and soul
 1. He knew he would die
 2. He knew he was innocent
 3. He knew he would be flogged, beaten, mocked, stripped and humiliated
 4. He knew there would be pain, yes, but even more - Jesus was about to bear our sin and endure God's judgment against it
 5. The innocent lamb would receive the full wrath of God

- E. But it was the only way...
 - 1. The only way to pay the full penalty for sin
 - 2. The only way for reconciliation between Creator and creature
- F. Jesus is in agony, wrestling, stressed, anxious
- G. His emotional turmoil cascades into the physical world as sweat falls like drops of blood to the ground
- H. In that moment, Jesus doesn't just need GRIT to be committed to the task
 - 1. He doesn't need Peter to tell him to "man up" and rub some dirt in it
- I. He needs to SURRENDER to the Father. Will he trust that the father's plan is best? Will he trust that the Father won't abandon him? That he knows what he's doing?
 - 1. "Not my will but yours be done."
 - 2. Jesus recoils from the horror of what he is about to endure... and yet willingly submits himself to the Father's will
- J. He's not just committed to seeing it through, he's surrendered to God's character
- V. The Blank Page
 - A. In his book, Steve Smith illustrates this concept of surrender with a contract
 - B. We tend to write the terms of our life and then ask God to sign
 - 1. I'd like to do this, live here, make this much money, be successful, have 2.5 kids, live in a nice neighborhood → would you bless it please, Lord?
 - C. Or maybe you're willing to push a little bit more:
 - 1. God, I would like to be generous and give 20% of my income away (if you would just please ensure I have enough to enjoy my lifestyle...)
 - 2. I will go be a missionary in Malaysia, (but I will live in the main city def not a village)
 - 3. I will talk to that guy about Jesus (but only if he asks me, 'will you please tell me about Jesus?')
 - 4. After writing our own terms, we push the paper across the table to God (in prayer) and ask him to sign → that's commitment
 - a) I will do this, you will do that → like a cease fire
 - D. But Surrender has no strings attached
 - E. Surrender grabs a blank sheet of paper, signs the bottom, and hands it back to God → surrender does not negotiate terms or details
 - 1. Trusting in God's goodness to do the right thing even though it's unknown
 - 2. Trusting anything he takes away is only b/c he has something else
 - 3. Trusting that discipline is painful for a season, but eternal joy is greater
 - 4. Trusting that you don't have to be in control, manipulate, hold on, etc
 - F. Surrender is the most logical, reasonable, spiritual response of worship
 - 1. Not to prove that I am awesome
 - 2. Or for God to prove he's trustworthy → he already did that
 - 3. We surrender because at we were purchased with his blood → my only hope in life and death is that I am not my own but that I BELONG to Him
 - 4. Surrender is your response of worship
 - 5. To sing songs of praise while willfully walking in impurity is not surrender

6. To be one person on Saturday night and a different person Sunday morning is not surrender
7. To live a spiritual double life is not surrender
8. To have a secular and sacred divide in your life, telling God he can surely speak into your marriage and your church, but not into how you run your business is not surrender

G. Paul says that SURRENDER is your reasonable response as worship

VI. SURRENDER

A. The question = **Who or what is in control of your life?**

B. What is “influencing” you → your decisions, your life

1. Is it the Lord? His every word, his every will?
2. Is it your spouse calling the shots on your life?
3. Is it your kids, and fears about all the what if’s of life?
4. Is it people? The future? Your Job? Your bank?
5. Is it your own desires? Your wants? Your dreams? Your plans?

C. How about YOUR contract? **Have you already filled it out and now you are just waiting for God to rubber stamp His approval?**

1. “God, I’ll follow you, but I won’t _____.”
2. “I’ll obey you unless _____.”
3. “You can have everything except _____.”

D. Imagine if Jesus didn’t sign that blank paper

1. Sure, he would have avoided some temporary discomfort
2. But then he wouldn’t have been the savior of the world
 - a) The enemy would have won

E. What would it look like for you to sign the bottom of that blank page?

1. What fear is holding you back?
 - a) “If I tell God I am willing to go to Africa, he might send me!”
 - (1) Maybe, maybe not

F. Don’t just grab a paper and sign it. Pray about this. Take it seriously.

1. Lord, what’s on my paper?
2. What am I unwilling to release to you?
3. What am I afraid you might do?
4. What do I just not want to do?

G. Spend time fasting and seeking the Lord this week and the next (Podcast)

H. Next week we are going to talk about the process of how to hear from God, but it all hinges on whether or not you have this heart posture of surrender

1. Not my will, but yours, be done...

I. *Romans 12:1, I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, **which is** your spiritual worship.*