

Compliance Versus Surrender

Working with clients who have issues that keep them from fully following the Lord and enjoying the abundant life is always a challenge. Many staff find themselves happy to work with agreeable clients who never seems to rock the boat. These clients seem to “really be getting it” until they leave and immediately relapse.

Should we be pleased with and try for compliance in our clients, or is there a bigger, better option?

The Israelites had compliance, David had surrender.

Law keepers had compliance, New Testament Christians learned surrender.

Compliance is a result of control.

Surrender is a result of giving up control.

Compliance can be about group-think.

Surrender is an individual decision and commitment.

Compliance promotes blame-shifting.

Surrender promotes self-responsibility.

Compliance is a formula.

Surrender is a life-style.

Compliance accommodates the temporary.

Surrender is about the permanent.

Compliance is about relationship with humans.

Surrender is about relationship with God.

Compliance is so much easier to work with than resistance, that sometimes I am tempted to promote it. However, compliance can obscure inner reservations which surface at inconvenient times. The most difficult and regrettable characteristic, though, is to observe the compliant person who is not surrendered merely treading water.

We have the responsibility of discipling those who come to get their lives changed. Discipleship has some great benefits and some huge challenges. We need to give a balance of these when we are working with people young in their faith. Every person has his or her own dictionary of word meanings. Submission is one of those words that can be inflammatory. Whether you are teaching submission or surrender, make sure you are emphasizing that God is the recipient. You are not teaching them to surrender to you or the Mission's rules. That would look more like compliance. You are helping them see the benefit of surrender to God's will for their lives.

One of the largest stumbling blocks for our clients to achieve long-term sobriety and life-change is lack of honesty. We must help them to see God's view of dishonesty, call it what it is, and challenge them to reject it. Lying is more than speaking an untruth. Cover-up, misrepresentation, manipulating, and misleading, are all lies. Help clients to see that compliance is merely an effort to prolong the refusal to change.

Submission is something I do to human forces around me. (Submit ye one to another). Surrender is when I let go and let God, give in and give over. This action couples with acceptance of God being the Lord of my life.

I do not celebrate compliance, but I rejoice in surrender.