

**Gathering Question:** List your top five indispensables. Be honest with each other! If you could buy insurance for only one of your top five, for what would you buy it? Why?

## Releasing Our Grip

All to Jesus, I surrender, all to him I freely give.  
I will ever love and trust him, in his presence daily live.

I surrender all; I surrender all.  
All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.

Can you sing those words with all sincerity and honesty? Even if we can honestly sing the words, do we understand what they really mean? If we are really honest with ourselves are we more like Ananias and Sapphira, who kept back a little for themselves but wanted everyone else to think that they were truly surrendering all. Unlike Christ, our tendency as human beings is to avoid surrendering anything.

Jesus exemplified the most perfect act of surrender when he gave up his place in glory to come to the earth, take on human form, and to die for us. If we are truly going to follow Jesus' example, what will that mean for us? Sometimes the very things we hold on to so tightly are the things that rob any real joy from our lives. When we let go we may be surprised by the freedom we find. As we release our grip, we may discover that the things we thought we needed to hold on to were in reality holding on to us.

The Academy Award-winning film *Terms of Endearment* opens with a scene any parent can relate to. The main character, Aurora, enters a dark and quiet nursery to check on her infant daughter. Wondering whether the baby is still breathing and alive, she pinches her until she wakes up. As the movie goes on to depict, during the next several decades of her daughters life, Aurora's concern and care grow into an overbearing attitude of control that affects her daughters marriage and children. Aurora's problem? She couldn't let go.

For you, it might not be a son or daughter. It may be your planned out life, or a position you have finally achieved, a dear relationship, or even a material object. We all hold on to something, either afraid to let go or unwilling to entrust it to someone else. Maybe we are afraid, or maybe our grasping to something makes us secure. Whatever the reason, it is very hard for us to let go.

**Read:** Hebrews 12:1-3; Philippians 2:1-8; Acts 5:1-11

### **Reflect:**

1. After reading Hebrews 12, what are we told to set aside? What should be the focus of our lives? How will that focus change what we hold on to?

2. What did Jesus surrender when he came to the earth as a child? What did he release or let go of? Why is that important for us to know?

3. What feelings do you have about Ananias and Sapphira? Pity? Repulsion? Kinship?