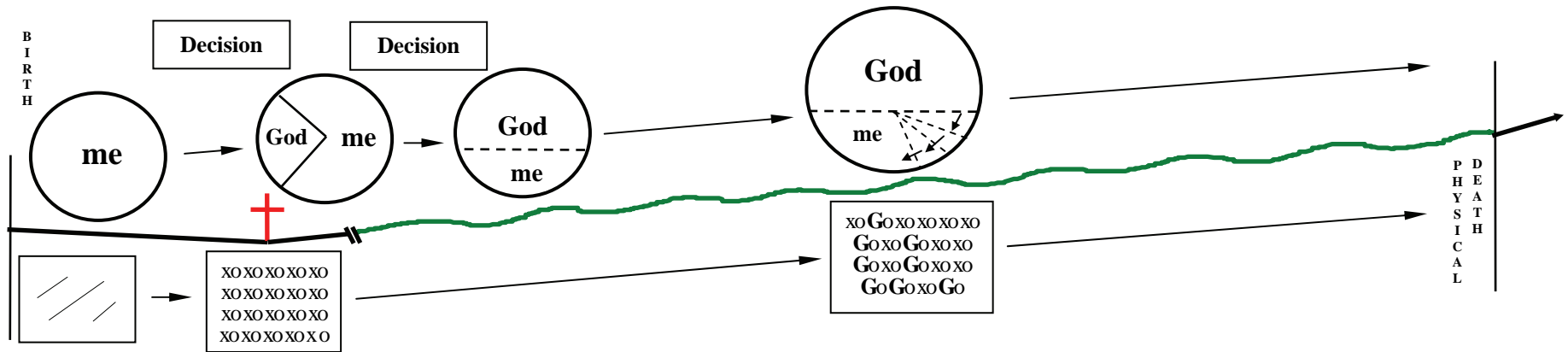


# THE NORMAL PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHRISTIAN



**CONSIDER:** Surrender consists of two parts.

1. First there is a **decision** to surrender the **will** (an acknowledgment of His ownership of my life and the obvious implications of the Master-servant relationship, that is, His “Lordship”).
2. This decision is then followed by the daily **process** of yielding up areas of my understanding and behavior. The Holy Spirit seeks my cooperation in allowing Him to transform me into an increasingly mature and fruitful Christian.

**CONSIDER:** A **one-time surrender** of the “will” precedes a **progressive yielding up** of “behavior”.

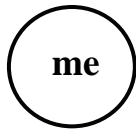
**CONSIDER:** “**Inward transformation**” will produce “**outward behavior changes**”.

*“True surrender is not simply surrender of our **external** life but surrender of our **will** -- and once that is done, surrender is **complete**. The **greatest** crisis we ever face is the surrender of our will. Yet God **never forces** a person's will into surrender, and He **never begs**. He patiently waits until that person **willingly** yields to Him. And once that battle has been fought, it **never** needs to be fought again.*

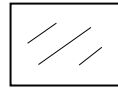
*Jesus says, "If you want to be My disciple, **you must give up your right to yourself to Me**." And after you surrender -- then what? Your entire life should be characterized by an eagerness **to maintain unbroken fellowship** and oneness with God.”*

(Taken from *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers – Sep. 13. (c) 1935 by Dodd Mead & Co., renewed (c) 1963 by the Oswald Chambers Publications Assn., Ltd., and is used by permission of Discovery House Publishers, Box 3566, Grand Rapids MI 49501. All rights reserved.)

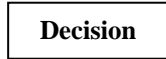
**Let's Go Through The Above Diagram Step-By-Step.**



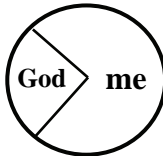
This circle represents the unbeliever.



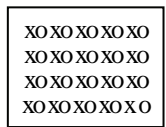
At birth our mind was like an empty blackboard.



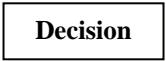
Through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, the unbeliever must recognize his/her hopelessness, and make a “**decision**” to call out to the Lord for forgiveness and salvation.



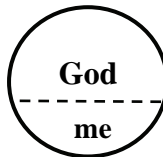
The new believer receives eternal life (an **event**) and the Lord begins to dwell in the believer in the Person of the Holy Spirit. During this phase it is natural for the new believer to be focused on “external behavior”.



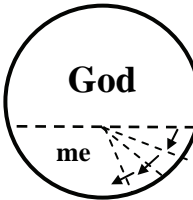
This graphic represents the understanding about life, values, etc. that has been acquired from birth to conversion as a result of the influence and learning from parents, peers, media, culture, etc. That understanding does not disappear at salvation. The believer now needs to learn to walk with the Holy Spirit as a habit. **The function of discipleship is to facilitate that process.**  
**Note:** Much of this understanding is contrary to God, but He alone can correctly manage the process of transformation.  
**Note:** X = Understanding that is contrary to God      O = Understanding that is not necessarily contrary to God



In order for spiritual growth to continue the believer has to come to an agreement with the Lord as to **who** is best capable of managing the growth process. **Preferably this takes place at conversion,** but unfortunately in many cases it is not understood and accepted, until later. Typically, there are three motivations that will help the Christian to make the decision to accept the Biblical Master-servant relationship. They are: 1) **Persecution,** 2) **Crisis,** and 3) **Personal discipleship.**



This graphic represents the believer who has made the decision to yield up his independence, and has acknowledged to the Lord His rightful Lordship of Christ over his life. He understands that God alone is capable of overseeing his life.



**THE GROWTH PROCESS:** As I allow Him, God will use His Word and circumstances to gradually illuminate areas of my understanding that He wants to alter. This process is called “Sanctification” (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:22-24) **“Spiritual growth” is the process in which God’s perspective of life is increasingly becoming the Christian’s perspective.** God does not want the Christian to be a mindless robot, but rather a companion who increasingly enjoys fellowship with Him.



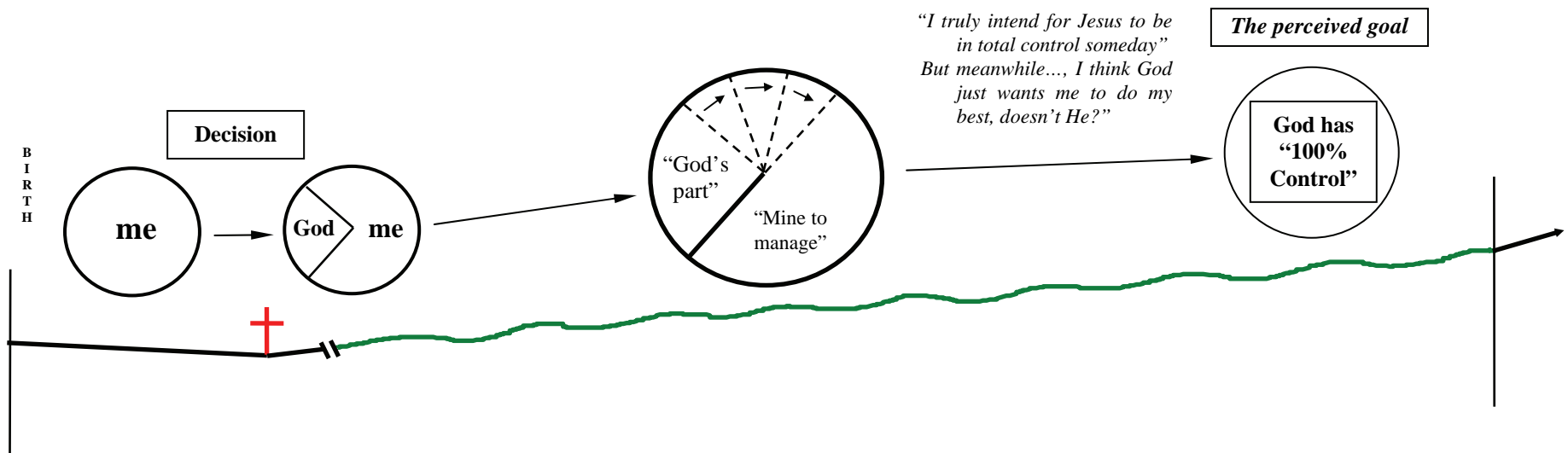
*“As a Christian is **transformed in his mind** and is made more like Christ, he comes to approve and desire God’s will, not his own will for his life. Then he discovers that God’s will is what is good for him, and that it pleases God, and is complete in every way. It is all he needs. But only by being renewed spiritually can a believer ascertain, do, and enjoy the will of God.”*  
 (Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., The Bible Knowledge Commentary, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

**Note:** G = Represents areas of understanding that God has changed to His perspective.

# THE COMMON MISCONCEPTION OF “PROGRESSIVE SURRENDER”

*This Diagram Represents the Abnormal Progressive Development of a Christian.*

**CONSIDER:** Many Christians view their relationship with God as depicted here. A critical error is to attribute to God authority (Lordship) over only a designated part of my life, as if He had not bought all of me. This view of the Christian life usually results from a lack of personal discipleship and/or an unwillingness to surrender one’s will to His Lordship.



**CONSIDER:** If “Lordship” is presented in the context of a “process of incremental surrender” of external behavior the perceived implication is made that a “totally outwardly obedient” life is the logical evidence of that “total surrender” being attained. Typically the believer sees himself in charge of overseeing that process, and this leads to cycles of frustration and discouragement, since who ever considers himself totally obedient?

**CONSIDER:** If “Tithes and offerings” are presented as “God’s share”, the perceived implication is that I have a “right” to manage the rest of my material wealth. If “Time” for attendance at church functions, Bible Reading, etc. is understood to be God’s part, then is not the rest of my hours mine to manage?

## **Problems Associated with the Preceding Perspective:**

### **1. It tends to result in a Christian perceiving God as a threat; such as:**

- a. “What will He ask me to do that I can’t do, or don’t want to do?”
- b. “What will He keep me from doing that I want to do?”
- c. “What will He take away from me that I hold dear?”
- d. “Will God fail me if I entrust this to Him?”

### **2. The Christian views himself/herself as being in charge of the process of spiritual growth,** making the determinations as to what can and should be yielded up to the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Christian sets down the rules and limits. This perception is typically based on **pride**, an inflated view of one’s own discernment and capabilities, and **a distorted understanding of God’s character**.

**CONSIDER:** **There is no reasonable logic for rejecting His yoke of Lordship.** A lack of acceptance is typically based on: 1) a fear of the unknown, 2) an unwillingness to relinquish perceived control, 3) an unwillingness to leave a comfort zone, or 4) an over-estimation of one’s own capabilities to determine and manage their future.

Jesus said: “*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. “**Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me**, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. “*For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*” (Matthew 11:28-30) **Jesus did not say, “learn about Me, and if you like how I do things, then take My yoke!”***

**CONSIDER:** The real question is, **Is God trustworthy?** If God were like you or me, we would have good reason to be fearful.

One should ask: Does God love me? If God’s character is as described in the Bible, and if He promises to do only that which is in my best interest, what then do I have to fear? Did He not design me? Did He not give me life? Does He not maintain my very existence? Who besides God knows what will really satisfy me? Does not He alone know what is best for me? Does not He alone know how He wants to shape my life and use me for His eternal purposes?

**CONSIDER:** God’s **ownership** of the Christian is a factual truth, which is **not** dependent on the believer’s acknowledgment of it. I do **not** bestow ownership, I can only **acknowledge** and **act upon** what He states to be already true. **New** believers will typically not be resistant to this truth, because they don’t have **preconceived** ideas of God’s expectations. In contrast, **older** believers tend to accept this truth intellectually, but be resistant to the implications. What are the **implications** of ownership? What rights or authority are generally understood to be conveyed by ownership? A disciple needs to understand that he lives in a spiritual **“kingdom”**, not in a spiritual democracy.

*Or do you not know that your body is a **temple of the Holy Spirit** who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are **not your own**? For you have been **bought** with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. 1 Cor. 6:19-20*

***If God’s intention were to do you harm or mistreat you, do you really think He needs to wait for your permission?***

# ***Analogy: The Rooms of Your “House”***

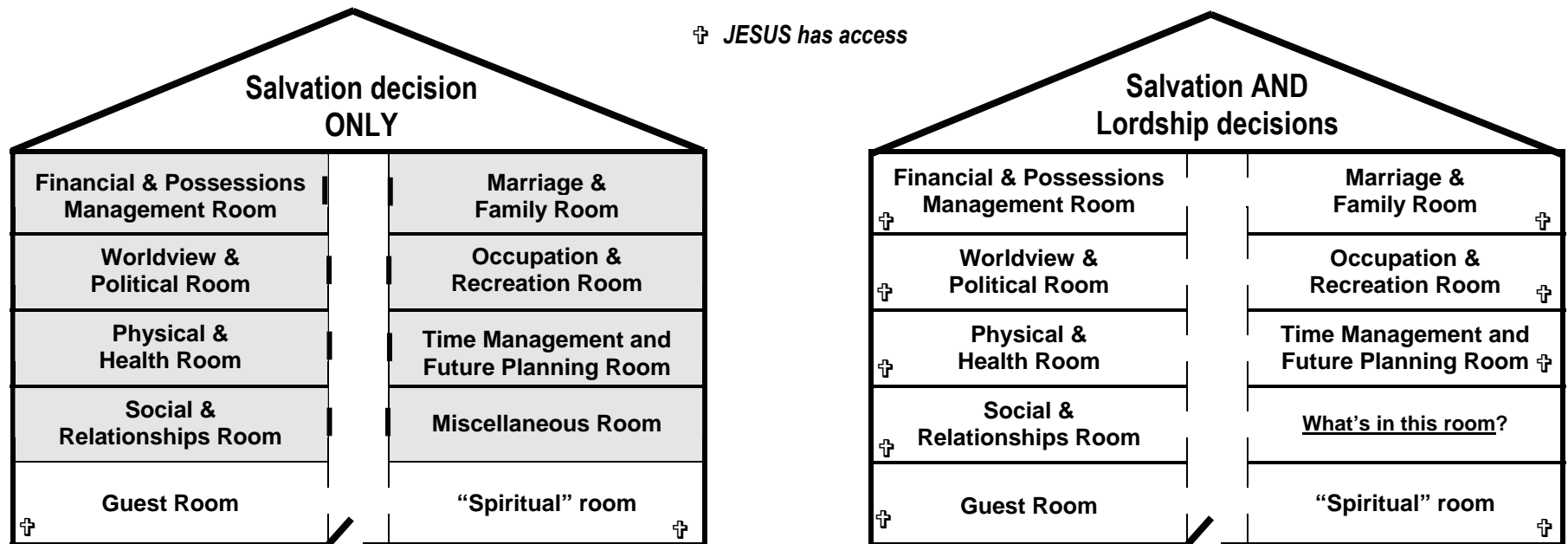
† Does Jesus have access to all the rooms of your house?

## ***A story of two believers....***

When Jesus knocked at the front door of their hearts (Rev. 3:20) and asked permission to enter, both of these persons gladly received Him, realizing that His absence had been the reason for the emptiness they had always sensed (**the Salvation decision**).

As new believers each was overjoyed that Jesus was in his house and that his sins were forgiven. Each had a new happiness and an assurance of going to heaven. Jesus was allowed to occupy the “Guest Room” – which was always kept clean and presentable for visitors – and He was also allowed to reside in the “spiritual” room – where the believer went to church services, prayed and read the Bible.

**But one day soon Jesus asked each of them for permission to make some changes in other areas of their houses**, such as adopting new management procedures, rearranging items, throwing out worthless things, and bringing in some new items. He asked for access to every room. **Each believer had a different response**.



## Salvation decision ONLY

The believer in the house on the left found himself reluctant to grant Jesus' request on the grounds that he was not really prepared yet for major changes. However, he would thoughtfully consider any suggestions, and could probably allow some minor changes that wouldn't seriously disrupt his lifestyle and future plans.

Jesus informed him that He (Jesus) is the only One who is really capable of making the correct decisions as to the above changes, since He alone knows what is needed to make the house into a suitable dwelling for God, one that would be usable for His purposes. Jesus clearly explained His good intentions, even guaranteeing that the believer would be more than totally satisfied with the finished product.

The believer replied that while the offer sounded very attractive, he considered himself to be a good judge of the appropriateness and non-disruptive pace of any changes, based on his past experience. He expressed his appreciation for Jesus' presence and blessings, and his desire to make the Guest Room as comfortable as possible for Him.

He assured Jesus that as time went on, he would certainly give Jesus access to other rooms. "Jesus, I'm thankful You live in my house! I'm really happy to know that I can count on You to be there whenever I find circumstances too difficult to manage.

## Salvation AND Lordship decisions

The believer in the house on the right also found himself reluctant to grant Jesus' request on the grounds that he was not really prepared yet for major changes. However, he had become aware that he had been **bought** at a great price and therefore Jesus was **the rightful Owner**.

He reasoned, "If Jesus is the Owner, how then can I deny Him access to every room of His house?" (the Lordship decision to acknowledge Jesus as **Master of his life**.)

The believer was somewhat apprehensive, as he didn't understand how this decision would impact his future. But he reasoned that since Jesus had done so much for him already it seemed logical that He was trustworthy to continue doing what was in his best interest.

"Jesus, I certainly don't know what You have planned for my life, and to be honest I have some fears. But I do understand that You own me, and that I cannot possibly make the best decisions for my life since I don't know what You want to make of me, nor what is involved in that process. I'm thankful that You do know, and I want to trust You alone to make the appropriate changes."

"Thank you for letting me be part of Your plans. Wow!"

***Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.***

(1 Cor. 6:19-20)

Even though making the Lordship decision gives the Lord access to all the rooms in the house, He alone decides what needs to be changed in each room. The Holy Spirit will manage the changes as He determines best. This is all part of the continued growth process.

WHAT ROOMS ARE IN YOUR HOUSE? Can you trust God with ALL the rooms? Think carefully and prayerfully if Jesus has access to all of your house – He owns it!

***Upon viewing the finished product, nobody will ever regret having made the decision to choose Him as the Manager of their life.***