



## The Dance of Our Life by Dr. Rebecca Dowden

“Living In Soul Motion”, [KKIM](#) Mondays 3pm (CST)

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Are you stressed out and exhausted from trying to choreograph everything in your life? I believe we can all give a big yes to that on any given day. **Jeremiah 10:23 tells us, “A man’s life is not his own it is NOT for man to direct his steps.”** The truth is God wants to lead us in this beautiful dance of life that He has created for us. I love the image of dancing with God. He is our bridegroom and our dance with Him symbolizes the intimacy He desires with us. With that vivid image in our minds today, let’s examine the beauty of surrender and the battle of control.

When my nieces and nephew were young we would all go to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Rodeo in Capitan, New Mexico. The whole event was like stepping back in time to a simpler and more innocent place. We loved watching the cowboys giving their all in the breath taking rodeo events, the beautiful pageantry of the rodeo queens and their majestic horses, and finally at the end, the spectacular fireworks show, but when the last firework had burned out, we knew the fun had actually just begun. We would all head over to the family Barn dance held at the end of the evening. From the very youngest to the very oldest, everyone experienced the joys of laughter and music at these dances. My oldest niece, Heather, was always one of the first to dance with her uncle, my husband. With love, he’d arrange their dancing position—arms and then feet, and off they would go around the dance floor. As we all watch from the edge of the floor, we would chuckle as Heather would slowly move from following her uncle’s lead as they danced to a sideways struggle for the lead position. My husband would laugh, and tell her, “Heather, you’re trying to pass me on the right again...get back in your lane!” Those are definitely some good times!

This sweet story reminds me how we have the same struggle surrendering to God and letting Him lead. In Matthew 10:39, the scripture tells us, “Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.” That death – the surrender- is what brings us life and truly gives us the ability to dance forward. When we believe we can control everything in our lives, we experience depression, anxiety, tension headaches, and stomach issues, just to name a few things. We believe the lie that control will bring us peace, but it is actually surrender that brings TRUE peace that only God can provide. **Philippians 4:7** tells us that “**the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**”

The bible is full of wonderful examples of surrender, but in chapter four of the book of Ester, it tells us one of the most powerful stories of surrender, other than Christ’s ultimate surrender for us. The story is about Ester a common, but beautiful girl who became queen of all Persia. However, while she was queen, an evil plot hatched to kill all of the Jews, who were Ester’s

people. Ester's uncle came to her and pleaded with her to speak to her husband, the king, and beg for his mercy, but Ester refused. She was terrified. If she went to the king without an invitation, she would most certainly be killed, even if she were one of his wives. Nobody could come into the king's presence without being summoned, but in a beautiful, God-lead moment, her uncle asks her, "Ester, what if the whole purpose of you coming to this kingdom was to serve your people in this very situation?" Ester was stunned and her heart was pierced. She knew that she had to surrender her life and fear to God. In that chapter, she says, if I perish, I perish knowing that her surrender meant allowing God to use her in whatever way He willed. She risked her life, knowing that she could trust God, no matter what the outcome, and she ended up saving her people. So like Ester we must be willing to surrender to God and enjoy the dance He has choreographed for our lives.

We all have a desire to lead Like my niece, Heather, at the Barn dance. We believe so often that we know where we need to go and how to get there. Ester also struggled in her moment of surrender. Common sense and protocol told her if she entered the presence of the king, she would be killed. But ultimately, through the wise words of her uncle, she understood that even though she didn't know where God's was taking her, she could trust him, and she was right. God's choreography for her life was going to take her to the center of her king's throne room where she begged for his mercy on the Jewish people and saved them from the slaughter.

So many times in my life I have believed that I knew what was best for me and fought surrendering to God's lead. Several years ago when God was trying to lead me to close my counseling practice, I felt like Abram when God told him to **"Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you."** (Genesis 12:1)

I remember the countless nights I poured out my heart to my husband- I told him through my tears, "I'm dying. I can't do this anymore," I felt so confused. I believed God led me out of teaching and into counseling, and my husband pointed out that maybe God was now leading me out of counseling. I just didn't understand how that could be? For many months, I went to bed exhausted, confused, and afraid. As the time passed and my desperation and confusion grew, my husband urged me to listen to God and follow Him. I knew he was right, of course, and I felt like I was listening with all my might but all I could hear were my own fearful thoughts taunting me. "Close your practice? No way! You'll be giving up. You'll let all your patients down. You'll be a failure. You're just not doing this right. Try harder. Buck up!"

In my refusal to surrender, my physical ailments became louder than my emotional pain. My stomach hurt; my head ached; I couldn't eat; I couldn't sleep. I just couldn't take it any longer. One morning, with my tear-stained face in the pillow, I heard God speak to me as if He were whispering inside my ear, "My precious child, MY grace is sufficient." I wasn't sure what His grace would look like if I took the leap of faith and closed my practice, but I felt so broken I finally surrendered. And since that time, God has led me to some new and exciting place, like this radio program. But at the time, I struggled to hold on to control, my understanding, my common sense, and all it bought me was pain.

If we hold are struggling to hold on to control or let something else control us, we have created idols in our lives and don't even know it. Our very strength may actually become that idol that

gives us the false belief that we can create and follow our own dance. This is especially true when we are hurting from some type of emotional pain in our lives. We may want healing so badly that we are willing to try and pull ourselves up by the boot straps and try even harder. If we are depressed, we think we need to have more positive thoughts and look for the good in the world; if we are struggling with anxiety, we think we need to make more lists and manage our time better - or even – stay away from those things that “stress us out.” If we have marital problems, we think we need to have better communication skills, more “dates,” etc. Obviously, all of these things we think we need to do can improve our lives, but only momentarily when we are leading our own dance by using our own understanding & will.

I recently heard false gods defined as anything we believe will rescue or deliver us. Since the idea of worshipping other gods sounds foreign to us as modern people, I thought that was a wonderful definition and one we could wrap our minds around. How many of us believe that more money, more security, more education, more romance, more hard work – more of our own strength- will save us, deliver us from whatever ails us! I know that I have believed all of those, and can probably slip into believing them again on any given day!

But the “easiest” of these to believe is that my own power/strength will save me, so I chose it as my dance partner. I think it is so easy because society seduces us into believing that and rewards us for it. Unfortunately, we have a society filled with empty, depressed, stressed out people because none of those things can really save us or deliver us so we are left dancing aimlessly.

When I’m depending on my own hard work and strength, I trip over my own two feet, and slip fall constantly. When we work hard to not be depressed, we get more depressed because we can’t do it on our own. If we are depending on our own strength to create security, we only get more insecure because we see how inadequate we are. Obviously, I could go on, but you get the idea. What a paradox! What we are working so hard for and believing only back fires and leaves us with the opposite of what we are striving for.

However, the good news is through our dependence and surrender to God, we are more than conquerors- there is no dance step too difficult, no pace too fast. In Matthew 19:26 **Jesus tells us that man can do nothing without God, but with God** all things are possible. However, we never want this to sound like a platitude. So what does that dance actually look like in our lives? It looks like a living, breathing relationship. We ask God, “What do you want me to do today?” And we listen – He may speak right into our thoughts, He may speak through another person, and of course, He will speak to us straight from His scriptures. God may lead us to do the exact dance steps we would have done anyway or He may lead us to do a completely different dance. Either way, what is important (what surrender looks like) is our willingness to come to Him, to ask, to listen, and to follow His lead.

Are you holding onto control? Where do you feel God leading you that you struggle to follow? What is keeping you from surrendering? Allow your bridegroom to lead in the dance of your life. He is a trustworthy partner and we can enjoy the joy of the dance.