

I Surrender All- October's Hymn of the Month 2023

**By
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Do you ever think about the words and what they mean when you are singing hymns in church? In Ephesians 5:19, the Bible says, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” This verse reminds us of the importance of the hymns in our worship and the importance of content, unto the Lord. With this in mind, may I suggest that to sing *I Surrender All* and really mean it would be a difficult task for most of us. Judson W. Van DeVenter, the author, tells us how his own indecision would result in the writing of this hymn:

For many years I had been studying art. My whole life was wrapped up in its pursuit and the thing farthest from my mind was active Christian service. My dream was to become an outstanding and famous artist. After graduating from college, I studied drawing and painting under a well-known German teacher. To help me financially, I taught school and eventually I became supervisor of art in the public schools of Sharon, Pennsylvania.

It was during this period in my life that a revival was held in the First Methodist Church of which I was a member. I became very interested in these meetings as a personal worker. The Spirit of God was urging me to give up teaching and to enter the evangelistic field, but I would not yield. I still had a burning desire to be an artist. This battle raged for five years. At last the time came when I could hold out no longer and I surrendered my all—my time and my talents. It was then that a new day was ushered into my life. I wrote *I Surrender All* in memory of the time when, after the long struggle, I had surrendered and dedicated my life to active Christian service for the Lord.

Van DeVenter's hymn and hymn story remind us all to be sensitive to the Lord's leading and consequent surrendering. Plus, the content deserves our fullest attention and should cause us to close our lips and search our souls the next time the hymn is made part of our church experience:

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.