Session 1: Surrender Is Not Giving Up

PHASE 1 — FOUNDATION: SURRENDER AND STABILIZATION (WEEKS 1–2) · WEEK 1 — COMING HOME

Date: _____ My craving today (0–10): _____ One word for my week: _____

Before your first group, a licensed counselor completed your assessment, safety plan, and treatment plan. In your first group, your facilitator confirms the counselor plan is in place, without reading your clinical detail.

What we're learning

Many of us mixed up surrender with defeat. Giving up says, “nothing can change,” and it stops moving. Surrender says, “I cannot do this by my own power” — and then it moves. It moves toward help, toward honesty, and toward people who will walk with us. Recovery starts the same way: not with a perfect plan, but with an honest turn toward home — toward help, and toward the people who will receive you honestly.

- Direction, not perfection Surrender is measured by which way you are facing and walking, not by how cleaned-up you feel while you walk.
- Control is the old strategy Naming the specific things we white-knuckled — other people's choices, the past, withdrawal, reputation — shows where surrender has actual work to do. White-knuckled = held on tight with all our strength.
- Help is not humiliation Accepting help from the group, a coach, and a sponsor or mentor is the mechanism of this program, not a sign of failure in it.

Goals for this session

- ☐ I can define surrender in my own words and distinguish it from giving up
- ☐ I can name one area of life I have been trying to control alone
- ☐ I can state how this program works — rhythm, agreements, and who my people are

Check-in

What did it cost you to walk through the door of this program — and what finally made the cost worth paying?

Discussion — write your answers

Write what you would say out loud — and more, if it comes. There is no right-length answer; there is only an honest one.

1. What is the difference, in your own life, between giving up and surrendering?

2. What have you been trying to control that is not yours to control?

3. Who is one person whose help you have resisted, and what would accepting it look like this week?

4. What do you most hope being welcomed back — received honestly, just as you are — means for you personally?

Session 1 — Skill Practice

In pairs: each person completes the sentence, 'I have been trying to control _____, and surrendering it this week looks like _____.' Partners repeat the plan back word-for-word, then ask one question: 'What will make that hard, and what is your plan for that moment?' Switch.

My surrender sentence: I have been trying to control _____, and surrendering it this week looks like _____.

What will make that hard?

My plan for that moment:

My takeaway

The one thing from this session I most need to remember — in my own words:

Homework — this week's application

☐ Write the surrender sentence from the practice in your workbook and read it once each morning this week. Bring one line about how it went to the next session.

Space to do the homework and note how it went:

An optional Scripture handout for this session is available from your facilitator on request.