A Little Bit at a Time

By Donna Whiffen

Webster's dictionary defines *surrender* as "the action of yielding one's person or giving up the possession of something especially into the power of another." The dictionary goes on to say that surrender implies a giving up *after a struggle to retain or resist.* Wow!

I hear the word *surrender* and my memory takes me back to a warm evening as I sat on the rooftop of a house on a small farm in the northwest corner of the island of Puerto Rico. I had climbed up to the roof to get away for a bit and do some thinking. I had been invited to the island for my summer break from college to help a friend and her family in their Christian day school and church. I spent most of my time cleaning, learning to cook, and trying to have meaningful conversations with the family with my limited high school Spanish. I missed my family in South Carolina and I was feeling lonely. My friend climbed up to the roof and tried to keep me company, but she knew I was going through something I had to settle with the Lord.

That night settled it. I surrendered to full-time missions and yielded my person and my possessions into the power of Another. I guess one could say I gave up after a struggle to retain or resist.

Mark & Donna Whiffen and family

Fast forward eight years. I had just landed in Mexico City for the first time. My husband and I were chaperoning high school seniors for what we thought would be a life-changing trip for many of them. What it ended up being was a life-changing trip for us! Although we knew we were going to Mexico City someday, those ten days spent with loving missionaries and nationals cemented in us the desire to make Mexico City our new home. We surrendered again.

Three years later, we were on our way to Mexico City with a two-year old in tow, a baby on the way, and a Dodge Caravan pulling a much-too-big trailer. We stopped at a Burger King for lunch somewhere in Louisiana, and all I could remember was that I was beginning to doubt we were doing the right thing. I walked outside and did laps (eight weeks pregnant) around the Burger King, all the while crying and saying, "Lord, if you do not want us to do this, please stop us, now." He did not, of course. So, I surrendered again.

In the 18 years we have been in Mexico City, I have had to surrender over and over. The night I surrendered on a rooftop in Puerto Rico was only the beginning. The surrender my husband and I made in 1996 to start the long process to get to Mexico City was also a beginning. That surrender got us here, but daily surrenders keep us here.

Each day I have to choose to surrender another area of my life. A speaker once said that when we talk about surrendering our lives to God, we picture giving God $1,000 and saying, "Here is my life, Lord, take it and use it for Your glory." God takes us to the bank and gets the $1,000 changed into quarters. Then He asks us for 25 cents here, 50 cents there, etc., for the rest of our lives. We just celebrated 18 years in Mexico City, but I have found myself even more than ever conscious of the need to give God those pieces of 25 cents and 50 cents He asks of me each day. W