

## Wednesday, October 12, 2011 – Measuring Our Commitment to God

If you look up the definition for the word commitment, chances are you will find several of the following as part of the definition:

- the act of committing or pledging
- the state of being committed or pledged
- an obligation, promise, etc. that restricts one's freedom of action

In all aspects of our lives, from big things to some not so big, life often presents us with the need to make commitments and keep them. Most in the world call for you to “try something” before you commit. But we should understand that if you are going to do something right, “giving it a try” will not get the job done. How would your boss feel if, in your job, you decided to just “give it a try?” How many more marriages would end in divorce if spouses decided to just “give it a try” in making their marriage work? Would our children stand much of a chance, either physically or spiritually, if we just “gave it a try” in raising them?

A commitment demands a determined attitude and requires that we must actually decide to do what we say we will do or is required of us.

In our spiritual lives, God requires a total commitment from us. A total commitment puts God at the head and us as humble, obedient servants. In the example of the disciples, found in **Matt. 4:18-22**, we are told, “**...And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left the nets, and followed him. And going on from thence he saw two other brethren, James the [son] of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they straightway left the boat and their father, and followed him.**” These men were invited by Christ to follow him and immediately they left their families, their business and they even left their equipment just for a chance to follow the Messiah.

It is very easy for mankind to put off God. Unlike bosses or spouses, we don't have to face Him directly. We won't see the consequences immediately that come from our rejection or disobedience. We tell ourselves that we can make it up to God later. This is not the attitude that Christ taught us that we should have. In **Luke 9:59-62**, he gives us an example of the urgency we should have when it comes to following God. The passage reads, “**Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father. Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house. But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."**” There is nothing fundamentally wrong in burying a loved one; there is everything wrong with pushing Christ to the back of the line in order to do it.

Have you ever wondered about your commitment to God/Christ? Have you ever compared your commitment to our first century brethren? Paul, in **Acts 20:24**, gives us an insight into his thinking on the subject. He states, “**But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to**

**myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”** What can we glean from this passage? I believe there are at least two points we can take from this passage.

First, we must possess **Holy courage or moral courage**. This is an attitude that nothing will deter me from serving Christ. While this does not necessarily mean physical courage that can be required of us (v.23). Paul faced chains and tribulation. They don't alarm him or move him. Life is not to be considered so precious as to be retained at all cost. Remember the charge we studied in **Rev. 2:10**, “**Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**” We should be prepared to die for the cause of Christ.

Moral courage often requires a cost. Jesus told His followers, **Luke 14:26**, “**If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.**” What does hate mean? A quick study of **Matt. 10:37**, provides us the understanding: “**He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.**” In context, it means to love less. We are to love everyone and everything less than the Lord. Nothing, not even relationships, should stand between us and God.

Second, we must have a **Heavenly commitment**. Paul determines to “**finish my race with joy.**” No persecution or desire for self-preservation deterred Paul. He understood that the Christian life is a race or a course to run. There will be hills and there will be valleys. What should our attitude be? The Hebrew writer says, in **Heb. 12:1**, “**Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**” We should always remember the ultimate prize which awaits those who “**finish my race with joy.**”

**1 Cor. 9:24 - Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.**

Commitment is needed to finish the race. Finish it with joy. Understand the worth of our prize

**Rom. 8:18 - For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**

Is your commitment to God worthy of that prize?