

Commitment: A Lost Art

Webster defines commitment as a pledge or promise to do something and dedication to a long term course of action; engagement and personal involvement.

Have you sensed as I, the unwillingness of the society that we live in today to make a commitment to any course of action? It seems that we all want to be free spirits without anything to keep us from doing what WE want to do when WE want to do it. Where is our commitment to values, integrity and morality?

We are living in a day and time when we have a 50% marriage failure rate. Many would rather live together without being legally married in order for them to be free to leave if it doesn't work out to THEIR expectations. What about husbands and fathers who abandon their wives and children without any concern for their support, without any regards for the emotional trauma and scars that can affect their spouses and children throughout their lifetime, thereby setting an example that commitment is not important?

Even in the workplace employees and employers fail in the area of commitment to one another, their jobs and responsibilities, quality of products and mutual respect. In politics, commitments to the citizens of this great country made by those in the political arena are made to be broken depending upon how it affects them and their political careers with little or no regards for the people whom they have let down by their failed commitments.

For those of us who are believers, have we been guilty of failing God and those around us because of our unwillingness to make commitments? Even when we do make a commitment we often fail to follow through with that commitment. Some would fall into the category of those who are willing to make a commitment if they benefit by doing so, without any regard for what God would have them do or how it would affect others.

The Word tells us in Matthew 16:24-27 ---"If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will reward each person according to what he has done."

As I read this Scripture, I know that I must ask the Holy Spirit to examine all of my thoughts, attitudes, behavior and words to be very sure they line up with the Word of God and my commitment to Christ. Frankly, there are things that He has revealed in my life over the years that are very humbling and suggest that I am not where I thought I was or where I should be in my walk with the Lord. To be very honest, I don't feel that I am the only one that God has revealed this to. I believe this is God's challenge to all of us. I believe we have been lied to by our flesh and the enemy to compromise our commitment to the Lord by fitting into the world's mould instead of God's.

I am deeply troubled with what I see in our local churches and

throughout the body of Christ. I see commitments to responsibilities that are treated lightly. We promise to fulfill a role in the church and then don't, without saying a word to those whom we made the promise to and see no wrong in it. Sometimes we are asked to fulfill a role that we know God would have us consider, and say we will pray about it with no intention of ever doing it. Even when we hear God speak to us, we resist saying "Here am I, Lord, send me." Why? Because, our freedom in this world is more important than obeying and pleasing God. And yet, we praise and worship God on Sunday morning and whenever the church doors are open and tell Him how much we love Him and are committed to His ways and not ours. Oh! How we must grieve God's heart by our double-mindedness.

In Matthew 28: 19,20 —" Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you---"

What do these verses mean to us? To many it applies to everyone but them, to some it applies to just those in the five fold ministry (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers). But the Word doesn't say that. It says GO to all of us, irrespective of our positions in the body of Christ. Why do we not see that the GO in this text means more than going on a foreign field as a missionary or becoming a pastor? It means taking the gospel to our workplaces, communities, schools, families and wherever the Holy Spirit would lead us. This means not just in words but living a life that reflects Christ, not the world. In order to do this, we must fulfill our commitment that we made to Him at Salvation. There is no need to pray and ask God if we should do this, He has made it very clear in His Word that we MUST. It is a matter of obedience. It is a matter of denying ourselves and resetting our priorities to make the Lord our number one priority on this earth, not our freedom to do as we please, as the world does.

Just think for a moment, if Jesus had failed to fulfill His commitment to the Cross for you and I, where would we be today? (John 3:16)

In closing, let's take another look at the Word of God and how He honors our commitment to Him.

II Chronicles 16: 9 - "For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him---"

Psalms 37:5,6 - "Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him and He will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun."

Let us all review our priorities and how we handle commitment in our lives. We cannot allow ourselves to make life in this world our priority and focus. If we do, we will compromise our commitment to Him and our testimony to the world around us. He cannot bless our rebellion towards His Word. If we are His, then He must be our top priority and the One who deserves our primary commitment and related service. By so doing, the world will come to know Christ by the lives that we live through our commitment to Him.