

Ignoring the Call to Commitment

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose”
Jim Elliot – Missionary martyred by the Auca Indians of Ecuador

“If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice is to great for me to give for Him”
C.T. Studd – missionary to china, India, and Africa

“One of the greatest foes of the Christian is religious complacency”
A.W. Tozer

Commitment to Jesus Christ in the Real World - In the here and now
Commitment to Christ in the here and now means commitment to His church

Scripture: Luke 14:25-33

Supporting Passages: Matthew 10:37, 38; Matthew 16:24-26; Luke 9:23

1. Commitment Requires Choices of Priority:

- A. Christ a priority over relationships – vs. 26a
- B. Christ a priority over love for self – vs. 26b
- C. Christ a priority over plans – vs.27-32
- D. Christ a priority over possessions – vs. 33

People will say, “I’m committed to Christ!”

YET –

- Can’t get to church on time and sit wondering when it’s going to be over
 - Satisfied hearing the Word of God once a week
 - Will have to get up too early to make Sunday school
 - Know the church has numerous needs for people to serve, but I’m just too busy
 - Giving minimal
 - Prayer room (praying with other believers) is just not convenient
- So, just how Committed are you to Jesus Christ?**
- Coming to Church or reading the Bible
 - Trying to do what’s right

Luke 9:23

- ⇒ **“Come after Me”** (Commitment to Christ requires major adjustments)
- ⇒ **Denying Self** (Completely disowning self) – Luke 9:23a
 - Giving up the right to Himself to God
 - To subject oneself entirely to the Lordship and resources of Jesus Christ
- ⇒ **Taking up the Cross Daily** – Luke 9:23b
 - This is more than saying no to yourself
 - It is a total surrender daily
 - A willingness to pay any price for Christ’s sake
 - A willingness to endure shame, embarrassment, rejection, persecution and even death for Jesus sake

“When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die”
Dietrich Bonhoeffer – Director of a German seminary that resisted Hitler

Denying self and taking up your cross is a willingness to leave behind your own plans, and your own ambitions and follow Christ in a relationship of commitment!

2. The Call to Commitment is Ignored:

- A. When we don’t apply it specifically to ourselves
- B. When we interpret commitment on our terms instead of Christ’s terms
Commitment to Christ in the here and now means commitment to His church

Why be Committed to a local church?

1- The Price

The local church was purchased with the blood of Christ- Acts 20:28
*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed **the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.***

2- The Reality

The local church is the visible manifestation of the Body of Christ
Colossians 1:18a - *And he is the head of the body, the church:*

- ⇒ **Church:** A called out group or assembly
(Referred to as the universal church or Body of Christ)
- ⇒ **Local Church:** A geographical group of professing believers who have been baptized and who have organized themselves for the purpose of doing God's will.

3- The Plan

The local church is God's plan for believers:

The Local Church: The Place to be, the place to belong, the place to become
Some may be thinking, "Do not have to go to church to be a Christian"
No but you have to be in church to be an obedient Christian

C. When we are willing to go through the motions of living a Christians life without the commitment

Equivalent to playing church

3. Truths about Commitment:

A. When we are committed, we find a way not an excuse

(See Luke 14:16-24)

Excuses are easy to come up with:

"I don't have time" / "I did not make time"
"I had something else going on" / "I choose to do something else"
"I don't feel like it" / "Not everything we do in life do we feel like doing"
The key question is not, "How do you feel?" but, "Have you obeyed?"

B. When we are committed, we overcome and when we aren't committed, we struggle

Are you characterized as someone who struggles with your Christianity?
Commitment finds a way –

- Do you struggle with faithfulness to church?
- Do you struggle having time alone with God?
- Do you struggle giving to God?
- Do you struggle obeying God?

C. Commitment produces change, if not we remain the same

Commitment changes our plans, impacts our schedule and dictates our priorities

D. Commitment produces action

Life moves in the direction of our commitments

E. Commitment is noticed by others

F. We are shaped by what we are committed to

- Priorities follow what we are committed to
- Finances follow what we are committed to
- Schedules are shaped by what we are committed to

Quote displayed on an office wall –

"My greatest fear is not that I will be a failure,

Invitation:

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself,
And take up his cross daily, and follow me.

"Take up his cross"

Jesus takes the most despised and rejected symbol of his time and says,
"If you want to follow me, take this up."

"Take" - This word indicates that dying is **a choice we make**

- When you are dead, you aren't concerned with the things of this world
- People that are dead don't seem to care very much what other people think of them (Peer pressure)

First question – Have you been saved?

Have you come into a right relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ?

Are you willing to commit your life to do whatever God wants?

Are you willing to get on board with Christ's plan for the church and your part in that plan?

Commitment is putting yourself on the spot!

On the spot before the audience of One - God

On the spot before your family

On the spot before your church family