

How Committed Are We?

Introduction

Read "The Parable of the Popper"

1. **As Christians we must be totally committed to Christ.**
2. **Commitment means:** "an agreement or pledge to do something in the future.....the state of being obligated".
3. **Understanding commitment.**
 - A. **Various areas of life (Wife, Children, House, Job, etc.)**
 - B. ****Jesus** - can't be a disciple without commitment.**

The Commitment of Discipleship

1. **Jesus taught men to count the cost of discipleship.**
 - A. **Jesus told of three would-be disciples:**

Luke 9:57-62 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You **wherever** You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." 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."

- 1) **Were they really ready to follow Jesus?**
- 2) **One must count the cost of discipleship**
 - a. **Requires self-denial**
 - b. **Kingdom must take precedence!**

B. Another example.

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.

- 1) **Christ must be elevated above family and self.**

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

2. **Christ would not ask us to do anything that He would not be willing to do Himself. He is our great example! Notice:**
Philippians 2:1-12
(Emphasize key points --- He humbled Himself)

Paul's Example of Commitment

1. What did being a Christian cost him?

2 Corinthians 11:23-28

- A. He endured much - and did not become discouraged and quit or even reduced his service to God – he was totally committed to Christ!**

2 Corinthians 4:8-10 We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed--always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

2. A Soldier should understand that he must make a total commitment to serve those who enlisted him. A failure to do so would be foolishness and would not be tolerated.

- A. The apostle Paul told the young evangelist Timothy:**

2 Timothy 2:3-4 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier .

3. Paul taught others the necessity of living for Christ.

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is **no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

2 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore **we make it our aim**, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

2 Corinthians 5:15 and He died for all, that those who live **should live no longer for themselves**, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

4. Even facing death, he wrote:

2 Timothy 4:6-8 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have **loved His appearing**.

A. Paul understood commitment to Christ - HE LIVED IT!

The Devil's Effort to Destroy Our Commitment to Christ

- **Does Satan have his grip on us?**

1. **Some are deterred by:**

- A. **False teachers**

2 Peter 2:1-2 But there were also **false prophets** among the people, **even as there will be false teachers among you**, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And **many will follow their destructive ways**, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

- B. **Various temptations**

- 1) **Immorality or just the Cares of the World**

Luke 8:14 And the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and ***pleasures of life***, and bring no fruit to maturity.

2. Many Christians become involved in things not sinful in nature.

A. They put those things first, in direct conflict with what the Lord clearly teaches:

Matthew 6:33 But **seek first the kingdom of God** and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Colossians 3:2 **Set your mind on things above**, not on things on the earth.

1) Paul referred to these kind of individuals saying:

Philippians 2:21 For all seek their own, **not the things which are of Christ Jesus.**

Philippians 3:18-19 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the **enemies of the cross** of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame-- who **set their mind on earthly things.**

B. Temporal concerns and pleasures can choke out your devotion to Christ.

1) Some Christians have even been heard telling of things they took pleasure in doing when they should have been in the worship service.

a. Hunting, Fishing, Camping, Movies Attending Baby Showers, Visiting Old Friends, etc.)

☛ **They are "ENEMIES OF THE CROSS"**

Churches Suffer from Lack of Commitment

- 1. Lack of attendance (worship, gospel meetings)**
- 2. No study**
- 3. Functions become more important than worship**
 - A. school, business, recreation (areas where we DO have choice in a matter)**
 - 1) Can we tell Jesus we are totally committed to His cause when we excuse ourselves from worship to attend these things or making a myriad of excuses when in fact we could be assembling with the saints?**
 - When these things happen it becomes discouraging to the other members of the church.**

The Cost of Not Being Committed

- 1. Costly to the Lord's church - not just financially.**
 - A. Worship services will be lifeless.**
 - 1) No enthusiasm in worship - Committed Christians are enthused Christians!**

B. Poor attendance

- 1) **A distinct difference between the Sunday AM, PM and the Wednesday evening service.**
- 2) **Can't edify or be edified, therefore COMPLAIN!**
 - **Often times those who complain the most are those who do the least.**

C. Few conversions

- 1) **If the Lord's work is not a priority then there is NO personal work going on in our life.**

D. Children of Christians will be lost

- 1) **Leadership by example - Parents are you setting the example? A committed Christian is also a committed parent!**

E. Church dies

- 1) **As membership grows old, members die, few conversions have taken place. It wasn't their priority!**

Conclusion

1. **Seek and knock. The Lord can't hear you if you're asleep.**

Matthew 7:7 Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

- A. A committed Christian is not a sleeping Christian.**
- B. May all of us be awake so that we can join in the work which Christ committed to us.**
- C. Can we honestly say that we have seen our personal commitment to the Lord grow over the past year?**

2. **Read the last verse of "The Parable of the Popper"**

The Parable of the Popper

Behold at the time of harvest the ears of corn did bring forth kernels which were dried and prepared for the popper's hand.

And the popper did take the kernels, all of which appeared alike unto him, and did apply the oil and the heat.

And it came to pass when the heat was on, some did explode with promise and did magnify themselves, yea, even a hundred fold.

And some did burst forth with whiteness, which did both gladden the eye of the beholder and satisfy the taste of the popper.

And likewise, some others did pop, but not too much. But lo, there were some that did just lie there and even though the popper's heat was alike unto all, they did bask in the warmth of the oil and kept everything they had for themselves.

And so it came to pass that those which had given of themselves, did bring joy and delight to many munchers, but those which kept of the warmth and did not burst forth were fit only to be cast out, and were thought of with hardness and disgust.

And thus we see that in the beginning all appear alike, but when the heat is on, some come forth and give their all while others fail and are discarded.

(Author Unknown)

Soldiers of Christ, Arise!

It is 5:00am. The squads are out on the parade ground. The roll is being called. There is an important lecture in a few minutes that all should hear. The sergeant calls out,

"Where's Private Jones?" "Oh," says Jones' buddy, "Jones was out late last night and did not feel like reveille. He said to tell you he'd try to be here next time." "Okay," says the sergeant, "tell him we'd sure like to have him with us when he feels like it."

"Where's Brown?" "Oh, he's playing golf," yelled another soldier. "Said this was the only day he could go golfing." "All right," answered the sergeant.

"Where's Smith?" "He said tell you he has trouble getting up this early - he's still asleep," cries another. "Fine," replies the sergeant.

"Where's Robinson?" "His folks are visiting him," comes the answer, "and they would feel hurt if he didn't stay to entertain them." "I see" says the sergeant.

"Where's Ackerman?" Ackerman's buddy spoke up, "Uh, Sarge, he's mad at something you said in your lecture last week. He told me he wasn't going to come anymore while you were still sergeant." "Sorry to hear that," says the sergeant.

"Where's Snodgrass?" "He has a slight headache," comes a voice, "and thought he would just hang around the barracks today." "Okay," cries the sergeant.

"Is Private Black here?" "No," says a buddy, "he is thinking about moving over to another company; he says this group is not as friendly as it should be."

"How about Alexander?" Says one of the men, "oh, he's quit. He claims you emphasize rules too much."

"Has anyone seen Snavelly?" "He couldn't find any suitable uniform this morning," answers a friend. "He told me he would be back soon as he had a chance to pick out a decent looking outfit."

"Where's Blankenship?" "Right here, Sergeant," says the soldier, "and I want to tell you right now that I'm getting pretty tired of all this tough talk in your lectures and always running down the enemy, calling their name and talking about all kinds of tactics and strategies andSarge, er, Sarge.....where are you going, Sergeant?"

(Author Unknown - Borrowed from the Guardian of Truth Magazine, March 7, 1991)