

Commitment 1: No Matter What**860421**

It seems to me that the word 'commit' means that we have passed from mere thought into the world of action, of actually doing something! Something that we have had in our mind has finally come to pass in deed. It is very interesting that the word commit usually carries with it a negative connotation. When I looked up the instances of the word in the concordance, the idea of 'commit'-ing a bad deed outnumbered the good sense of the idea about 30 to 1. We never say that we 'commit' a good deed. Could we say that we 'committed' a visit yesterday? Hardly; it just wouldn't seem right. But what does seem right in the good sense is 'to make a commitment'. This is the meaning that I feel is very powerful, and one that we should let penetrate our hearts in our service to God. But what action does our commitment produce? Does commitment mean that we only rarely hold fast to our beliefs, or does it mean that we actually become involved?

Let us examine Christ's commitment to us. Christ gave up or let go of the glory of heaven for a time so that he could give us a chance to live. Once he was born of the virgin Mary, he entered this life and he was committed. He was not about to leave until the job was finished. His agony in the garden shows that commitment. Christ's love for man was like a large tree limb which Satan tried again and again to break, but could not no matter how he twisted it and bent it. When I think of Christ's commitment I think of the nails that bonded him, committed him to the cross. And he hung there, giving up his life for our own. In Romans 5.6-8 we read, "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." This is true commitment. Are we this committed?

Let me read an idea that Monroe Hawley had in his book: Searching for a Better Way.

'We were in a canoe in a fast-moving Wisconsin stream. Often the stream would part for rocks, sand bars, logs, or some other obstacle. As we neared the place where the water split I would shout to my partner in the front of the canoe, 'Which side?' He would survey the situation, decide which passage was best and reply. We would both then maneuver the canoe in that direction. Once we rounded a bend, shot through some rapids and were faced immediately with an obstruction. Almost before I could shout, 'Which side', we had quickly entered the passageway. My partner replied, 'Brother..., we're committed! What he meant was, the decision was made, we were on our way, there was no turning back, there was no stopping, there was no changing course.'

When I was in high school, a friend and I played around a lot on a horizontal bar that we had put between trees about 7 feet off of the ground. We would do flips and other gymnastic exercises on it, usually making up things as we went. We would watch gymnasts on TV and try to copy them. I used to be fascinated by the full circle, where you do a handstand on the bar and then with arms extended revolve around the bar until you are on top again. I had never done it before, but had been working on it a little when someone came to the back yard to visit. This was a perfect time to show off, I thought. So I tried the full circle. The only problem was that in my case it was only three quarters of a circle, because by the time I got that far around, I let loose and went flying out into space. The witnesses judged the three point landing a little rough. Naturally, I acted like that was just how the trick was supposed to go, but I nearly bent one of my landing gear backwards.

The lesson from this little experience is simply this: no matter how bad things are, it is better to hang on to something stable than to just let go and suffer the consequences. As long as I held on to that bar, I had something to work with, but the moment I lost my grip on it, I was lost. Our spiritual lives have the same kind of message to learn. We must hold on to Christ, be committed to him, and never let go no matter what happens.