

COMMITMENT

Don Krow

Luke 14:25 says, “And there went great multitudes with Jesus, and He turned and said to them.” At this time in Jesus’ ministry there were multitudes of people who followed Him. The English language doesn’t bring this out, but in the Greek language this is called an imperfect tense. It says, “there went,” which means they began to go repeatedly and continuously. Great multitudes began to follow Jesus, perhaps because of the miracles, or because He fed them. I don’t know the reason, but great multitudes were following Him. He turned and deliberately said something to them, which appears to have caused many of them to turn and follow Him no more.

In many churches today we say, “We’re having revival, and everyone is responding. Look at the masses . . . thousands of them,” but Jesus deliberately said something that caused many to turn away. In Luke 14:26 he said, “If any man come to me [that means wants go with me, wants to accompany me, wants to follow me, this is the requirement], and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” As I looked at that scripture I thought, “Lord you can’t mean that. What does that word “hate” mean? It probably means to love less or something like that.” As I began to study, however, I discovered how the word was used.

I want to share a few scriptures where this word “hate” was used. When Matthew 24:9 says, “ye shall be hated of all nations,” it literally means when one person hates another person. Again in Mark 13:13, “and ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake” literally means to hate another person. When used in Luke 1:71, “That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us,” it is talking about enemies and people that actually hate. This word “hate” is used in Titus 3:3 where it says “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”

Jesus used the strongest possible word to emphasize a point. He said unless you hate your father, your mother, your sister, your brother, even your own life, you can’t be His disciple. I want to ask you something: What is the closest relationship you will ever have on this earth? It’s your mother and father or your spouse and children, and Jesus said unless you hate them, you can’t be His disciple. What happens if your wife turns against you and divorces you, or your mother and father die? Who will stick with you then? It will be your brothers and your sisters, and He said unless you hate them, you can’t be His disciple. What is He saying?

Jesus is talking about the closest relationships we will ever have, and He’s saying, “I’m asking for commitment from you, a commitment in which I am preeminent. I want to be number one in your life, so I’m going to compare My relationship with you to the closest relationship you have on earth, and I’m using the word “hate.” Hate is a metaphor, a word of comparison, and He is saying, “My relationship with you is so important that I want it to be above all earthly things.” But there is one person you love more than your wife, your children, your mother, your father, or your sisters and brothers. Do you know who that is? It’s not God . . . it’s you. You love yourself more than you love your closest relationship.

Why are marriages breaking up? Why are people being divorced? It's because they love themselves more than they love their spouses. "You're not doing it like I want you to, so I'm getting rid of you." Jesus said, "There is one relationship I want to be number one above your own selfish life if you want to be My disciple." This is true discipleship. Jesus Christ is talking about a true commitment; He's not talking about a no-cost discipleship. He's asking us to follow Him. He's asking to be number one in our lives.

When Jesus says in Luke 14:27, "whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple," what does He mean? It probably doesn't mean much to you or me, but over 30,000 crucifixions occurred during the lifetime of Jesus, and when someone talked about bearing the cross, they knew what it meant. People were crucified outside the city; they carried their crosses to the place of execution, and then were nailed to them. Jesus said, "If you want to follow Me you must be willing to endure shame, embarrassment, reproach, rejection, persecution . . . possibly even physical death." He used the same words in Matthew 16:24 when He said to His disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." The words "deny himself" mean that there are times when we have to say "no" to ourselves to refuse what our flesh wants. We have to say it's God's way not our way.

Jesus is asking for a sell-out, 100 percent commitment if you really want to follow Him. I've been married for 28 years and have three children. When I was married, I thought, "Man, this relationship is free." You know what? Salvation is free. I thought all I had to do was go down the aisle, stand before a preacher, have some witnesses, say these vows, and after that it was going to be romance!!! It was going to be a great, wonderful relationship. Do you know what I discovered 28 years ago after that fact? Do you know what it cost me for that relationship? It cost me everything!! It cost me all my wages, everything I have—my property, my name, everything—to maintain and actually walk in that marriage relationship.

Jesus is saying, "Come to Me if you labor and need rest; I am the way. Ultimately, this relationship I am offering you free—forgiveness, righteousness, everything you need—will cost you if you follow Me. Do you want to sit down and count the cost, do you really want to follow Me?" It's not just a momentary faith. It's not "I'll follow Jesus when it's convenient." No, He wants a 100 percent commitment, and He illustrates that truth in Luke 14:28, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he has sufficient to finish it?"

If you want to build a building and you have \$50.00, you don't say to your wife, "I'm going to build a new house for you." "How much money do we have?" "I have \$50.00 in the bank." You begin, lay a few bricks, and everybody laughs at you because you started and didn't have enough to finish. Jesus said we need to sit down and count the cost, "Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish (verses 29-30)." Jesus is asking, "Do you want to follow me, to come after Me? This is a relationship that has eternal significance . . . that demands the utmost importance in your lives. It's a relationship for the long haul." Would you like to follow Him today?

The Bible goes on to say, "Or, what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? (verse 31)." If you had ten thousand men and there was an army coming against you with twenty thousand men, you would need to count the cost. Can I defeat them with these ten thousand men? Will it cost me my life? Will it cost me my kingdom? "Or else, while the other is yet a

great way off, he sendeth an ambassage [delegation], and desireth conditions of peace (verse 32).” If I can’t beat this guy, if I can’t afford to do this, I need to give up and ask for conditions of peace. Then Jesus says in verse 33, “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” He is saying, “I want you to come and follow Me. I want an eternal relationship with you, but this is what it demands: that I be preeminent . . . that you be willing to take up the cross . . . that you be willing to suffer shame, embarrassment, rejection, and persecution for a relationship with Me.” That is a paradox, isn’t it? The Bible says that it is only in losing your life that you really find out what real life is all about. This is a hard message from the lips of Jesus Christ, but it is a message of importance.

God is a jealous God. He wants a relationship with us, but He is asking us to sit down and think about it not do something quickly that won’t last. He’s not looking for a superficial commitment or belief. He doesn’t want Jesus to be tacked onto life somewhere in the background. He is asking to be preeminent in your life. Have you ever thought of making that kind of commitment? Have you sat down and counted the cost and thought about what a commitment it is to follow Jesus?

May God bless you today as you take these truths, consider them, and apply them to your life. He loves you. He’s given His all to you through His Son’s blood on the cross, but He is asking, in return, for a relationship that is more important than all earthly relationships, and even our own fleshly desires in life. God bless you.

COMMITMENT (Outline)

Luke 14:25-26: “And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, ²⁶If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”

Great multitudes of people were repeatedly and continuously following Jesus. Jesus then deliberately said something that caused many of them to turn and quit following Him. Jesus used the word “hate,” as described in these other scriptures:

Matthew 24:9: “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.”

Mark 13:13: “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

Luke 1:71: “That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.”

Titus 3:3: “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”

Jesus used the strongest word He could to get His point across. He’s talking about the closest earthly relationships we have—our own family. What is Jesus saying? He is asking for a commitment, so great a commitment that He is number one in your life, preeminent. He wants us to make such a strong commitment to Him that our relationships with our closest family members will seem like hate relationships.

Jesus is using the concept of hate as a metaphor so we will understand that our relationship with Him is far above all other relationships. We naturally love ourselves more than anyone else on earth, but we must hate ourselves also, in comparison to our love for Jesus.

Jesus is talking about a true commitment, not a no-cost discipleship. He is asking us to follow Him and make Him number one in our lives.

Luke 14:27: “And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”

Jesus is saying that we must be willing to bear shame, embarrassment, persecution, and even death if we are to follow him.

Matthew 16:24: “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

You must say “no” to yourself, refuse your ways, and take God’s way. Jesus is asking for a 100 percent sellout to Him. Ultimately, your relationship with Jesus will cost you everything. You need to count the cost of relationship with Jesus.

Luke 14:28: “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?”

You must have enough commitment to Jesus to pay the cost of the relationship, a relationship with eternal significance.

Luke 14:29-33: “Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, ³⁰Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. ³¹Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? ³²Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. ³³So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

You must forsake all to be Jesus’ disciple. This demands that Jesus be preeminent in your life. This is the paradox—only in losing your life do you truly find your life.

Matthew 16:25-26: “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. ²⁶For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Have you made this commitment to Him? He has given His life for you by shedding His blood for you. He desires to be above all your earthly relationships.

COMMITMENT (Teacher's Guide)

1. What does Luke 9:57-62 teach us about commitment?

A total commitment to God is the undergirding of faith. Some say "I'll serve God as long as it's not going to be hard." The devil does make it hard sometimes. Commitment helps us get up and start in faith again.

2. According to Luke 8:13-14, why have so many one-time professions of faith fallen away?

Not taking time to be grounded in the Word of God, and having no root system, they let the cares of this world take them away from following the Lord.

3. Would you commit your life in marriage to someone who would not commit him or herself to you?

No.

4. According to James 4:4, is it possible to commit spiritual adultery against God?

Yes, you are putting the world before having a relationship with God

5. In Ezekiel 16:8, God uses the illustration of marriage to describe a relationship with His people. Whose possession does one become in this relationship?
See also 1 Corinthians 6:20 and Romans 7:4.

God's.

6. Temporal faith is not saving faith. Jesus gave several examples of a person's faith that lacked true repentance and commitment.

- A. What can we learn about commitment and faith from John 2:23-25?

God will not commit Himself to those who do not commit themselves to Him.

- B. What can we learn from Luke 8:13-14?

We can receive and remain in God's Word and not allow temptations in the form of cares, riches, and pleasures to take the place of God in our lives.

- C. What can we learn from Colossians 1:22-23?

Saving faith is a faith that continues in Christ and is not moved away.

COMMITMENT (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

Note: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being disciplined. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

COMMITMENT

¹ Today, with the revelation knowledge that is flowing through the body of Christ about redemption from poverty, sin, and sickness, our commitment should be even stronger. But among many Christians, even Spirit-filled Christians, there is an attitude that says, "I'll serve God as long as it's not going to be hard." It's true that Jesus' yoke is easy and His burden is light (Matthew 11:30), but our enemy, the devil, does make it hard sometimes.

There have been times when I've been severely beaten in a round with the devil, and I've felt like quitting. It wasn't my great faith that made me get back in the ring; it was my commitment. My faith was the victory that overcame the world (1 John 5:4), but it was my commitment that made me get up and start in faith again. A total commitment to God is the undergirding of faith.

Many people have accepted the faith principles today about healing and prosperity, but they haven't been taught commitment. Therefore, they can shout with the best of them when their desires are manifested, but when the battle is on, and it doesn't look like the Word is working, they are ready to renounce the whole thing. That's because they aren't truly committed to the Lord. They may be committed to getting rich or getting healed, but they aren't committed to God.

I've heard people say, "I wouldn't serve a God who wouldn't heal me or supply my needs." Well, praise God—I would! I thank the Lord that I don't have to. The Bible says that He supplies all my needs (Philippians 4:19) and "by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). But I'd serve Him just because He is my Creator and has revealed Himself to me through Jesus. I serve God for who He is not what He gives. Praise God that He has freely given us all things through Christ (Romans 8:32), but I made a total commitment to Him before I knew He healed today and that He would prosper me. Therefore, if I don't see an immediate manifestation of the thing I am believing for, I'm not tempted to renounce the faith. My commitment is unconditional. My faith is the thing that keeps me from settling for less than God's best for me, but my commitment keeps me from wavering while faith is at work.

¹What does Luke 9:57-62 teach us about commitment?

² One night on the streets of Colorado Springs, I spoke to a man named Mike. He reluctantly let me speak to him about the person of Jesus Christ. He told me that he had turned to Jesus Christ at one time while he was in jail. Obviously, his one-time faith of long ago was not yielding any real change in his life today. Why is that such a common story in so many lives? Why have so many one-time professions of the faith fallen away?

³ How would you like it if you knew that the girl you were about to marry was going to be untrue? Would you go ahead and commit your life to that kind of relationship? I seriously doubt that you would. Why? Because the essence of “marriage” is to forsake all others and to cleave in love to the one you’ve chosen.

⁴ Jesus Christ has likened the relationship to which He has called us, to a marriage relationship (Romans 7:4). Some who have said “yes” to this relationship have remained true. Some have been unfaithful and have committed and are committing spiritual adultery (check it out for yourselves by reading James 4:4). Others have not even met the conditions to begin a relationship although they thought they had. One time the Apostle Paul asked some professing Christians, “Check up on yourselves. Are you really Christians? Do you pass the test?” (2 Corinthians 13:5, LB). Jesus said, “Not every one that has just said Lord, Lord will enter His kingdom” (Matthew 7:21-23).

⁵ So what is necessary to have a lasting relationship? In any lasting marriage relationship we must forsake our adulterous lover and cleave to our spouse. If, in this relationship, we are unloving, wrong or unfaithful, it is called a “transgression” against our “vows.” At these times, it is required that we turn, return, or turn back from that which would hinder our relationship and ask for forgiveness. This is called “repentance.” “Forgiveness” in any meaningful sense of the word presupposes guilt. Undoubtedly repentance is specified as the condition for “forgiveness.” What would you think if a man raped your daughter and said, “Please forgive me, but if I get the chance, I will do it again.” He would be asking for forgiveness while not turning from his sin and seeing it was wrong and despicable. “Repentance” involves a change of heart and a change of mind for the better. It’s a turning from Satan to God, and from sin to Jesus as the Savior and Deliverer from the penalty and power of our sins. This is not perfection; this is a change of direction. True Christians have turned to a new King and a new Kingdom for Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters” (Matthew 6:24).

² According to Luke 8:13-14, why have so many one time professions of faith fallen away?

³ Would you commit your life in marriage to someone who would not commit him or herself to you?

⁴ According to James 4:4, is it possible to commit spiritual adultery against God?

⁵ In Ezekiel 16:8 God uses the illustration of marriage to describe a relationship with His people. Whose possession does one become in this relationship? See also 1 Corinthians 6:20 and Romans 7:4.

⁶In Jesus' teachings and examples there are several instances of a faith that lacked true repentance (John 8:30-38, 44; Luke 8:13).

Let me give you just one example: "Now when He (Jesus) was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, MANY BELIEVED IN HIS NAME when they saw the signs which He did. ²⁴But JESUS DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF TO THEM, because He knew all men, ²⁵And had no need that anyone should testify of man for HE KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN" (John 2:23-25). Here we see many people putting some kind of mental assent or belief in Jesus, but Jesus would not commit Himself to them for He knew what was in them. In other words, the kind of faith that they had in Him was not a faith that was committed unto Him, therefore, Jesus would not commit Himself unto them. Could it be possible, my friend, that the kind of faith that you have put in Jesus is a non-committed faith that has been unwilling to go the distance? Jesus said that some people hear His Word and receive it with joy but believe only for a while, and fall away in the time of temptation (Luke 8:13). Temporal faith is not saving faith (1 Corinthians 15:2; Colossians 1:23). The Lord is longsuffering toward us, and not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). Would you be willing to turn or return to the One who loves you? "Forgiveness" is a "relationship" word, and the goal of God's forgiveness is to have a relationship with you. Are you the lost sheep in which Jesus would leave the ninety-nine just to find you (Luke 15:4-7)? He loves you that much.

⁶Temporal faith is not saving faith. Jesus gave several examples of a persons faith that lacked true repentance and commitment.

- (a)What can we learn about commitment and faith from John 2:23-25?
- (b)What can we learn from Luke 8:13-14?
- (c)What can we learn from Colossians 1:22-23?

COMMITMENT (Discipleship Questions)

Read Luke 9:57-62

1. What does this scripture passage teach us about the level of commitment toward following Christ?
2. In verse 62, what is the plow compared to?
 - A. Your Christian walk.
 - B. A hunk of wood and metal
 - C. Farming implements
3. Can you see how “looking back” on your old life, after having come to repentance toward God, would make you double minded?
4. Do you see how this would be displeasing God?

Read Luke 8:11-15

5. What is seed?
6. What happens to the seed that falls by the wayside?
7. What happens to the seed that falls on the rock?
8. What happens to the seed that falls in the thorns?
9. Can you see why so many one-time professions of faith have fallen away?
10. According to verse 15, what must the seed have so as to not get taken away?
 - A. Good _____
 - B. _____ and _____ heart
 - C. _____ and _____ with patience

Read James 4:4-5

11. Is it possible to commit spiritual adultery with God?
12. How does the Spirit within us yearn for us?

Read Matthew 22:37

13. Being the first commandment, how much of you does God want?

14. List the four things the Lord wants you to love Him with.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

15. If you don't love God with ALL of yourself, can you see how His jealousy for you flares?

16. If you don't have your heart, soul, mind, and strength focused on God it is focused on

- A. Television
- B. The world
- C. Romance novel

Read Ezekiel 16:6-14

17. God uses the illustration of marriage to describe a relationship with His people. Whose possession does one become in this relationship?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:17-20

18. "He who is joined with the Lord is _____."

19. What is your own body according to verse 19?

20. Are you your own?

21. Since we now belong to God, what are we to do? (verse 20)

Read Romans 7:4

22. You had to become dead to the law through the body of Christ so that what could happen?

23. Who is the "Him" that we are to be married to?

Read Colossians 1:19-23

24. In whom does all the fullness dwell?

25. What things has Christ reconciled to Himself?

26. Paul wanted to make the point that "ALL THINGS" included all things on _____ and in _____.

27. What was made through the blood of His cross?

28. Whom has He now reconciled?

29. Why did Jesus reconcile you? (verse 22)

30. We will be reconciled in His sight IF we do what?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

31. Towhom was the Gospel preached ?

Read James 1:22

32. What are you commanded to do in verse 22?

33. What are you if you are only a hearer of the Word?

34. God's first commandment is His most inclusive and important commandment (Matthew 22:37). We are commanded to love Him in this manner. If we only HEAR this commandment, what are we again?

COMMITMENT
(Discipleship Answer Key)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Absolute surrender | 19. Temple of the Holy spirit |
| 2. A. Your Christian walk | 20. No |
| 3. Yes | 21. Glorify God in body and spirit |
| 4. Yes | 22. We could bear fruit to God |
| 5. The word of God | 23. Christ Jesus |
| 6. Devil steals word from heart | 24. Jesus |
| 7. Believe for a while, in temptation = fall away | 25. All things |
| 8. Choked with cares and riches and pleasures of life | 26. Earth – heaven |
| 9. Yes | 27. Peace |
| 10. A. Soil
B. Noble – good
C. Kept - fruitful | 28. You and me |
| 11. Yes | 29. To present you holy, blameless and above reproach |
| 12. Jealously | 30. A. Continue in the faith
B. Grounded and steadfast
C. Not moved away from the hope of the Gospel |
| 13. All | 31. Every creature under heaven |
| 14. A. Heart
B. Soul
C. Mind
D. Strength | 32. Be doers and not hearers only |
| 15. Yes | 33. Deceived |
| 16. B. The world | 34. Deceived |
| 17. God's | |
| 18. One spirit with Him | |

COMMITMENT by Andrew Wommack (Additional Information)

Anyone who is truly successful knows that commitment is the main reason for that success. Athletics today has become so specialized that an athlete can't play in two different sports and be the best in both. He has to totally commit himself to doing only one thing to come out on top.

Jesus taught this same principle when He said you cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). Paul shared his secret of success in Philippians 3:13-14 when he said, "This one thing I do . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Peter told Jesus, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee" (Mark 10:28). All of these scriptures teach the necessity of commitment.

In the body of Christ today, commitment is one of the most needed qualities. I see so many people who are just trying the principles of God's Word. You'll never succeed if you just try the Word. We have an enemy, the devil, who is always trying to mess things up, and does sometimes. Unless you are totally committed to the fact that God's Word is the truth, you'll back off of your faith when things begin to look contrary. You must be committed to being a doer of the Word (James 1:22) not a "tryer."

Jamie and I have had hundreds of opportunities to back off of our faith because the physical evidence looked so opposite to what we believed. But just like Peter answered Jesus in John 6:68, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life"; we burned all of our bridges behind us. There was no plan "B" or plan "C". There is no other way unto the Father but through Jesus (John 14:6) who is the Word (John 1:1). So, live or die, sink or swim, we were committed to the Word.

On March 23, 1968 I made a total commitment of my life to the Lord. I was already saved. I accepted Jesus at the age of eight, and there was a genuine change that took place in my life. I can remember being made fun of by the other kids in my third-grade class for being a Christian. I was committed to Jesus as the one who forgives my sins, but that was all I knew. However, on that Saturday night in 1968, at the age of 18, the Lord opened up my spiritual eyes and let me see that I hadn't turned the control of my life over to Him in every area. Before that time, I didn't know I was supposed to. I was a good kid. I had never said a cuss word, or smoked a cigarette, or taken a drink. But the Lord showed me that I had never let Him live through me as He desired. I wasn't totally yielded to the devil, but neither was I totally yielded to God. I saw very clearly that all my religious acts were only of my own effort, and that amounted to a big zero in God's eyes. That night I totally yielded myself to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2) and desired for the Lord to give all the orders from then on.

That yielding took place years ago, and I can truthfully say that although I've certainly not attained it completely, the same commitment to strive toward that mark has been there. I made that commitment years before I began to hear about faith. There have been times when my faith has cracked under pressure because of my immaturity, and at those times my commitment was all that kept me in the fight.

A person who is really committed will stay in the fight even if he is losing. That has been proven a thousand times over by many Christians who didn't know their rights under the new covenant. They have suffered sickness, poverty, and many other things that they didn't have to, yet they refused to quit because they committed themselves to God regardless of the cost.

Today, with the revelation knowledge that is flowing through the body of Christ about redemption from poverty, sin, and sickness, our commitment should be even stronger. But among many Christians, even Spirit-filled Christians, there is an attitude that says, "I'll serve God as long as it's not going to be hard." It's true that Jesus' yoke is easy and His burden is light (Matt. 11:30), but our enemy, the devil, does make it hard sometimes.

There have been times when I've been beaten severely in a round with the devil, and I've felt like quitting. It wasn't my great faith that made me get back in the ring. It was my commitment. My faith was the victory that overcame the world (1 John 5:4), but it was my commitment that made me get up and start in faith again. A total commitment to God is the undergirding of faith.

Many people have accepted the faith principles today about healing and prosperity, but they haven't been taught commitment. Therefore, they can shout with the best of them when their desires are manifested, but when the battle is on, and it doesn't look like the Word is working, they are ready to renounce the whole thing. That's because they aren't truly committed to the Lord. They may be committed to getting rich or getting healed, but they aren't committed to God.

I've heard people say, "I wouldn't serve a God who wouldn't heal me or supply my needs." Well, praise God—I would! I thank the Lord that I don't have to. The Bible says that He supplies all my needs (Philippians 4:19) and "by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). But I'd serve Him just because He is my Creator and has revealed Himself to me through Jesus. I serve God for who He is not what He gives. Praise God that He has freely given us all things through Christ (Romans 8:32), but I made a total commitment to Him before I knew He healed today and that He would prosper me. Therefore, if I don't see an immediate manifestation of the thing I am believing for, I'm not tempted to renounce the faith. My commitment is unconditional. My faith is the thing that keeps me from settling for less than God's best for me, but my commitment keeps me from wavering while faith is at work.

Those of us, who were caught up in religious denominations before we received revelation of our total victory in Jesus, have a tremendously hard time overcoming that religious dogma that was crammed into us. But one thing I praise God for is that there was some teaching about commitment. I mean, what else did they have to preach? They didn't believe in healing or prosperity, and thought that the more you suffered the holier you were. So they had to preach commitment strongly to keep their members under that kind of doctrine. In some ways, many of our brothers and sisters, who haven't received the revelation of what is available to them through Jesus, exhibit more commitment than some Spirit-filled people. My brethren, these things ought not to be (James 3:10).

A person who has made a total, unconditional commitment to God, even if everything isn't going the way it should, will not wind up doing without. They will actually see their faith produce better.

In Daniel chapter 3, we read the story about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who were thrown into the furnace for refusing to worship the graven image of the king. Verse 17 shows us that they not only believed that God was able to deliver them, but they knew that He would deliver them. However, verse 18 says, “But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” They weren’t making a negative confession. People with negative confessions don’t see the deliverance power of God the way they did. They were simply expressing that they were committed enough to God that they still wouldn’t worship the image of the king if it cost them their lives. Because of their total commitment, Satan wasn’t able to hit them with fear. They wouldn’t bow regardless of the outcome. That’s commitment!

Satan can tell when a person is only committed to a point, and you can be assured he will push you to the breaking point. But when he perceives a person who is totally committed, he will flee from you. I’m not saying you won’t experience any resistance, but those who have the hardest struggles are basically those who are wavering in their commitment.

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