
“Committed to the Commitment”

Making commitments comes easy. Anyone can make one. Just ask the person who made a commitment on January 1st to exercise and lose weight this year. (Of course my question would be to that person... “how’s it going”?) Or, the smoker who made a commitment to stop smoking. The alcoholic who vows to stop drinking. Ever hear someone make a pledge to be a better father or mother? What about a better husband or wife? I have. What about the Christian who makes a commitment to pray more each day and spend more time with God? The interesting thing about making commitments is that usually they are made with sincere motives and genuine intentions. I believe that everyone who declares that they are going to do something significant really does believe that they will accomplish it. Whether they are small commitments or life changing ones like placing your faith in Jesus Christ, or marrying your sweetheart, having children, changing careers, etc. We all make them without second guessing our pursuit to, not only see them through, but to grow as a person in the process. So, why is it that the person who commits to losing weight goes MIA from the gym after just four months?... the smoker stopped for a few weeks but now is back to his usual routine?... the father or mother has yet to spend consistent quality time with their kids?...the husband or wife are still fighting with each other?... the Christian’s daily reading plan has become, once again, the “every other morning when it’s not raining” plan. The new Christian falls away, the married couples divorce, and on and on. Why does this occur so often to so many? I believe that answer lies in the realization of how committed one is to the commitment itself. In other words, how serious are you about the commitments that you just made? This is the all too important question that many fail to ask. As a result, during moments of distraction, disappointment, delusion, or testing the pledge you made now loses it’s steadfastness and eventually, without a re-dedication, becomes another failed self-promise. The sought out value or benefit that you would have attained now must be delayed, if ever, achieved.

As I write, I know that many can relate to what they are reading. Therefore, the question becomes how can we truly commit to our commitments so that what we desired in the first place will manifest itself in our lives? The best answer to this question is in the life and sacrifice example of Jesus Christ. Jesus made a commitment to be our sacrificial lamb so that our sins would be paid in full, and hence, give every believer the right to be called sons and daughters of God and thereby, be saved (John 1:12). He did this for you and I and anyone who would believe in His Name (John 3:16). This, the greatest example of commitment the world has ever known, reveals to us the outline of how we too can commit to our commitments and benefit from achieving them. Let’s first examine that Jesus began His commitment to earthly ministry and His calling with the end in mind. He never questioned, doubted, or was confused about what His earthly ministry and mission would yield nor what His sacrifice on the cross would do for repented sinners - salvation. He knew what the end result would be and was clear on His purpose. He had the end in mind. Secondly, Jesus knew that there would be obstacles along the way. He recognized that His commitment to be the Savior of the world would not come without trials, tribulations, tests, and many challenges along the way so He was never caught off guard and thereby thrown off track. His keen awareness and acceptance of inevitable roadblocks helped Him deal with them when they arose (Mark 12:13-18). Thirdly, Jesus knew that there was a going to be a price to pay along the journey to fulfill His commitment. In fact, this is clearly evident when in the Garden of Gethsemane He pleads that “this cup be taken away”. Jesus was fully aware of the pending excruciating pain that He would soon endure. He recognized the price He would soon pay, yet He remained focused on doing the will of the Father. He fully accepted the price He was about to pay for His commitment. Lastly, even throughout His tumultuous journey to the cross, Jesus never got dissuaded or lost focus because He knew it was a worthwhile cause. There was nothing that could have distracted, disappointed, delayed, or disillusioned Jesus from what He came to do because the worthwhile cause of salvation for mankind was far too magnanimous. It demanded that He remain steadfast and committed.

The life of Jesus provides for us then the answer to true commitment, doesn't it? We can learn from His example that the success of any true commitment made must come with initial understanding--that there must be a detailed end in mind. In other words, to make a commitment to do something must first begin with what you expect the fulfillment of that pledge to yield for you or others. Attempting to do so without it is like attempting to throw darts at an invisible target. You'll never know if you've hit it or not because you have no idea what it looks like. Equally as important is accepting the fact that along the road to fulfilling your dedicated promise will come a host of problems that will thwart and derail your attention and focus, and thereby, your journey. Your best defense will be to be prepared for them so that you are not blind-sided when they occur but are able to adjust and keep on going. Finally, and most important, know that there will be a price to pay. However, the price you pay will be worth it if you have a significant and worthwhile purpose. Your purpose or goal has to be one that will stir your soul and force you to stay the course. I am convinced that by following the ultimate role model's living example we can all learn how to stay committed to the commitment.

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