

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE COMMITTED

1997 by Mark Beard

Text: II Timothy 1:12

When an airline pilot begins his takeoff down the runway he continues to accelerate until he reaches takeoff speed. At the same moment, he is approaching the end of the runway. The point of "no return" is reached when he no longer has enough runway to safely bring the aircraft to a stop. At that moment he is "committed" to a takeoff.

When a heart surgeon opens the chest of a heart transplant patient, puts the patient on the heart and lung machine, and takes the diseased heart from the chest of the patient, he is "committed" to the completion of the operation.

When a military general equips his troops for battle, gives them a battle plan, places them in the theater of battle and gives the command to attack; he is "committed" to the battle.

Most importantly, when a person gives his life to Christ by putting his faith and trust in Him and by turning his back on the world; he is depending on Christ to see him through to the end. He is "committed."

In each case there is the opportunity to stop all action prior to commitment. Commitment takes place after we take action. Therefore, when we talk about what it means to be "committed" we are making several clear distinctions.

I. WE ARE ENGAGED IN SOMETHING THAT WE HAVE CHOSEN TO DO.

A. Commitment cannot and will not be forced on anyone.

B. Commitment to Christ is something that we must chose for ourselves.

Haddon Robinson has said, "You will invest your life in something, or you will throw it away on nothing." (Rowell, 26)

Being committed means...

II. WE HAVE STARTED SOMETHING THAT MUST BE FINISHED.

A. Our choice will have eternal consequences.

The choices we make today concerning our spiritual life will affect us now and throughout eternity.

B. Our commitment must be an eternal commitment.

Oswald Chambers writes, "Discipleship is based on devotion to Jesus Christ, not on adherence to a belief or creed. ... There is no argument and no compulsion, but simply -- If you would be my disciple, you must be devoted to Me." (124)

Being committed means...

III. WE HAVE GONE PAST THE POINT OF RETURN.

A. We are not our own anymore.

B. We have burned the bridge to the old life.

CONCLUSION

One Haitian pastor illustrates the need for total commitment to Christ with this parable:

A certain man wanted to sell his house for \$2,000. Another man wanted very badly to buy it, but because he was poor, he couldn't afford the full price. After much bargaining, the owner agreed to sell the house for half the original price with just one stipulation: he would retain ownership of just one small nail protruding from just over the door. After several years the original owner wanted the house back, but the new owner was unwilling to sell. So the first owner went out, found the carcass of a dead dog, and hung it from the nail he still owned. Soon the house became unlivable, and the family was forced to sell the house to the owner of the nail.

The Haitian pastor's conclusion: "If we leave the devil with even one small peg in our life, he will return to hang his rotting garbage on it, making it unfit for Christ's habitation." (Larson, 37)

The *distinctions* that we have pointed out serve to make the point that we must make up our mind that we will serve Christ and never look back.

References

Chambers, Oswald (1963) My Utmost for His Highest
Larson, Craig B., ed. (1993) Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching
Rowell, Edward K. (Ed.).