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**Following Jesus: The Six Challenges**

**Challenge Two: The challenge of commitment**

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**Proverbs Chapter 16 verses 1-9**

1. **Introduction**

**In today’s world** commitment is often seen as simply **staying the course - providing it doesn’t get too tough, or ask too much of us.**

Commitment is also seen as **making a pledge or a promise - although we might need to drop it - if it isn’t achieving what we want or what we are expecting.**

**However, with God – commitment is much, much more!**

In **Romans Chapter 12 verse 2** it says, **“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.”**

**For Christians commitment is an action - on our part - in responding to God.**

Yet, there is no point talking about commitment unless we have at least the **intention** **to commit.**

Just as we should honour our commitments to others, we should honour our commitment to God. **How?** By **dedicating time and energy to seeking Him and listening to Him.**

When we commit to pursuing a deeper relationship with God, **it requires effort and** **actions which will enable us to achieve that deeper relationship.**

This commitment allows us to experience the joy of His presenceand **the transformation that occurs as we align our lives with His will.**

**Proverbs Chapter 15 verses 1-3** says this **“To humans belong the plans of the heart,**

**but from the Lord comes the proper answer of the tongue. All a person’s ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the Lord. Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.”**

Unfortunately, some Christians go on in the Christian life, year after year, **in partial commitment** to God. Yet, in the Bible, **partial commitment is seen as no commitment at all.**

**Revelations Chapter 3 verses 14-16,** says this **“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation.I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm - neither hot nor cold - I am about to spit you out of my mouth.’**

**“Hot” - you’re all in!**

**“Cold”** **-** means turning away from God all together. **It can happen!**

However, some – for example, may be committed **80 percent to God** and **20 percent to the world;** the truth is that even **95 percent** commitment is not good enough for God.

He requires our **total commitment.**

**I would suggest that the Christian life does not ‘fully’ or ‘properly’ work as God intends without total commitment from His people.**

1. **Proverbs Chapter 16 verses 1-9**

On the basis of God’s word, there is simply no way to a fulfilled Christian life without **total commitment.**

**That is the fact of the matter.**

**It is not a matter of theory,** but a matter of reality and experience. **I can testify to this fact myself; I have experienced being “hot and lukewarm, and, at times, maybe even cold”.**

However,the truth is that only **“hot” works fully –** bringing with it the **‘abundant life’ we have been promised – and which I hope we all desire!**

**All in all, commitment has to do with the most important subject of all for Christians - our relationship with God.**

**Proverbs 16:9** says, **“In their hearts, humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.”** This verse reminds us that while **we are free to plan our lives, it is ultimately the Lord who determines our path – a path we trod - where we need Him with us every step of the way!**

**As we develop intimacy with God and commit ourselves to Him,** through His Grace. He shapes and molds us into who we were created to be.

Each of us has a purpose, a unique calling that God has placed upon us. **However, we may struggle to discover and fulfil that purpose without a fully committed relationship with Him.**

**When we commit** ourselves to God:

* Our commitment allows us to **open ourselves up** to His guidance and leading.
* It allows Him to **reveal Himself, and the things He wants us to know and understand,** which will develop us into the person He designed us to be, living out our purpose in His kingdom.
* It allows us to **experience fulfilment and the satisfaction of being used by God to touch the lives of others'.**

**All through His Grace!**

**This verse** encourages us to acknowledge that **our plans are subject to change, opposition, and misunderstanding**, but if we allow God to establish the steps we take along the way we will arrive at the destination He intended for us.

**Also, this verse should** teach us **humility,** reminding us that we are not in complete control of our lives, but rather, **we are called to submit to God’s will**

1. **So What Does Commitment to God Look Like as we Live Out Our Lives?**

Committing to the Lord is **a powerful way of living life.**

It is a way of **‘being’** that will bring **clarity, peace, and guidance to our lives.**

It is a way of **surrendering** our desires and intentions to God, **trusting that He knows what is best for us.**

* It starts with **a commitment to Seeking God’s Will and Guidance.** Before making any plans, seek God’s will through prayer and meditation. Spend time in His presence, asking Him to reveal His plans and purposes for your life and to guide you as you move forward.
* As you make your plans, **ensure that they align with the principles and teachings found in God’s Word.** Seek wisdom and guidance from Scripture, and allow it to shape your decisions and actions.
* When you then act, **surrender control.** Recognise that God is ultimately in control and trust Him to guide your steps. Let go of any need to manipulate or force outcomes.
* **Live your life trusting in His provision.** Rest in the assurance that God will provide everything you need to fulfil His purposes for your life. Trust that He will open doors, provide resources, and guide you every step of the way.
* **Place your trust in His perfect timing.** Trusting in God’s timing requires **patience and faith.** It means surrendering our desire for immediate results and embracing His divine timing.
* As you live out your life, **continue to pray for confirmation from the Lord** **that you are still aligned with His will.**

**Ultimately, committing our plans to the Lord is an act of faith, surrender and trust.** It requires us to let go of our own agendas and seek God’s will above our own. **As we do so, we can experience the peace, guidance, and fulfilment that comes from walking in alignment with God’s purposes.**

1. **Conclusion**

Commitment to God is **not just a one-time decision and act; it is an ongoing commitment to nurture a deeper relationship with Him, to develop holiness, and to embrace our unique purpose in Him.**

By committing ourselves to God, **we demonstrate our willingness to honour Him with our lives and allow Him to work within us and through us. Amen**