

**Men's
Servant Leadership Study**

**Week 5
COMMITMENT**

Memory Verse for the Week: Matthew 16:24

To what are you committed to the most? _____

How did you come to that conclusion? _____

DAY 1 Personal Development: Commitment

Read Romans 12:1-2

Effective leadership flows from commitment to the right things. As followers of Christ, the single most important commitment of our lives is to God. Any true (and eternal) success we experience as leaders will flow from that commitment.

The apostle Paul urges us on God's behalf to devote ourselves to God. The word "therefore" (v.1) points to all the apostle has written in the previous eleven chapters. In light of God's mercy, which justifies, sanctifies, and will someday glorify us; we are to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to Him. In other words, we should allow God's mercy to accomplish this additional work in our lives. We should let it drive us to absolute commitment.

The word "offer" implies that this act, much like a wedding vow, occurs once. It may be renewed, but at some point we should be motivated by God's mercy to devote ourselves to Him. When we take this step, we're acknowledging Christ's leadership in our lives. We sacrifice our selfish desires and misguided ambitions as we strive to align ourselves with God's will. Once this act of commitment occurs, our talents and dreams will be surrendered to His purpose. And the more we give ourselves to Him, the more He will bless and use us.

Have you committed yourself completely to Christ? If not, consider doing so now. If you're a devoted follower of Christ, perhaps you could consider renewing this commitment.

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1) Explain what it means for us to offer our bodies to God as living sacrifices.

2) According to verse 1 what is it that should cause us to commit ourselves completely to Christ?

3) There is an expectation in these verses that two specific areas of our lives should we be committed to God, what are they?

When we come to truly believe that God's will for us is good, and perfect, and acceptable, no matter what our circumstances might be, it becomes much easier for us to remain faithful and committed in our service to God and others.

DAY 2 Commitment and Who God Is

What is the basis for security and significance in life? Security relates to commitment, and significance relates to how long something will last. God tells us that He is committed to all who are in Christ, and that our relationship with Him will last forever. Read Jeremiah 31:31-36 to see the covenant of commitment the Lord made with his people.

Read Jeremiah 31:31-36

In spite of the rebelliousness of the people of Judah, the Lord assured them through the prophet Jeremiah that He was committed to their ultimate good. Judgment was inevitable because they had flagrantly violated God's commands, but the prophet looked beyond this impending condemnation to a time of consolation. There will be a faithful remnant, and God's people will eventually enjoy the blessings of forgiveness and complete renewal.

In this covenant, God commits Himself to the welfare of the house of Israel and Judah and predicts a time when they will all know Him and when His law will be written on their hearts (Jeremiah 29:11).

God's grace is always previous to our response and demonstrates His unshakable commitment to us (1 John 4:9-10). When we love God, it is only as a result of His love for us first (1 John 4:19).

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1) If God is this committed to your personal welfare, what keeps you from enjoying a full sense of security and significance?

2) What do these verses say to you about God's level of commitment to His children?

- Numbers 23:19 _____

- Jeremiah 29:11 _____

- Ephesians 2:19 _____

- Hebrews 13:5 _____

- 2 Peter 3:13 _____

- 1 John 2:25 _____

DAY 3 Commitment and Who I Am

Quality relationships are founded on the rock of commitment, not the shifting sand of feelings or emotions. God calls us to be a people of commitment, first to Him and then to others. Look at Joshua 24:14-27 to study the parting words of a man whose entire life was marked by commitment.

Read Joshua 24:14-27

Joshua told the people that even if they chose not to serve the Lord, they would still not be exempt from service. If we do not serve the Creator, we will unavoidably serve some part of the creation. But the gods of success, position and possessions are cruel taskmasters and never deliver the profound satisfaction they

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promise. God alone is the worthy object of our total commitment, and if we direct our highest commitment to anything else, we commit idolatry. We were designed to serve God and to find our deepest satisfaction in Him, but we will be half-hearted at best if we try to play by two sets of rules and serve two masters (Luke 16:13).

Many of those who followed Jesus were merely curious. Others were convinced of the truth of what He was teaching, but only a few were fully and personally committed to Him. When His uncommitted followers began to leave Him in response to His difficult sayings, Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked if they wanted to leave with the others. Although it is doubtful that they understood the Lord better than those who were leaving, they realized that once having committed themselves to Him, there was no turning back (John 6:60-69). As disciples of Christ, we are called to remain committed to Him even when we are unable to understand Him.

In what ways has your level of commitment to the Lord been conditioned by your understanding of what He is doing in your life? _____

The call to commitment is a call to constant vigilance in maintaining and understanding the standards of that commitment. No matter what distractions a godly leader may encounter, he or she needs to maintain his or her focus on serving the Lord.

Joshua 24 documents Israel's dialog with their leader Joshua as to how they will remain committed to God now that they have defeated the inhabitant's of the land of Canaan, and are preparing to settle into their new home. Listed below are verses from Joshua 24 that will help us create an outline of the chapter. Give a title to the verse that sums up the main point, and then summarize the verse. Verse 14 has been done for us as an example.

14 **The command:** Joshua tells them to through away their false gods, and fear God and serve Him with a totally committed heart. (Use this example to complete the remaining verses)

15 _____ : _____

16 – 17 _____ : _____

18 _____ : _____

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19 _____: _____

20 _____: _____

21 _____: _____

22 _____: _____

23 _____: _____

25 - 27 _____: _____

Comment on any insights the Lord gave you as you completed this exercise: _____

The command is given in verse 14 to be faithful (committed) to serving God, but with the command he also gives a choice. Unlike us, God is not afraid to give choices to his children. We like to give commands and when they are not obeyed we become more demanding and/or make sure that the person that we are commanding feels our wrath when they don't obey. God doesn't want our commitment to Him to be based on threats or manipulation, but He does want us to clearly understand the consequences of our choices.

DAY 4 Commitment and How It Works

How on earth do leaders establish and retain committed followers? How, in some cases, do we get ourselves committed enough to pay the high price of success? God knows how, and the prophet Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3:17-18) models an essential truth about God-focused commitment.

Read Habakkuk 3:17-18

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What a refreshing statement! Many leaders would love to have followers who are this committed to the cause. In fact, many leaders would love to have this level of commitment to their own cause. The key ingredient to Habakkuk's statement is that it is unidirectional; he promised to maintain his attitude regardless of the payback.

That's really what "commitment" is. The statement, "I will be committed *if...*" isn't commitment-making; it's deal-making. It's not committing; it's bargaining. In Habakkuk chapter 2 God explained His justice and His majesty to the prophet. Habakkuk 3:17-18 is the prophet's response to that revelation of God's character.

In the absence of a life-consuming ideal, asking for the level of commitment Habakkuk expressed is absurd. Leaders must identify what it is within their organization that is genuinely worthy of commitment. Until leaders complete this definition, they sound rather shallow even talking about it. No sane person will commit to things that don't really matter. But when an organization's goals and outcomes are properly related to the living God and its activities honor Him, then commitment makes sense. Instead of asking, "How do we get commitment?" effective leaders will begin by asking, "To what (or whom) are we committed?"

1) In Habakkuk's world fig trees and grape vines were important to his everyday life. Replace fig trees, grapes, olive crops, etc. with the things that are most important to you. Then write this verse using those things as your commitment to rejoice in God no matter what might come your way.

DAY 5 Commitment and What I Do

What does commitment look like in a leader, and how can we practice it? Read Matthew 16:24-26 to examine Jesus' standard of deeper commitment.

Read Matthew 16:24-26

Jesus spoke these words to His disciples, but they still call us to action today. Through these living words, Jesus makes it clear that He requires total commitment of His followers. He said that unless one commits everything, one loses everything. For the Christian leader, that commitment must remain strong until the end of our earthly walk. Inspirational and motivational speaker Og Mandino expands on the necessity of strong, long-term commitment.

One of Mandino's ten common causes of failure is "quitting too soon." Mandino tells the story of Raphael Solano and his companions who were looking for diamonds in a dry river bed. Discouraged, Solano claimed

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he had picked up about 999,999 rocks and was quitting, his companions said, “Pick up one more and make it a million.” That “millionth” rock was “The Liberator,” the largest and purest diamond ever found. Mandino writes, “I think he [Solano] must have known a happiness that went beyond the financial. He had set his course; the odds were against him; he had persevered; he had won. He had not only done what he had set out to do – which is a reward in itself – but he had done it in the face of failure and obscurity” (pp.44-45).*

Jesus urged His followers, “take up your cross and follow Me.” He knew better than anyone else how elusive the great prize is. But He also knew that anything less than a total commitment to achieving the prize would not suffice. In the Christian life, as in the leader’s organizational life, total commitment to the cause facilitates success.

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WRAPPING IT UP

1) Having now gone through this week’s study has your answer to the very first question of the week changed: To what are you committed to the most?

2) Take the time to reflect on the verses you commented on in Day 2 study. How have these statements of God’s faithfulness/commitment strengthened your commitment to Him?

3) What area of your life, if any, keeps you from committing yourself completely to God on a daily basis, and what is your plan to gain control of that area?

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