

## The Nature of Commitment

### 1. The Nature of Commitment

A. Commitment differs in duration, intensity:

1. Uncertain duration, weak intensity: brand motor oil, where buy gas.
2. Short duration, strong intensity: a new pet, diets/exercise, school ties.
3. Long duration, moderate intensity: car, favorite radio station, grocery.
4. Long duration, strong intensity: marriage (?), trusted doctor, citizenship.

B. Some commitments are selfish: commitment to airline for frequent flier miles.  
Some commitments altruistic: care for mentally handicapped child. Many **both**.

C. The stronger the commitment, the **greater resistance** to change. Often occurs gradually even when beneficial. Paradigm shift difficult: new associations, routines, point of reference. **Illus:** Democrat => Republican in AL.

### 2. Jesus' Expectations on Commitment

A. Jesus always upfront, direct about His expectations. No "fine print."

1. Lk 9:57-62 - Jesus rebuffs three would-be disciples: 1) Unbridled, unrealistic enthusiasm; 2) Misplaced priorities, even important ones (easy to *rationalize* Jesus to lower priority); 3) Not willing to completely sever old ties.

2. Lk 14:25-33: Note who "*cannot be My disciple*":

- a. v 26 - Not "hate" family/self - Not in sense of ill-will or harm but properly prioritizing. Jesus demands to be placed first.
- b. v 27 - Not bear cross, follow - Bear burdens, responsibilities, consequences inherent within discipleship. Must "count cost": **Illus:** Half-finished shopping centers, nuclear plants. *Waste!* **Illus:** Jumped into job at restaurant. Quit.
- c. v 33 - Comprehensive: Not forsake "*all that he has*." We are committed at all times, in all places, in every circumstance.

B. Jesus challenged those who followed Him for wrong reasons: Jn 6:24-26, 60-66. Jesus not a politician; He did not court, woo, stroke, beg and plead for "votes." No false promises for momentary popularity, support. Not **numbers** but **quality**.

- C. Thus **duration** of our commitment is for life; we will not be judged on the *majority* of our years and how they were spent. The **intensity** of commitment is constant and fervent, not intermittently dormant where faith still intact.

### 3. Commitment: Cost vs. Reward

(**Illus:** British are debating their commitment to the monarchy. Worth investment?)

#### A. Costs:

1. **Suffering:** Potential loss of friends, family, income, etc. Commitment to Jesus is *military enlistment* - Mt 10:34-39. Timeless antagonism between worldly/heavenly: “*Do not marvel ... if the world hates you*” (1 Jn 3:13; Jn 15:18-19).
2. **Community responsibilities:** Worship, study, collective work, responsibility to the Lord’s people. Discipleship not “at large” proposition.
3. Many, however, mistakenly see Christianity as only deprivation, drudgery and dreariness.

#### B. Rewards: “Why are you a Christian? What’s in it for you?”

1. Paul: Considered Jewish losses “gain” - Ph 3:7-9. He received fellowship with and favor of the Almighty.
2. Commitment to Christ is connection with divine royalty; it is moral and spiritual direction and fulfillment; it is sound ethics that builds strong character, families and social support. Selfishly, it is being good to ourselves.
3. A reciprocal commitment: Jesus will never forsake His disciples (Heb 13:5) but will confess us as we confess Him (Mt 10:32-33). He will be loyal, faithful and committed to us throughout life.

#### C. Peter: “*To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life*” (Jn 6:68-69).

### Conclusion:

1. Everyone in this life will be committed to **something**, and that commitment will require time, sacrifice, effort, suffering. Will the reward be perishable or *imperishable* (1 Cor 9:25).
2. “*For I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*” (Rom 8:18).