

## TOTAL COMMITMENT

### "Self"

2 Corinthians 8:5

#### Introduction

1. "Total" has the idea of entire, complete, absolute. "Commitment" connotes a promise. Hence, the concept of "total commitment" avers complete performance of a particular act. In relation to spiritual things, it affirms the complete abandonment of one's entire being to the Lord and His purpose. It is an exhaustive phrase. It holds nothing in reserve!

2. In most circles, total commitment is applied to some specific activity or item. It may relate to giving, serving, time use, or whatever. It is a favorite approach to Christian living by those who look for the spectacular and the immediate response. This study concerns something deep and penetrating.

3. To get a handle on the subject, it is important to provide answers to a variety of questions. Four are proposed with a final one for the conclusion. Study them:

#### 1. WHAT?

The basic text for this study relates to the reflexive pronoun "their own selves." It is one word in the Greek. While the word may have many meanings, the one for this context is "the persons," rather than their "goods." It was the individual Macedonians in and of themselves who are the feature here.

Elsewhere this sort of item is referred to as the "yourselves" and "members" (Rom. 6:13). The former marks one's very life and the latter one's activities. It is summarized by the word "bodies" (Rom. 12:1). The point is this: the total personal being is given to God. No personal rights are retained!

#### 2. WHY?

It is reasonable to ask this question. How does it come about that God would make such a demand or express such an expectation? The answer is given: He paid for it! This is the intent of 1 Corinthians 6:20. The aorist passive form of the verb makes the purchase His and not ours! We were therefore passive in the act. The actual price is given by Peter (1 Pet. 1:18) where the verb is different, but also passive in form. It is the "precious blood" which marks the purchase (cf. Ex. 21:1-11; 29:20; 30:11-16).

It is on the basis of this bold statement that Paul

reminds the Corinthians that "ye are not your own" (1 Cor. 6:20). It is a phenomenal concept. Who then can claim to his being as his own? The price of blood, and that of the Son of God, has paid for what we are!

### 3. WHEN?

God is not to be mocked. Neither does He have a withholding card. His pile, to say it reverently, is not stacked. His direct purpose in sending Christ was for the salvation of the world (John 3:16-18). The issue is Christ! The issue is salvation! The issue is heaven or hell. This does not militate against an individual seeing more to his initial reception of Christ, but it does give the focus on it. The argument is summed up in Romans 1-5.

While "Lordship salvation" (requiring a sinner to understand all the aspects of Christ's family expectations) is not Scriptural, this does not mean that His rightful place in the believer's life is anything less than that! Chronologically, however, it follows salvation as the flower follows the bud! This is the argument of Romans 6-8. So, total commitment of one's self comes when there is an understanding of the death of Christ for sin (the nature which produces acts of sin).

### 4. HOW?

This is a huge question. To know facts and not know their use is a disaster. God provides the "how." The verb he uses is "yield" (Rom. 6:13; 12:1). It means to "place beside" or "put at one's disposal." Other translations of the same word suggest the idea of "present" (Acts 1:3; 23:33). The point is simple: give up to His control!

An outstanding example of this sort of methodology is provided in the life of Abraham. He used a familiar phrase: "here am I" (Gen. 22:1, 7, 11). That is precisely what "yield" means. When He calls, you respond with these "total commitment" words: "here am I."

Conclusion--WHEN? How tragic to procrastinate in receiving Christ as Savior. It could mean the loss of one's soul (John 3:18). The offer of salvation is given to all. Those who receive Him are forgiven forever! Now, what about this business of "total commitment?" The loss of one's witness and testimony for the Lord is inconceivable. It is too horrendous. But that is what is sacrificed if a "yielding" is buried underneath a life of selfishness. The flower of His seed fails to bear. God spare us from such a reproach upon Him.