

## **“Letter of Commitment”** **By Brother Kenneth Ray** **May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

A commitment is a pledge, or a promise to do something. Commitment is not new to any of us who have been in a school club, scouts, military service, etc. These and other organizations have oaths or pledges. They spell out what the organization is about; the values to which you are to commit to. I don't think that this is anything that any of you are learning for the first time, but sometimes we need to be reminded of things. Mike, here, has made a commitment to the US Navy; his parents worry about him. That's part of their commitment as parents to their child.

As Christians we have a bad tendency to let our commitments lapse; life gets in the way. I'm not saying that it's bad, I'm just saying that it is. We don't mean to do it.

I have needs in my life, and I know who can handle them, and I'm not that guy. Even the best among us have needs, and the worst, and everyone in between. I think that covers all of us.

As Christians, we may enjoy coming to a church building, or being among the people of God at their home or just out and about. These things are normal and expected, our commitment is not to church or to fellowship, but it is owed to Jesus alone.

How many of you know what recruiting is? In college sports, they have something called a letter of commitment. When they recruit an athlete into their program, there are three steps: Verbal, Letter of Commitment, and De-commitment. It's a lot like putting money down on a house that you intend to buy.

Couples have commitments to each other, whether they are dating, engaged, or celebrating their 6-year anniversary. You may think that a six-year anniversary isn't much, but, in this day and age, there are a lot of couples that can't manage that much commitment. Commitment is not easy. It's not easy to go to work every day; it's not easy being married every day. That's why it's called work. Work takes effort, and takes commitment. Jesus spells out what we're supposed to be committed to.

*Matthew 28:19-20    ...**teach all nations, baptizing them...***

Teach and baptize all nations. Then Jesus makes a more personal commitment to us (“**Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.**”). He is with us. God is always there, even when we don't feel him. Salvation is not based on feelings; it's based on faith. We walk by faith and not by sight.

*John 1:43    ...**Follow Me...***

And we see Jesus going unto the different men who would become the disciples; they each were asked to do the same thing: Follow Me. And by follow Me, He meant more than just physical following, He was talking about talking with Him, and communing with Him.

There is a word, and sometimes it's a bad thing, but sometimes it isn't; the word is substitute. If you get a meal at a restaurant, sometimes you can substitute a salad for the fires. Sometimes you can substitute one sweetener for another when you are baking

something. Sometimes you substitute going to church and getting involved in lots of church activities for following Jesus. Your commitment happens during the hours that you are *not* here. Because we follow Jesus the rest of the week, we can come here on Sunday morning and celebrate that relationship.

*Hebrews 13:8 ...the same yesterday, and to day, and forever...*

Jesus is still the same, and He is still asking us to follow Him and He is still asking for your commitment to observe His teachings. You may have a favorite TV show that you like to watch, or a novel that you like to read, or you may like listening to your favorite music, or maybe it's computer time, but your commitment to God needs to outweigh those things. If God tells you to put that down or turn it off, and go do something else, you need to be ready to do that.

I share this with you because there will come a time when you are going to be asked if it is okay to substitute for something else in your commitment. How do you know if that is an acceptable substitute or not?

*Matthew 4:1-11 ...it is written...*

Jesus' commitment was challenged. Jesus was asked to make some substitutions. Jesus was much like us. He was asked to substitute who He worshipped. You notice that there were three temptations, and each time, He answered, "It is written." Satan will try to get you to substitute weakness for strength, and then tell you that God is letting you down. That's why the Bible says:

*2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God...*

When we stay committed to God's Word, it will help us. See how Satan divided the Word of Truth? He will twist it. This is why making personal time for study and reflection will benefit us.

Time is part of recruiting, and also of de-commitment. This is one of the most valuable things, if not the most valuable thing, we have when we talk about commitment. When we commit time to Jesus in study, in seeking, and in prayer, it means that we will have to commit less time to TV, reading a book, listening to music, etc. When we give someone our time, we are telling them that they are very important to us and that they matter very much. Think about it, you don't spend time with your "un-best friend" do you?

Sometimes we become more obsessed with our resume in the church than our actual standing with God. "Why are you telling me that? Don't you know how long I've been in the church? Don't you know all the titles that I've held?" But I must need what you're trying to give me because I'm fighting tooth and nail against it.

*Colossians 3:12-15 ...put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness...*

The letter of commitment is in front of you, but you can only sign it in charity; charity is the ink in the pen. Sign your letter of commitment today.