

# Committed Is As Committed Does

BY DAVID POSEY

As my son was going out the door on one Sunday, he remarked, “another sermon on commitment, huh?” And, sure enough, he was right. It hadn’t occurred to me that I had preached so many lessons on that topic until he said that.

I have to admit that I preached those sermons because I was frustrated at the lack of attendance or participation in classes by about half of our members of the church where I was preaching at the time. There would be times when I would preach a “rip-roaring sermon” on attendance and someone who never attended other than at the Sunday morning preaching/communion service, would say, “that was a great sermon!” If they could read my mind, they would have heard me say “*whaaatttt???*” to myself.

I have to say, those kind of responses keep a preacher humble; they shatter any notion that our words are being heard in the same way we think we are delivering them. You’ve heard the truism many times: “people only do what they want to do.” It’s true of all of us.

The sad thing, though, is that the folks that made those comments probably think they are committed Christians, in spite of their lack of interaction with other Christians in the same church. And, who knows, maybe, they are doing good deeds in their life away from the church building? That’s great.

But anyone who is reading his Bible carefully will come to an obvious conclusion: committed Christians are not just doing good works out in the community-at-large. Committed Christians are devoted to other Christians.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. *Galatians 6:10*

Some elders from another church asked me recently what we do about members who come only on Sunday morning, and not even for Bible class on Sunday morning. They don’t participate in other Bible classes, they never come to evening services on Sunday or Wednesday. My first answer was that I preach attendance lessons from Hebrews 10:24 more than I used to. Like a lot of preachers, I use to park on the command of 10:25, “do not forsake the assembling of yourselves as is the habit of some.” I still believe that’s a command, but there’s an easy mental jump around it: “I *don’t* forsake the assembly; I’m there every Sunday morning.” So, when they hear admonitions to attend, they figure the preacher must be talking to someone else.

But Hebrews 10:24 puts the onus on us from a different perspective. The negative command in v. 25 is preceded by the rationale for attending in v.24:

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love  
and good works

“Consider” means to think. “Think about how to help others improve,” the writer seems to be saying. Embedded in this milder-than-v. 25-command is a plea to love our brothers enough to consider their needs and to love them enough to help them love better. No one is excluded; all of us are to be about this business about “stirring up.” And no one is exempt from the command to *think* about how they can do that.

This is a crucial preface to what the writer says in v. 25. “Consider...do not forsake...” I think we can safely infer that no one who is truly “considering” how he can help other Christians improve in the difficult business of love would ever habitually miss any assembly. After all, these gatherings give us the best opportunity to help each other do exactly what the writer is telling us to do.

Commitment is as commitment does. I’m not committed to Christ if I’m not *doing* the things he defines as the acts of a committed Christian. There are many commands that could be termed, “acts of a committed Christian.” The list is huge, so let’s see if we can simplify it a bit by putting them into some categories.

I haven’t included a “commitment to Christ” category since, if an act is an “act of commitment,” it is commitment to Christ.

### **I. Commitment to the Body**

The point about attendance above fits under this category. Our attendance at assemblies is not only a command to be here — God is not looking for robotic obedience. Instead it is a command designed to cultivate a community of believers who love and respect each other enough to attend the “family gatherings” each time the doors are opened.

### **II. Commitment to individuals in the Body**

Beyond the commitment to the body as a group, there are many commands to care for individuals — too many to list here. For example, I John 3:16-18 tells us that loving each other includes taking care of a “brother in need.” John reminds us that love is proved not in words, but in deeds (v.18). I Timothy 5:3-16 spells out our responsibility to widows. James 1:26-27 says that “pure and undefiled religion” includes caring for orphans and widows.

### **III. Commitment to family**

You wouldn’t think commitment to family needs to be called out, but one look at society today says otherwise. Fathers and mothers abandon their families every day. In many cases, commitment to a lifestyle — from jobs to drugs — trumps commitment to family. In Romans 1, Paul lists “without natural affection” (*astorge*) as one of the sins that stains the world.

Christians should be the light on the hill when it comes to family relationships. But in too many places, the church is a house with its lights off. Divorce, out of control kids, quarrels and fights within families — you name it. Can you call someone a “committed Christian” if these kinds of things characterize his family relationships?

#### **IV. Commitment to society and the world in general.**

We do have a responsibility to world at large. We are commanded to be good citizens (Romans 13; I Peter 2:13-17). Jesus told us to love our enemies (Mt. 5:48). We ought to be committed to the well-being of every person we know. Remember that when Paul said to “do good” he said to “do good to *all*...” then, “especially to those of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

It's safe to say that our commitment to the world we live in — meaning the *people* in the world — says volumes about our commitment to God. How can we forget that the most famous verse in the gospels says, “For God so loved the *world*...”? Yes, people in the world will hate us (John 15:18), but we are told to love them anyway.

Someone said that the person who is nice to you but not nice to the waiter is not a nice person. The point is that our actions demonstrate who we really are. If we take Jesus seriously, we love (*agape*) everyone because Jesus did. I hate to say it, but I've met some members of the church who wouldn't give the woman at the well the time of day! (See John 4).

The charge that Christians are judgmental is not without merit. Too many of those who claim the name are just that. They carry signs with offensive language toward certain groups instead of seeking out individuals in those groups to try to save their souls. There is no love in carrying a sign; *agape*, by definition, is commitment to the spiritual growth of another. Commitment is as commitment *does*. You are only committed to the degree that your actions show you are. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 16:24? “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Or how about Matthew 12:30?

Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

Or,

So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. *Luke 16:33*

And,

“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” *Luke 9:62*

Need I go on? Jesus had a lot to say about commitment and he was serious. Jesus doesn't sit in second place in anyone's lineup. He must be our first priority.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

*Matthew 6:33*