



From Pastor Kris:

This reading plan entitled “A CALL TO COMMITMENT” was to accompany a sermon series I was planning on preaching in the month of April. Because of the “stay-at-home” time, I felt led to go in a different direction with my preaching topics. When I revisited this daily devotional, I realized this would be helpful for us men. Hopefully this will help us to deepen our commitment to God, family, church, and community. I pray that you will be encouraged in your spiritual growth through these daily readings. God bless you!

Day 1: Joshua 24:14–15 (ESV) — 14 “Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15 And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

These words were spoken by Joshua in the final stage of his life. Before he died, he wanted to be assured that the Israelite people would remain true in their commitment to God. To follow through with a sincere and faithful commitment to the One True God, we must first put away other gods. Today, these gods are not fashioned out of wood or stone. However, anything that comes between us and Jesus surely is an idol. Joshua challenges each of us to choose this day whom we will serve. It's always a choice. Will

we be committed to the kingdom of God or the kingdom of ourselves? May we, like Joshua say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Next steps:

- Ask yourself, "Am I reliable and faithful in my commitment to God?"
- Consider ways that you and your family can serve the Lord (i.e. helping in Sunday school, working in our food bank, sharing the gospel with friends, family and neighbors, etc.)

Day 2: 1 Timothy 1:12–16 (ESV) — 12 I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, 13 though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. 16 But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

Some Christian men want to commit to wholehearted service, but they often feel that their past is pulling them down. They feel ashamed and even unqualified. However, in Christ, and through God's mercy, we are qualified and equipped to serve Him. The Apostle Paul felt that he was the worst of all sinners. He had even persecuted the church. On the road to Damascus, Jesus said that Paul had actually been persecuting Him. As God began to get a hold of Paul's life, he was put on display showing God's perfect patience. He became an example to all of us who believe. Do you feel ashamed of your past? I encourage you to stop looking in the rearview mirror and look ahead at how God is going to use you to touch people's lives. Bring all the dark places of your life into the light. Confess them to God and make a commitment to live in a way that will bring honor and glory to Him.

Next steps:

- Remind yourself that you are qualified to make a commitment to God's service.
- Ask God to help you set aside your past so that you can move forward in your commitment to Him.

Day 3: Romans 6:1–4 (ESV) — 1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you

not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Men, have you convinced yourself that you cannot overcome sin and therefore are incapable of making a complete commitment to God? Have you ever thought where these feelings might be coming from? I can assure you they do not come from God. If you know Jesus Christ personally, you are dead to sin. There is no need to live in sin any longer. Not only are you dead but you have been buried with Christ. And the greatest news of all is that you have been raised from the dead. Do not let Satan deceive you that you are doomed to a certain sin. Commitment includes an understanding that you walk in newness of life. You do not need to do the things you used to do. You can serve God with a clear conscience. Every time you are tempted to fall back into the same old sin, thank God that you died to that sin and don't have to do it any longer.

Next steps:

- Rejoice in the truth that you are no longer a slave to sin.
- Set aside the sin that so easily entangles you so you can run the race of that God has set out for you.

Day 4: Matthew 4:19 - And He [Jesus] said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

When Jesus came upon Peter and Andrew at the Sea of Galilee, he called them to follow Him. His call included becoming fishers of men. A commitment to follow Jesus will always include a commitment to persuade others to follow Him as well. Jesus said of himself, "I have come to seek and to save that which was lost." In the time of Christ, disciples followed their rabbis around and sought to imitate them. In the same way, if we are to imitate Christ, we must have a heart for lost people. From this compassionate heart, we will want to tell them how to know God through faith in Christ. As we ask God to give us a compassionate heart for the unsaved, He will give us opportunities to share our faith.

Next steps:

- Make a list of everyone you know who do not know Christ as Savior.
- Ask God to give you opportunities to share your faith with them.

Day 5: Deuteronomy 10:12-13, "Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?"

Our commitment to God will always lead to a wholehearted commitment to obeying His commands. Moses gave God's commands to the Israelites. They were the very words of God. Today, we have God's Word in the Bible. His commandments are written on its pages. We are not to dream up God's commands and we don't discover them through our emotions or experiences. They are clear and objective. Without diligent study of the Bible, our commitment will be shallow at best. If we can spend just ten to fifteen minutes a day reading and praying, over time, our understanding of God's commands will deepen. As a result, our commitment will deepen.

Next steps:

- In the next week, try setting aside fifteen minutes a day to read the Bible and pray.
- Ask God to give you the diligence to continue to read each day of your life.

Day 6: Galatians 2:20 (ESV) — 20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

When we come to faith in Christ, we die with Him in his crucifixion. For our commitment to deepen, we must first view ourselves as no longer living. We died with Him when He died. Christ now lives in us. Living for Christ is in reality a commitment for His life to be lived in us. We "live by faith in the Son of God..." The motive for our commitment is twofold. Our first motivation is to respond to his love. Christ's love compels us in our commitment, because He died for us, that we would no longer live for ourselves. The second motivation is Christ's self-sacrifice for us. He "gave himself for us". How can we not commit our life to Him since He committed his death to us?

Next steps:

- Take a few moments to thank God that you have died to your sinful self and have risen to new life in Christ.

- As you prayerfully consider Christ's commitment to you in His death, think of ways that you can allow His life to live through you.

Day 7: 2 Corinthians 5:20 (ESV) — 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

An ambassador is called to represent their country. They also represent the king of their country. As men committed to Christ, we must view ourselves as citizens of heaven, representing the King of kings and Lord of lords. We have a message given to us to proclaim to our friends, family, neighbors, workmates etc. And what is that message? It's an urgent call for people to be reconciled to God. This reconciliation cannot occur by anyone's personal efforts or obedience to certain rules or regulations. Reconciliation comes only through faith in the crucifixion of Christ. Ask yourself, "Who can I share Christ with today?" God has given you all you need to be an excellent ambassador. You have the message, you have the power of the Holy Spirit, and the love of God that is shed abroad in your heart.

Next steps:

- Make a list of characteristics of a good ambassador for God.
 - Set some goals for your own life that you're going to pray about from this list.
- As you go about your day, prayerfully look for people you can share God's message of reconciliation to.

Day 8: 1 Thessalonians 4:1 (ESV) — 1 Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.

Men, understand this - Christian commitment is not a hallow duty. Unfortunately, some churches and religions demand compliance to certain codes of conduct as an end in themselves. However, biblical Christianity is about a relationship with God in which we obey Him to please Him. For the mature Christian, to please God is the highest aim. They place no demands on God to reward them for their obedience.

Also, Christian commitment is not a static duty. We don't reach some level of spirituality and then we can coast. The apostle Paul challenges us to grow in pleasing God more

and more. Our commitment, heart and lifestyle should be in a continual process of transformation.

Next steps:

- Ask yourself, “How do I view God’s commandments? “
 - Do you view them as hollow and lifeless?
 - Or do you view them as filled with life in your effort to delight God?
- Ask God to give you a new perspective about His commandments.
 - The ultimate goal of obedience to His commands is to bring him pleasure!

Day 9: 2 Chronicles 16:9 (ESV) — 9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him...

Loyalty is a characteristic of highly committed men. If I’m committed to someone, I will be loyal to them. To be loyal to someone is to give them our allegiance. They are of the highest priority to us. They can count on us to serve them in any way we can. This is the kind of loyalty we need to have toward God. This kind of loyalty motivates us to seek a blameless heart. A blameless heart grows in allegiance and obedience to God.

As we remain firm in our loyalty to God, He comes alongside of us to provide strength (“strong support”). When God sees our loyalty and He strengthens us to serve Him, spiritual momentum takes place in our life. We transition from “glory to glory” into the image of Christ.

Next steps:

- Identify any issue or priorities in your life that reflect a lack of loyalty to God.
- Ask God to remove them so your allegiance to Him will grow and mature.

Day 10: Psalm 37:5–6 (ESV) — 5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. 6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

Sometimes I feel life is really hard. In fact, the harder I try, the harder it seems to be. Perhaps, I’m not committing my way to God. The word for “commit” is literally “roll”. The picture is that we are to roll our ways over to God. We are not alone. God is there for us and in us to bring about His purposes.

When we commit our way to God, it becomes His way. And when our way is joined with God's, He will gladly act to bring about His purposes. Verse 6 reveals that God's purposes concern our character and testimony. There is no greater joy than when God transforms us into a righteous and just person. Therefore, we need to remind ourselves that God's ways lead to life change. Our ways need to be about the same purpose. Do your commitments and priorities center around change in your character?

Next steps:

- Consider any of your ways that have not been “rolled” over to God.
- Make a commitment today to walk in the way of God and allow him to bring forth your righteousness as light, and your justice as the noonday.

Day 11: Psalm 1:1–2 (ESV) — 1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

When we are lacking in commitment to God, we fall into the downward spiral of sin. First, we walk in the counsel of the wicked, then we stand in the way of sinners and then we finally sit in the seat of scoffers. Sitting with the scoffers is when we have completely adopted the thoughts and lifestyle of the world. This downward spiral always leads away from the blessed life.

As we deepen in our commitment to God, we increase in our delight in His laws. They become something beautiful to us. We think about them day and night with great joy. We love to obey God!

Next steps:

- Take stock of your life to determine if you are in a downward spiral of sin.
- If so, ask God to fill your heart with a delight for His commandments.

Day 12: Hebrews 11:8 (ESV) — 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Abraham showed His commitment to God by obeying God's call (“summons”) to leave His home and journey to Canaan. The astounding thing about Abraham's commitment is that He followed God, “not knowing where he was going”. Commitment often leads to unknown places. Unknown places stretch our faith. Unknown places teach us to trust

in God. An unknown place might be a new job, a new ministry, or a new relationship. As we commit to our faithful God, we don't need to know where we're going; just that God is leading us there!

Next steps:

- If you sense God is leading you toward unknown places, ask Him to give you faith and wisdom for the journey.
- Don't be afraid; rather, trust that God will lead you according to His Word.

Day 13: 1 Chronicles 28:9 (ESV) — 9 “And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.

Our commitment must include knowing God and serving Him. Knowing and serving always go together. We can't serve God if we don't know Him. If we are growing in our knowledge of God, service will inevitably follow. This knowledge is more than intellectual. It's more than just knowing facts about Him. It's knowing God relationally and experientially.

True commitment leads to wholehearted service (“serve Him with a whole heart”). Our goal is to serve with all that is within us. Certainly, we will fall short of attaining this, nevertheless, this is to be our goal.

Also, true commitment is voluntary (“willing mind”). We should not serve out of guilt or compulsion. Voluntary commitment and service is a result of experiencing God's grace. His grace so fills our heart with gratitude it spills out into a longing to make His name known among all people.

Next steps:

- Ask yourself, “Do I only know God intellectually or do I know Him relationally and experientially as well?”
- When you read the Bible, remind yourself that this is a revelation of God and His desire is to relate to you personally.

Day 14: Luke 14:26 (ESV) — 26 “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

What a radical call to commitment! Speaking in hyperbole, Jesus is saying that our commitment to Him must be so deep that all other relationships pale in comparison.

This does not mean we abandon our commitment to our family. We love and serve Jesus by loving and serving our family. The motive is Jesus-centered. If we don't put Jesus first, our relationships with others will not be right. Don't be afraid to put Jesus above your family. They will be blessed by your service to God and to them. No one has ever neglected their family by putting Jesus first. In fact, as we make Him our highest priority, everything will come into a healthy balance.

Next steps:

- Ask God to empower you to place Jesus as your highest priority.
- Seek God's wisdom for how this Jesus first commitment works out in your family life.

Day 15: Luke 14:27 (ESV) — 27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

When the Roman Empire crucified a criminal, they forced them to carry their own cross to the place of execution. This was a visible display of the Romans' might and power. In the same way, we are called to carry our cross as a way to symbolize that Jesus is our master. Carrying our cross occurs whenever our thoughts, words, and behavior affirm that Jesus is our first priority. This is the true mark of being His disciple. When we are so committed to Christ, all our efforts to be independent of Him fall away. What is left is simply Jesus as master and king over our lives.

Next steps:

- Think about what priorities you have that need to be removed or downgraded so that Jesus can take first place.
- Make a plan on how you are going disentangle yourself from your misplaced priorities?

Day 16 - Galatians 6:9 (ESV) — 9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

While our commitment to good works has no bearing on our salvation, it does affect our impact in this world. Sometimes there's a temptation to give up in our commitment to the Lord. As the apostle Paul writes, there is a potential of "growing weary of doing good". This is an especially powerful temptation when we see nonbelievers prospering while we seem to struggle as children of the King. When we view true riches as the things that are spiritual, we can be reminded that God will use us to reap a harvest, not only in our own lives but in the lives of others.

Men, even as we go about our commitment to doing good, sometimes we won't see the harvest for quite some time. Just like the farmer, we sow the seeds of God's love and message, and the harvest comes much later. But it is certainly true that if we do not sow seeds of good works, there will be no harvest. So let's press on, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Next steps:

- Resolve to not grow weary in well doing.
- Ask God to renew your commitment to serving your church family and community with the love and message of Christ.

Day 17 - Colossians 1:28–29 (ESV) — 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

A key component in a man's commitment to Christ is to proclaim Him to those he comes in contact with. He is to be willing to warn and teach other believers as well.

As we seek to fulfill our commitment to proclaiming Christ, we must understand that we cooperate with Christ in His power. It has been said that the work of salvation is "all of Christ and none of me." However, our Christian commitment and practice is "all of Christ and all of me." Every time we feel like we are all alone, struggling and striving in our service to God, we need to remind ourselves that this is untrue. God is in us and working through us!

Next steps:

- Ask God to empower you to share Christ with your family, friends, workmates, etc.

- Don't become discouraged; rather hold to the truth that God is working powerfully through you.

Day 18: 1 Corinthians 15:10 (ESV) — 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

The Apostle Paul was a man of great determination and devotion. He traveled throughout the Roman Empire, often facing intense persecution. His courage is legendary in the church. However, his commitment to the message of the gospel was fueled by the grace of God.

God gives His undeserved favor by calling us to our special unique ministry in his kingdom. Because of God's grace, there is no room for pride in any accomplishment in serving Him and His church family. Likewise, if our ministry seems small and insignificant, we don't need to be embarrassed. God, by his grace, places us where He wants us. The important key is that we do serve, with all the strength that God provides.

Next steps:

- Prayerfully consider where God wants you to serve.
- If you feel inadequate, start thanking God that He gives grace to follow His calling.

Day 19: Romans 12:1 (ESV) — 1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

After writing eleven chapters about all God has done for us, the Apostle Paul challenges us to respond to God's mercies. He calls us to commit our bodies as a continual, living sacrifice. The word for "present" is "yield". We are to yield our bodies in submission to God. In other words, we are to commit all that we are, and all that we have to God. It all belongs to him. He created us, sustains us, and owns us. When we make a commitment of ourselves to God, we truly live a life of worship. We are ascribing to God His worth by our thoughts and behavior.

As I consider committing my all as a living sacrifice, one of the questions I ask myself is, "What am I holding back from God?" This can be a convicting and even painful

question, but very worthwhile. We are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. There's no room for any other god.

Next steps:

- Ask yourself if there is anything hindering you from giving yourself as a living sacrifice to God.
- Ask God to take away any desires, goals or dreams that keep you from committing to God as first priority.

Day 20: 2 Timothy 2:3–4 (ESV) — 3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

Sometimes we talk about serving in the church as “volunteering”. From Paul’s instruction to Timothy, it is clear that the word “volunteering” is a misnomer. In actuality, we are to serve as good soldiers of Christ Jesus. It’s not an option to serve Christ’s church. As we make a firm commitment to serve as a soldier in Christ’s spiritual army, we must avoid becoming absorbed (or entangled) in priorities that don’t line up with God’s purposes.

Certainly this does not mean that we are to give 24 hours a day to serving through the church, but we need to remove any distractions that keep us from this commitment. As Paul writes, our priority is to “please the one who enlisted us”. God is our commanding officer and we are to gladly obey His calling on our life.

Next steps:

- If you are presently serving in a ministry, keep on keeping on!
- If you are not, ask God to show you where you can serve Him as your commanding officer.

Day 21: 2 Timothy 4:7–8 (ESV) — 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

This is a fitting Scripture to complete our 21 reading plan on commitment. When the Apostle Paul wrote these words, he was nearing the end of his life. He was confident, not in himself, but in God, that he had finished the race set out before him. At times, his

race was challenging, even painful. He suffered persecutions and slander in his ministry to the church.

At this writing, he was looking forward to his heavenly reward. He was encouraged that not only would he receive his heavenly reward but all those who long for the appearance of Christ. As we live our lives in expectation of the return of Christ, our commitment will grow stronger every day. Our goal will more and more become a desire to fight the good fight, finish the race and keep the faith. May this be our aim and prayer!

Next steps:

- Wholeheartedly serve God for your whole life!
- Look forward to your heavenly reward when Jesus will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."