

Making My Christian Commitment Stick

by Ralph Sutura

Making your Christian commitment stick requires a mature and growing Christian life, assurance of salvation, and participation in public worship and church life.

Duration: 58:28

Scripture: Mark 5:19, 1 Corinthians 12:20-21, Galatians 5:1-16, James 1:22-23

Topics: "Commitment"

Description

The video titled 'On Making My Christian Commitments Stick' by Ralph Sotera addresses the issue of how to maintain and uphold Christian commitments. Sotera emphasizes the importance of walking in the Spirit and developing a life pattern of victory. He references James 1:22-23, which urges believers to not only hear the word of God but also to be doers of it. Sotera highlights the significance of committing our tongues and eyes to God, avoiding destructive speech and consuming media that strengthens faith and purity of mind. He also emphasizes the need to guard our weak spots, as Satan often attacks us at our areas of vulnerability, particularly in the realm of self-discipline and prioritizing God in our lives.

Transcript

The following recording by Ralph Sattera, entitled, On Making My Christian Commitments Stick, is available from the Canadian Revival Fellowship, Box 584, Regina, Saskatchewan, in Canada. This tape deals with the topic of how to walk in the Spirit. May God bless you as you listen to this message.

Now tonight I would like to deal with the subject of how to make my Christian commitments stick. I am convinced that many people are not interested in walking with God, simply because they're not really sure that once they begin to walk a Christian life that they're able to make that commitment stick. And tonight I'd like to address myself specifically to that area.

The Apostle Paul in the book of Galatians says these words, Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. He's saying there's a kind of standing that if you'll find it, you'll be able to stand in a kind of a liberty, and you need not be entangled again in a yoke of bondage. In the same chapter, chapter 5 of Galatians, in verse 7, he says these words, Ye did run well, who did hinder you, that ye should obey not the truth.

And that's interesting to note that that verse comes in this very chapter that goes on, and it talks about so many things that we love to relate to in this ministry. In verse 13 it says, Brethren, ye have been called

unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. And it continues on in this tremendous chapter of the difference of the walk in the spirit in contrast to the walk in the flesh.

Isn't it interesting that those verses come in the same chapter that started, Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage, or with the yoke of bondage. And then the apostle reminds us, You started out well, and who did hinder you, that you should not obey the truth. And that introduces us into this whole area of the walk in the spirit, as contrasted to the walk in the flesh.

Now I believe this, that the gospel of deliverance must become a gospel of development. And if there is no development, then there is a sign that the deliverance has not been total, complete, and final in a way that we could find a life, a life pattern of victory. In James chapter 1, it says these words.

I read verse 24. For he beholdeth himself. Well, really it's talking about verses 22 and 23.

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

Now that's a little bit hard for me to do as a twin, because even though when I turn away from a mirror, I have to look at my brother to remind me what I look like. But here the apostle is reminding us how easy it is to go before a mirror and see yourself, but then turn away and not really be remembered or remember yourself as you really are. Then he says these words.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. Now that's a tremendous verse. I love that.

I like those words that there is a perfect law of liberty. Now it seems like a mistake for the apostle to put those words together. Law of liberty.

And yet those are the words he used. And he says there's a perfect law of liberty. And that word perfect means a mature, a developed, a balanced, a sane law of liberty.

What is the apostle saying? Is he really saying that when you know liberty in Jesus Christ, that's a divine law? That is a divine law. You know what it is? It's a law of bondage. You see, it's bondage to Jesus Christ that produces a liberty that otherwise we'll never know anything about.

Now that's what God wants us to know something about. How there can be a maturing law of liberty in our Christian life so that this can be a beginning point and you can go on from grace to grace in the things of God. It's always thrilling when you see people who start out in the way of God and just continue and develop in a beautiful pattern.

It's always tragic to find others who do not learn that to be true in their own personal lives. If we can keep building on higher plateaus each day we live, we'll find growth as a normal way of living. But some of us who have been up on a mountaintop experience say to ourselves, when the crusade is over and when all

the emotional excitement is over of my commitment, then I've got to go back down into the valley and begin to work way down there.

And that's what happens. Some people go right back down into the valley. I don't believe that for one moment is what God wants us to do.

God never intends the Christian to live down in the valley primarily, but what keeps us from living on a high plateau? I know you can't live on a high peak. Why have you tried to build a house right on the peak of a mountain? No, you're there, you're subject to everything that comes along. But I've noticed that people who like to live on high areas, they come down off the mountain peak and look for the first place where there's enough flat land on a high plateau and they build a house there.

And what a view that is. That's a lot different from being in the valley and trying to look up. I say to you tonight that your experience can be a growing, developing, mature, beautiful thing that you can thank God until the day you die or until the day he comes for all of his children and you can say, thank God for my commitment.

The perfect law of liberty was allowed to mature in my own personal life. Now, how is that a reality? Well, there are some things we must really settle, if that's going to be true. First of all, we must be sure about our salvation.

We must make sure that this thing of our salvation is totally settled between us and God. Now, our salvation is not based on our feeling. You see, the word feeling, whenever it's mentioned in the Bible, though few times, never has anything to do with salvation or even the forgiveness of sin.

And there are many people who say they're saved only when they feel saved. I heard a great man of God say, he said, you know, I never feel saved until I have a cup of coffee for breakfast. Because before that time, I feel kind of miserable and ornery, but it seems like that cup of coffee makes me feel better.

But he said, thank God, I didn't have to go by my feeling because my salvation was not dependent on my feeling. My salvation was dependent on something far greater than that. Now, I never discourage anybody who tells me about a wonderful experience with God and the feeling and the joy and the release that he's had when he has met God.

Don't ever discourage anyone who talks like that. That's wonderful, that's normal, that's sane, that's sound, that's wholesome. But don't allow anyone to base his salvation on that feeling or to make that the criteria as to whether or not he has salvation or assurance of his salvation.

Salvation is a walk of faith. For the apostle Paul reminds us in Colossians 2.6, as we have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. Now, how did we receive him? We received him by faith.

The word of God says, by grace are we saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. Therefore, that same faith that is exercised as we receive Christ is the same kind of faith that God wants us to exercise for our assurance of salvation. The same way we are saved, that's the same way we are to claim the assurance of our salvation.

You know, Hebrews chapter 11 is a hall of fame, it's a hall of faith, and what a tremendous thing is. You see those great heroes of the cross, and I see those heroes of the faith who we revel in the stories of their

lives, and we see by faith, by faith, by faith, by faith, and then we say by sight, by sight, by feeling, by circumstances, by everything else but faith. Then when we see what they accomplish by faith, and we see how little we get done by sight, then we see really what God puts as a criteria for victory, and power, and release, and assurance of salvation.

I like that little poem. Three men were walking on a wall, feeling, faith, and fact. When feeling got an awful fall, then faith was taken back.

So close was faith to feeling, that he stumbled and fell too. But fact remained, and pulled faith back, and faith brought feeling too. Did you get that? You see, when we base our salvation on the fact of God's holy word, that does something to our faith, and when our faith is right based on the word of God, then there's the joy to know, there's an inner peace to know, that we're agreeing with God about what he says in relation to our salvation.

Now there are many people who have a problem with assurance of salvation. I have noticed that most people who have a problem of assurance of salvation, their bigger problem is a problem of assurance of a full commitment. That when their commitment is right, watch how the assurance begins to take care of itself.

Have you ever really seen many people who know what it means to deal honestly with sin, to deal honestly with their self-centeredness, to by faith claim the fullness of God's Holy Spirit day by day as a daily walk of life? Have you noticed many people like that who have a problem with assurance of salvation? Those that have learned how to keep short accounts with God, and learned how to walk in God day by day? I've noticed those are not the people that have a problem with assurance of salvation, but it's usually those people who know that there are some areas of their life that they're not willing to deal with, and their heart is already condemning them. And if their heart condemns them, how much more will the God of the universe be the one looking from above? And no wonder there's a condemnation. It's the one who is not certain about his commitment, who is the one who so often lacks the assurance of his salvation.

Now you see, the Word of God reminds us, in Hebrews it says, we are to draw near in full assurance of faith. And full assurance of faith is the direct result of full commitment to Jesus Christ. And if you're here and you have a problem with assurance of your salvation, I ask you to search your own heart as to whether or not your commitment is full, it's complete, it's total.

I didn't say perfect. I said complete. I said total.

That as you are here tonight, you're saying, God, to the best that I know my heart the way I really am, I've surrendered every right of my life at the foot of the cross. Watch what kind of assurance God gives in that kind of a situation. Now we talk about feeling.

I've heard people say, well, I'm not sure I'm saved because I don't feel saved. I say, well, do you have peace in your heart? They say, yes, but I don't have a feeling. Well, I say, well, what is peace? Isn't it amazing how misery likes company? When God can even give us peace and we don't think that that's feeling.

But you see, I know I'm saved two ways, and I want to tell you about them. I know I'm saved by God's Word and then secondly, by God's witness. You see, God's Word is, He said it.

He said it. God's witness is, He said it to me. And when I can put those together, what assurance comes in my being? When I say, God said it, that's the objective truth.

That's the outward written evidence. That's the tangible Word of God that I have in my hands. God said it.

And the one who said it makes all the difference in how I believe it. When the President of the United States says something, I have to respect what he says on the authority of his office. When an ordinary citizen says the same thing, it doesn't carry the weight as the President when he says it, because of his office.

Now the same thing is true about salvation. When I realize that it's the God of the universe, the God who holds the breath of every living being in the palm of His hand, the God who was and who is and who shall be forevermore, the God who spoke the Word in the dawn of creation and planets were flung out into space, the God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, the God who placed all the gold in the mine that's there, the God who is able to take your breath from you just as quickly as He's given it to you, the God of the universe who literally by His own Word has framed the world in which we live by the power of His own Word. That's the God I'm talking about.

He's the one who says it. And your salvation is not based on what I say, what your church says, what dogma or creeds or anything else may have to say about it. It's based on the fact that you're agreeing with God about what He says.

Now, the moment you say, God said it, and you agree with God about what He says, that's the moment the objective truth becomes personal, and it becomes a subjective reality within you being. So you then say, He not only said it, but He said it to me, and God's Holy Spirit witnesses with my spirit that I am the child of God. So God's Word says it, and when I agree with God's Word and say amen to God's Word, the Holy Spirit says amen inside of me.

Now, the Holy Spirit will never say amen inside of you until you say amen to the Word of God. The Holy Spirit will never say amen to your feelings. He will never say amen to emotion.

He'll never say amen to anybody else's experience. But when you agree with God about what He says, and you say, amen God, it's so I believe it on the basis of what you say, I accept it, at that moment His Spirit bears witness with your spirit that you're truly the Son of God. So assurance of salvation is where we begin.

You'll never be able to walk in victory until you agree with God and God's Holy Spirit says amen in your innermost being, that you know that you've passed from spiritual death into spiritual life. Now, then we cannot minimize the importance of participation in public worship and church life if we are going to succeed spiritually. There are some people who get the idea that they can commit themselves to Christ, and they never need to show up in worship anymore.

They never need to worship with other believers. They don't need the fellowship of other believers. They have the idea that this is now settled once and for all, so I've got my ticket to heaven.

I don't need any more help. I'll just make it on my own. And you know, that's a tragedy to see that, where it's just like the tragedy of seeing a baby who was born to parents, that one who was a child of love and tenderness, and that one that brought so much joy to the parents, that one becomes a tragedy and a calamity in the life of the parents if that child never developed.

And God has something to say about our development, and one of those things is the importance of the local church, the importance of fellowship in the body of Christ, the importance of being actively alive and participating in the spiritual worship of the local church. Some come to meetings like this, and they get the idea that where so many people have opportunity to share, that we think lightly of the local church, that we think lightly of the pastoral ministry, that we think lightly of the preaching of the Word of God. That's as far from the truth as anything I can say.

When does a boy become a man, primarily? When that boy learns how to take responsibility. And you will become mature spiritually when you no longer live as a religious tramp, tramping from one church to the next, to the next, to the next, seeing how much good you can get from each one, never being responsible to any, never feeling a vital part and a vital link of the local church. I challenge you that if you've met God, you need to ask God to direct you into the life of an evangelical church and into an atmosphere that is conducive to your growth and to your development, and where these truths will continue to feed your soul day by day, week by week, and year by year of your life.

And as long as you stay tramping around on the outer fringe of the life of the local church, you'll always be an immature Christian, because you're in direct disobedience to what God commands believers to do in fellowshiping one with another and forsaking not the assembling of ourselves together. And then we must cultivate the habit of a daily commitment to God. Some get the idea that once I've come to the altar of the prayer room, that's all I need to do.

But I hope it's come clear and loud in this crusade and in this ministry that to walk with God means to keep short accounts with God, to constantly remind God that you recognize He's to be in control of your life, deal honestly with sin, bring your old self-centeredness to the foot of the cross day by day, and claim the fullness of God's Holy Spirit day by day and moment by moment in your life. And when that becomes a way of living, that you consciously are aware of the fact that you again are reminding God that you're agreeing with Him that your life is not your own, and that you're His, and that you're His to control, and you gladly and willingly accept His Lordship, control, and ownership over your life, then a pattern of living will develop such as cannot develop without it. Cultivate the habit of a daily commitment to Almighty God.

Then there are many people who never mature because they are not willing to vote with God on all issues in their life. They are still asking the question, why, instead of what. No Christian will ever be able to understand Romans 8.28 and 8.29 as long as he's asking the question, why.

Somebody said, why is a crooked letter and can never be straightened. And that seems to be true spiritually. As long as you question, why God did you allow this, you're questioning the authority of the God of the universe.

You're almost saying to God, God, didn't you have any more, and I say it reverently, intelligence than that, than to permit that to happen in my life. You're questioning the authority of God. When you're not willing to vote with God on every issue in your life, but rather when God deals with you and you get to the place where you're willing to say, what is it, Lord? What is it in the situation you're trying to teach me? What is it about the circumstance that needs to make me more like Thee each day? You see, now you're not questioning His authority, but in perfect submission, you're agreeing with the Almighty God, the intelligent God of the universe, that He knows why He did it.

And you're not going to worry about that, but you're concerned to find what is the thing that God is trying to teach you about your walk with Him. That will help you in the hour of trial. It will help you in the hour of

sickness.

It will help you in the hour of misunderstanding. It will cause you to recognize that God in His beautiful way is performing the job of conforming you to the image of His Son more and more each day you live. Therefore, vote with God.

Give God the benefit of your doubts. And if you will, He'll give you the benefit of taking away all of your doubts. Many never mature spiritually because they're not willing to clean house thoroughly.

You know what spring cleaning is like? It's when the whole house gets turned right side up. It's been upside down for six months. Now it gets turned right side up, inside out.

Everything's cleaned out. Underneath, in and out, every place you go, you've cleaned house thoroughly. And I believe that at this point, many young Christians and those who commit themselves to God never mature because they're not willing to agree with God about what God shows them that needs to be cleaned out of their lives.

There are many kinds of sins. What about the sins of omission? Those are the sins that you know, those things that you do not do when God tells you you ought to do them, such as failure to read the Word of God, such as failure to spend time with God in prayer, such as obeying God about sharing the reality of Christ with your neighbors. Those things that you fail to do, that God clearly commands, are for believers to do.

Sins of omission. We need to clean house thoroughly in that area. Sins of co-omission.

Those are those willful acts that we know are displeasing to God, those desires and acts that we allow to continue in our lives that we know are displeasing to God. Then there are the sins of disposition. You know what that is? That irritable, grouchy, gripey, touchy, picky, puny, sensitive spirit that you told yourself is your personality, when all the time God's trying to show you that that's the thing that destroys your personality.

And then you told yourself that you inherited it from your great-grandmother and great-grandma's not here to defend herself. And God has a lot to say about the sins of disposition. No Christian needs to live to his dying day with an irritable, touchy, gripey, grouchy, sensitive spirit.

God has deliverance for you. Then the sins of supposition. That's a big one.

Have you ever seen all the things that come into our lives that we supposed people thought about us? I've seen people, we've dealt with them, and they've told me all about how people think about them in the church. And I say, now how do you know that? Did so-and-so tell you that? Did so-and-so tell you? No, no, no. Nobody told me, but I just supposed it was that way.

And our minds run rampant and loose. And God needs to teach us how to bring our thought life and our thought patterns in subjection to the obedience of Jesus Christ. And the Apostle Paul talks about that.

How we're to literally capture every thought and make it a slave to Christ, and not allow our imagination to run loose and to run wild, and to cause us to think those things that are impure and some things that never even existed. Sins of supposition. Then there are the sins of lack of restitution.

And those are those things that God has pinpointed in your life. And you know what you need to do to make them right, but you're not willing to do it. And right at that point, when God says yes about something, and you say no about something, right at that point, you lose out in your power and dynamic with Him.

And I've seen many cases where people have been used of God for a spiritual breakthrough in the unsaved world, simply because they obeyed God about restitution. I've seen people said, I've never seen Christians act like that before. I've never seen people so right with God that they had to make things right around town.

I'll never forget a man who came to one of the daytime meetings, where we're speaking to a local civic club. He said, you know, I've got to speak to you. He said, I've never had this happen to me in all my years in business.

An 18 year old young fellow came into my department store the other day, and he said he had to come and tell me that he had stolen some things off of the counters several years ago, but he had been down to the revival meeting, and he got right with God, and now he came to make restitution, and he told me the story of how Christ had transformed his life. Here's an unconverted businessman with his eyes as big as marbles, just listening to everything I had to say. Why? Because a Christian obeyed God in the area of restitution, and it opened a heart that otherwise would have been closed to listen to the message, simply because of making things right.

And many believers cut God short because of the sins of lack of restitution. They are not willing to make those things right that God puts his finger on, and shows need to be made right. And then, if you're going to succeed spiritually, prepare to guard your weak spots.

Prepare to guard your weak spots. Some, Satan always attacks us at our weakest point, and in everybody's life that's different, but Satan will always seek to attack the weakest point. Now, in many of us, that weakest point is in the area of self-discipline, especially when it comes to putting God first, as far as taking time with God, with his word, in prayer.

That's usually an area many of us have a problem. Now, how can you guard that weak point? Well, here's a simple suggestion. If you want to have prayer and Bible reading between 11 to 12 every morning, why don't you have Sally call you up at five minutes to 11 and say, Jane, what are you going to be doing for the next hour? And hang up.

And then, at five minutes after 12, have Mary call you and say, Jane, what have you been doing for the last hour? One was calling you to remind you of your commitment to meet God at that hour, and the other was checking up to see whether or not you kept your commitment to God. Now, that's a simple thing, isn't it? It's a very simple thing. I've seen Christians who have asked other people to help them guard their weak spot, so that they could build a defense around their lives, and after a thing to continue, and found themselves growing in the area that they thought was their point of biggest weakness.

So, God wants to teach you that. You sit down and talk to yourself. Now, I know there are places for people who do that.

But once in a while, it's good to do. Talk to ourselves, and say, all right, now, I know the way I am. I know my life, and I know where I need victory, and I know where I need help.

And as brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, we need to bear each other's burdens. Therefore, I want to see one way I'm going to find help to guard my weak spot. You have just listened to side one of this recording.

Please turn over for side two. Leads me right into the next step, and that is, consider the buddy system for regular worship. A buddy system for regular worship.

Now, the Bible talks all about it. Romans chapter 12, 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verses 20 and 21, talk all about this, how we need each other. We need to bear each other's burdens.

I suggest that every Christian find another Christian, one that you admire, look up to, and respect because of his life, and plan to meet with him once a week, and for one hour only. For what reason? So that together, you can share each other's joys, you can bear each other's burdens, you can correct each other, you can admonish each other, you can lift each other up, and you can really spank each other when you need it. And get it to be someone outside of your immediate family.

I know some great Christians who are personal friends of ours, and one of the secrets to their personal greatness is the fact that once a week they meet alone with another Christian. I know one who meets with another businessman every Thursday at noon, and guess where he goes? Out to the cemetery. Well, I think that's a good place to be.

After all, if you want to understand death to self, why not be at the cemetery? Really not. But it's a place to be alone where those two men are alone. And I've called that man, I've said, Stan, how about going out for lunch? He said, no, that's the wrong day.

That's the day I meet with Art, out there in the cemetery, where we pray, and we bear each other's burdens, and we talk over our problems. One hour. When one hour's finished, it's finished.

I said one hour, only one hour. You know why? Because if you begin to take advantage of a buddy spiritually, then that one will not be a help to you, but rather that one will become a crutch to you, and you'll never get on your own two feet. Because God wants to teach you how to stand alone, as well as stand with someone to help you.

Don't make yourself a nuisance, nor weaken your Christian life by always running to people for help. Now, I know there are specific needs and times where you need help, and young Christians just starting out have a lot of questions. I'm not talking about that.

But I'm talking about the people who are always leaning on others, all of their life, and they get the idea that their spiritual help comes from this direction, instead of from this direction. And they never learn how to commune with God in a personal way for their spiritual development. Now, your commitment needs to be specific, as well as general.

We talk about committing our whole life to God. Now, God wants to teach you how to commit specific things to God in your personal life. Set up for yourself goals, specific goals, that by the grace of God and by God's taking control of your life, you believe he's going to reach through you.

Now, don't be under bondage to them, nor be legalistic about them, feeling as if I do not attain, I fail. That's not at all. But I believe every Christian who succeeds spiritually must get before God and say, God, what specific goals will thou have for me to set up in my life? Let God write them for you.

And then remind him that if he's doing the writing, then he's going to have to do the fulfilling, and by God's grace, you're going to claim his fullness to see that those things come to pass. And then to go about them. What are some of them? Well, what about the amount of time that you want to spend with God daily in prayer and with your Bible? Maybe you ought to commit yourself specifically to a certain amount of time.

The number of people God impresses on your heart with whom you want to share Christ during the week. And if God opens the way, wonderful. And if he doesn't open the way, wonderful too.

But you just have your heart and mind open because you believe that God has set that goal before you. What about the talents of your life that ought to be committed to certain specific areas of church life? Service for God. There are some people who never stand behind the pulpit and do what I'm doing now.

But there are many people who will do many things in the church that I'll never do. And it's just as sacred for you to keep good Sunday school records as it is for me to stand in this pulpit and speak this message tonight. And it's just as sacred for you to do some tasks to keep the house of God clean and to keep it respectable so that people coming in can admire it as a place of worship and say, truly it looks like a house of God as it is for me to stand behind this pulpit.

And there are certain people who have been given certain gifts by God and talents that if they were committed specifically to God and the church could fulfill such a great service. There are shut-ins that need help. There are people that need letters.

They need encouragement in the mail. There are people that need phone calls. There are elderly people who can commit themselves to babysitting for young couples as they are out sharing Christ with others elsewhere so that others can be involved.

There are hospitality talents that God has given people so that every Sunday they've already put an extra roast on. Or in our case at home, Mother would always make sure that there'd be always enough spaghetti sauce so that if we ever saw anybody in church on Sunday morning that looked like a stranger, Dad would always invite them to our home for dinner. We hardly ever knew a Sunday, eating a meal alone as a family.

Well, you say, you must have had a small family so there was a lot of room. Yes, we did have a small family. Mother, father, six children, grandmother, granddad, and great-granddad.

Eleven of us under one roof. But Dad would always say, we can always put an extra pound of spaghetti on. And granddad, as God touched his life, he was in the shoe repair business, just a meager business.

Why, whenever an evangelist would come to the church, the first thing he'd do is just, let me see your shoes. And he'd fix the evangelist's shoes whenever they needed fixing. And I believe that granddad has rewards in heaven such as I'll never know anything about in that same area.

Because there were specific areas of his life that were committed to God. And God needs to teach us tonight that there is excitement about the ordinary things when ordinary things are committed to God. Do you know why? Because in God's sight, there is no difference between the secular and sacred.

Everything is sacred to the believer. And then what about my giving to God's work? Well, you say, I'm used to tithing. The church tells me I'm to give 10%.

I didn't say that. I said, have you committed the other 90% to God? You say, well, what do I own then? I gave him 10%. Now you're asking me to commit the other 90%.

Well, what do I own? That's right. Nothing. Nothing.

You're not an owner when you're a believer. You're a steward. You've been put in trust.

And I'm asking you whether or not you're so in touch with the owner that you can consult with the owner as to how he wants you to use his money. Or do we automatically think that as long as we put 10% in which God has directly told us what to do, that the other 90% we can do whatever we like. And God wants us to make some commitment about our money as to who really is in control of it, who owns it, and what he wants to say to us and through us for his glory.

And then what about committing my tongue to speak those things that are true and pure and kind? Some of us need to make a commitment like that. And I believe that's one of the biggest commitments that any of us will ever make. For the apostle James reminds us of what kind of, what our tongue can really do.

It can set a whole world on fire, a den of iniquity located right behind our teeth. Somebody said your tongue is in a wet place. Be careful that it doesn't slip.

And many of us have a tongue that seems to be tied in the middle and wagging at both ends. One man couldn't get his tongue on the altar. Came to a meeting and the pastor knelt next to him and he kept saying to the pastor, oh pastor it's my tongue.

It's my tongue. I just can't get my tongue on the altar. It's my tongue.

I just can't get my tongue on the altar. And the pastor took one look at the altar, turned to the man, he said, sir the altar is 20 feet long. How long is your tongue? And God needs to teach us that there needs to be a commitment of that member of our being that can destroy homes.

It can destroy families. It can destroy churches. It can destroy denominations.

It can destroy ministries. It can destroy children. It can destroy parents.

It can destroy reputations. It can destroy future happiness. And God needs to teach us to be specific about that commitment of our tongue to him.

And then my eyes. What about a specific commitment about my eyes? Only to read and to watch those things that cause stronger faith and a purer mind. And I make notes.

Try to fit most paperbacks into that. Try to fit most television programs into Philippians 4 verse 8 where it tells us how we are to think. What sort of things are pure? What sort of things are lovely? Just and good, of good report, of virtue.

All of those attributes of praise. Think on these things. God tells us how we're to think.

You know if you want to take that verse literally? Who is the altogether pure one? The altogether lovely one? The altogether true one? The one who is altogether of virtue and of good report? Who is he? Jesus Christ. Do you know what the Apostle Paul is saying? You want to have victory in your thought life? Make your thought life Christ-centered. Whatsoever is Jesus.

Whatsoever is Jesus. Whatsoever is Jesus. Whatsoever is Jesus.

Think on Jesus. And it's going to be difficult for any Christian in this meeting to be thinking on Jesus when he's watching Love of Life or Secret Storm. No wonder it's a storm.

And General Hospital, Search for Tomorrow, The Dating Game, Newlyweds. You know what the National Association of Better Broadcasters say about those programs? About those last two I've just mentioned? It says the participants take the worst beating. That's the way they rate those programs.

And yet we waste that God-given time in our eyes and our minds and contaminate our minds and allow all of this to penetrate our being. Why I don't blame some women for looking at their husbands when they come home, when he comes home at 4 30 or 5 in the evening and say growlingly, where have you been today? You've been watching two or three or four hours of soapbox operas. No wonder you're suspicious about your husband when he comes home.

And you'll never succeed spiritually until you make a commitment of your mind and your eyes to purity, to holiness, to godliness, to righteousness, to those things that are going to bring a pure mind, a stronger mind and faith that will mature. Then here's another truth. Keep your eyes off of people.

Keep them on Jesus Christ. Keep them off of people. Even the best of people.

You know, you can look at the best of people and if you look close enough, you're going to find some holes. You know why? Because none of us are perfect yet. And we all have work that God has to do in our lives.

So you need to get your eyes off of people. You need to get your eyes off of people who came forward in this crusade. You need to get your eyes off people who testified in this crusade.

Those who stood up here and prayed. Those who stood up here and sang. And even those who stood up here and shared with you.

You need to get your eyes off of people. You need to get them on Christ. You know why? Because there's nothing wrong with him.

When Pilate said that day, I find no fault in him, he knew what he was talking about. There's no fault in his doctrine. There's no fault in his character.

There's no fault in his personality. There's no fault in his way of living. There was no fault in the way he died, because it was all in God's will.

If you'll just keep your eyes fixed on him, you won't stumble over the inconsistencies of others and of people around about you. You say, but is it right that there are hypocrites in the church? Why, it's not right that they're hypocrites, but it's right that they're in the church. In fact, it's more right that they're in the church than they're anyplace else.

I'd rather see a hypocrite in church than anyplace else, wouldn't you? He may get some help from being in church, more help than you're getting by hiding behind him and staying away. And you know, in order for you to be bigger than the hypocrite, you can't allow yourself to be smaller than he is. And if you hide behind him, that's your proof you've got to be smaller than he is, or else you can never hide behind him.

Somebody said, if you could knock down one hypocrite in the church, about 10 leaners on the outside would probably fall over at the same time. Now, what to do about the hypocrites in the church? Well, I'll tell you what to do about them. Expect them, so when you see them, you're not shocked.

Pray for them. Don't get shaken up by them. And help them and win them to Christ in the love of Christ.

Now, I'm really not surprised about that, because I noticed that even in Jesus' field, he had hypocrites. And he warns us that if he is a master at those who are phony, so would we, as his servants, find the same problem. And there's going to come a day when there'll be a separation of the wheat from the tares, and the sheep from the goats.

And God will do that separating in his time. Now, here's another truth. Recognize and accept people the way they are, not the way you wish they were.

And if you could just learn this truth, what a difference it'll make in the way you succeed spiritually. I've seen a lot of people who have a problem simply because they're not willing to accept people the way they are. Now, if everybody were the way you wish they were, then they would all be just like you, and then we have compounded the problem.

But learn how to accept people the way they are, not the way you wish they were. What a world would it be if we all were the same member of the body. If we all were a finger.

What an awkward body. And you know, it's easy to love a few people in the church like a handful others, tolerate some, and really almost hate others. You know which ones you love? The ones that are closest to being just like you, or else the ones that are closest to satisfying your needs.

You can love them. And that's true of pastors as well. You remember the pastors you really love? The ones that seem to have a personality that suited yours just right.

And then people said, I just wonder if after the crusade is over, and after I've made my commitment to God, and I'm not going to church every night, whether or not I can continue walking this Christian life when the twins are not around anymore. I don't think my pastor can do it the way they did it in the crusade. So if your pastor is not a twin, then you figure he can't do it.

And God has to show you, and he has to show me, that he made you the way he made you, and he made me the way he made me, and he made your pastor the way he made your pastor, and he put us all together so that we could recognize and accept each other the way we are, and not the way we wish everybody was around us. And I'm going to tell you what that'll do for you. That will cause you to accept your pastor such as you've never accepted.

It'll cause you to accept and love some people in the church that up until now you've merely tolerated. And it'll cause you to have a heart filled with an agape divine love such as you never thought could be possible. You know, it's intriguing to watch what happens.

When you begin to accept people the way they are, then you'll begin to magnify their good points and commend them for the good things you see about them, and diminish the weak areas and the bad points about them. And the moment you begin to do that, they in turn will begin to sense that, and in response to that, they will respond to you in such a way that a new relationship of love will develop, and before long, as a result of your commending each other and complimenting each other on those areas of greatness in the

goodness of God, before long you'll find that person right where you always thought he should be anyway. And there's a way in which we minister to each other by magnifying those good things we see in each other, and thanking God for them, and diminishing those areas that we may not completely understand.

And I'd say to some who are here tonight, the reason why God brought into your life a pastor who may have the kind of personality that rubs your personality a little bit the wrong way is not primarily to change the pastor, but primarily so that you can have a good opportunity to test and exercise the grace of God, to see whether or not the grace of God can cause you to love your pastor, even though his personality rubs you the wrong way. And if you learn that, how you have developed spiritually? Right in the process. The Bible says, above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, for love shall cover the multitude of sins, a multitude of sins.

And when it says fervent charity, it really means bring your love to a white heat boiling point. That word fervent means white heat boiling point. Fervent charity, that kind of a boiling love, one for another, because that love covers a multitude of sins.

Now learn how to say, I'm sorry, and will you please forgive me, and be ready always to accept the same in return. Now don't go to a person and say, I'm sorry. And then he turns to you and he says, no, I'm sorry.

So what do you have? Two sorry people. There's so little that's said when you say, I'm sorry. You have not admitted anything when you say, I'm sorry.

But when you say, I'm sorry, and will you please forgive me, then you are admitting that you're wrong. But you say, I wasn't wrong in what I did. Oh, but you were wrong in the way you reacted to what he did.

And you're not going to prove whether or not what he did was wrong, you're going to prove that what you did was wrong. And that you reacted to a situation that was not Christ-like, it was not God-like, it was not Christian, and therefore you're saying, I'm sorry, will you please forgive me. Ella May Miller says that the three most exciting and most important words in marriage are, I'm sorry, honey.

And she says, walk to the mirror together, and say it to each other, I'm sorry, honey. Oh, the healing balm that comes when we admit that we have sinned against each other and want to be right. And then learn how to program Christ and program sharing Christ into your everyday experience.

Remember this, the moment it's not worth talking about, it's not worth having. That's true of many things. I've noticed people who are excited about the things that are really worth something.

Have you ever been given an airplane, a real one? You've been given an airplane. You say, Ralph, come on up to the airport, see the airplane I've been given. And while I'm out there looking, it's a beautiful airport, it's a beautiful airport.

In the process, I say, who gave you that airplane? And you bow your head. Well, I'm shy. And I'm a little too shy to tell you who gave me the airplane.

I'd look at you as if something was absolutely wrong with you. Why, I would think you'd be saying, well, Ralph, you know Mr. So-and-so, he's the man who gave me that airplane, and I'm so happy and excited about it to think that he would do that for me, even though I didn't deserve it. And why don't you go see him, maybe he has another one to give you one too.

In your exuberance, that's the way you'd feel about it. And if you're going to succeed spiritually, you may not have all the answers, but God help us that early in our Christian life, we're going to learn how to share the reality of Christ with others and just give him glory for what he's done. Jesus tells us how we're to share.

Jesus told one man, go back to thy brethren and tell them what great things I have done for thee and what great compassion I have had on thee. Talk about what God has done for you and the kind of compassion Christ had on you to minister to your needs. And if there's nothing else you can say about sharing the truth, maybe in your young Christian experience, oh, there's nothing that takes the place of telling the world was once I was blind, but now I see and I know the man who made the difference.

Then the burden bearing principle is a must for Christian maturity. No Christian can prevent becoming ingrown without this principle of bearing other people's burdens. It's impossible.

Christian fellowship. No Christian will be a fulfilled Christian unless he learns how to fulfill the law of Christ, which is bear one another's burdens and soul fulfill the law of Jesus Christ. And you know what real love is? First Corinthians 13 is the love chapter.

And in the midst of it, it says it's the kind of love that beareth all things. It didn't say just beareth nice things, but beareth all things. And when that kind of love pervades your heart and you begin to bear another's burdens, oh, what a tremendous difference it's going to make in your relationship with God.

Some have the idea that bearing burdens and sharing with each other creates problems. But on the contrary, I say it solves problems. Where would some pastors be tonight had they had a congregation with open hearts willing to bear their pastor's burdens on their knees in divine love, walking in their pastor's shoes for a few days, sensing the real heartbeat of their pastor rather than criticizing on the outside.

I know many a man in the ministry would have been spared a life of shipwreck if Christians had learned how to minister to their pastor when he was in need and bear his burdens in the bond of divine love. Now, in closing tonight, there is a prayer of the committed Christian. When you have surrendered your life totally to God, there is a prayer that God wants you to pray.

It's this. Yes, Lord, what else? Yes, Lord, what else? I believe that when you can pray that prayer in sincerity and honesty and a willing desire to pray, I believe that's one of the truest signs of spiritual victory. You see, by praying that, you're doing this.

When you say yes, Lord, you're showing God that your heart's desire is to implicitly say yes to everything God says, an implicit obedience to all of God's revealed will for your life. And when you say, what else? You're saying, God, I'm anxious to deal objectively about everything thou didst show me that needs to be made right. You see, the truly committed Christian no longer rationalizes God's truth to fit his lifestyle, but now he's molded and conformed to the image of Christ daily, and he understands this truth, that divine blessing is the result of direct obedience.

And when you get to that place, I believe your life will be lived in the terms of the maximum, not in the terms of the minimum. You'll find a law of liberty, that there'll be no more bondage, but it will be liberty, because it's a love relationship with God only. And everything God shows you, you're going to say yes to.

And I do not have time tonight, but I believe in three specific areas God will begin to speak to us as we read his word. One is in the area of Bible separation. God's manner of dealing with people has always

been one of separation, not amalgamation or infiltration.

God never intended for his people to do his work using the enemies of God to do it. The principle of separation is not one of personal options, it's one of divine command. And God warns those who would minimize or break down the difference between truth and error.

And God clearly tells us what our stance should be against heresy, what our stance should be against any area of doing the work of God that seeks to amalgamate God's people with the unsaved crowd and try to pretend to be doing the same thing under the name of God. And you need to search out what God says about that. And you'll be saying yes, Lord.

Perhaps that's the great need of your life, to be able to say yes, Lord, to all these things that you've heard as you've listened to this tape. Perhaps the Lord has spoken to you in that way. Why not pray to him right now and commit your life to him afresh and say, Lord, my answer to you is yes.

I say an unreserved yes to you, Lord. May God bless you as you do it. Further copies of this recording are available from the Canadian Revival Fellowship, Box 584, Regina, Saskatchewan in Canada.

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