

# Commitment to the Father

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald emphasizes the necessity of total commitment to God, exemplified by Jesus' life and sacrifice.*

**Duration:** 38:54

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Psalm 37:5, Isaiah 41:10, 1 Peter 2:21

**Topics:** "Commitment"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of full commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. He highlights the blessings that come from Calvary and the need for a proper response to the truths presented. The preacher refers to the church in Laodicea and the warning given by Jesus about being lukewarm. The sermon also explores the concept of commitment to Christ and the impact it should have on every aspect of a believer's life. The preacher references Deuteronomy 6:4-9, which instructs believers to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

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## Transcript

6, please, Deuteronomy chapter 6. You've heard about preachers who choose a text and then depart from it forever. I'm going to choose a text and depart from it, but hopefully not forever. I'll come back to it before the message is over.

We'll begin in verse 4, Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 4. Here, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. These words which I command you this day shall be in your heart.

You shall teach them diligently to your children. You shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign in your hand, and they shall be as frontlets before your eyes.

You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. We've been speaking in this series on that expression, my heart, my life, my all. The first night we talked about the logic of Calvary, and that introduced us to four life-changing questions.

At least the answers to those questions are really life-changing. Who the Lord Jesus really is? He is the incarnate God. What he did for us, he, the incarnate God, died for us on the cross of Calvary.

Who are we? And Alan has answered that in the song he sang tonight, so appropriate. Who are we? The wonder of who we are, the wonder of how unworthy we really are. I was thinking of that chorus, wonderful savior, wonderful friend, wonderful life that never shall end, wonderful place he's gone to prepare, wonder of wonders, I shall be there.

That will be one of the greatest wonders of heaven. And then finally we talked about the blessings that flow from Calvary to those who are redeemed by precious blood. And that led us down a one-way street to full commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We need to respond to these four truths that we had before us in the previous meetings. And frankly, the only proper response is, it has to be everything or nothing. It was not without reason that the Lord Jesus said to the church in Laodicea, I wish you were either hot or cold.

Because you are not hot or cold, I will vomit you out of my mouth. But he was only saying what was the only logical conclusion to the great truth that we have. And that led us last night to the subject of what is commitment to Christ.

You can read about commitment, you can read about a subject like that in literature, you can hear it spoken from the platform. But if you're anything like me, there's nothing like seeing it exhibited in a human life. Have you ever had that expression? Well, you read things in the Bible, and they seem to be mystical and ephemeral.

They're often spaced there somewhere, and all of a sudden somebody comes into your life. And that person is living out that truth. And you say, now I understand it.

And so we want to look at the life of someone whose life was one of commitment, and his name is Jesus. The Lord Jesus was fully committed to the will of God his Father. As we said at the close of the meeting last night, he's not only the author and finisher of faith, he's also the inventor and chief example of commitment.

And if you want to know what is meant by that word, just study the life of the Son of God. When the Father looked down upon a world of lost mankind and said, as it were, whom shall I send and who will go with me? The obvious response of the Lord Jesus was, here I am, send me. He said, in effect, he wanted to do the will of God no matter what the price may be.

And he knew what the price would be. It meant for the creator to be born in a stable. The law of a feed box for a mattress would be good enough for him.

I have a hard time taking it in. And even in later years, the Lord Jesus knew nothing of the comforts which we take today as being our inalienable rights. He never knew hot and cold running water.

He never knew a shower. He never knew an inner spring mattress or any kind of a mattress as we know it today. He never knew bathroom facilities.

He didn't even have what foxes and birds of the air have a place to call his own. Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests. But the Son of Man had not where to lay his head.

How touching it is to read that when the disciples went to their own homes, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. And as the hymn writer said, Thy bed was the sod, O thou Son of God. Thy bed was the sod, O

thou Son of God.

The Savior knew what it meant to come into a world of sin. It really didn't shock us too much to come into a world of sin, did it? We can't know the suffering that his advent meant to him. You know, the more godly, holy a person is, the more exquisite is his suffering or her suffering in the presence of sin.

You take this cultured, refined, godly Christian woman and you take her down to Skid Row and see some of the sights down there. She's absolutely repelled by it and repulsed by it. Think of what it meant for the Lord Jesus to come down to this world, the Holy One who knew no sin.

Think of how exquisite his suffering must have been. It hurts us to resist temptation. It hurt him just to come in contact with it.

And in accepting the will of God, the Savior knew that he would be despised and rejected. Imagine the Lord of life and glory coming into the world, the world his hands had made, the creatures whom he had made, and he knew coming in just exactly what his welcome would be. He would be despised and rejected.

That is true. Man of sorrows. What a name for the Son of God who came, ruined sinners to reclaim.

Hallelujah. What a Savior. In spite of it all, he would be constantly showering blessings upon people.

That's really wonderful, isn't it? He'd give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the mute. He would deliver the demon possessed. And yet he would receive ingratitude and abuse.

The hymn in our hymn book, and one of the verses of that hymn says, Why? What has my Lord done? What makes this rage and spite? He made the lame to run. He gave the blind their sight. Sweet injuries.

Sweet injuries. Yet they at these themselves displease, and against him rise. The Lord Jesus knew what loneliness was, and he was well acquainted with grief, as Isaiah says.

He earned, and earned well, the title, Man of Sorrows. He would be insulted, accused of being born of fornication, of being demon possessed. He would be accused of performing miracles in the power of Satan, all by his own creatures.

But he never did think of turning back. There was a lonely path he'd trod, from every human soul apart, known only to himself and God with all the grief that filled his heart. Yet from the track he turned not back, till where I lay, in sin and shame, he found me.

Blessed be his name. Wonderful, wonderful Jesus. He's going to hear about it for all eternity.

Yes, when the Son said, Here I am, send me, the future was all an open book to him. But he was so committed to the will of God, that he faced it with determination. Time and time in his earthly ministry, he spoke of his desire to be totally committed to God, his Father.

He appealed to the consistent testimony of the Word of God, that he came into the world to do the will of God. From Genesis to Revelation, the story is the same. He came to do the Father's will.

Early in his ministry, he cleansed the temple there in Jerusalem, and it clicked in the disciples' minds, and they remembered it was said of him, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. He was consumed with

zeal for the Father's interests, for the Father's house. He was consumed with zeal to do the will of God.

One day he said to the multitude, For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me. Isn't that wonderful? I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me. When as a boy, his parents found him in Jerusalem, after missing him for three days, he reminded them that he had to be about his father's business.

That's commitment, friends. When the disciples expressed concern that he hadn't eaten recently, he said, My food is to do the will of God and to finish his work. So those who sought to kill him because he healed on the Sabbath day, he said, I do not seek my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me.

No one had ever been so focused as the Lord Jesus Christ. Dear friends, if you want to know what commitment is, you see it in his life as you see it nowhere else. The shadow of the cross was always before him.

It was there at the Jordan when he was baptized, when he and Pia went into the waters of death to rise again and thus fulfill all righteousness. He said, I have a baptism to be baptized and how am I straightened until it be accomplished? Man. Tremendous, isn't it? Obedience was not an occasional act with Jesus.

It was the story of his life. There was no shrinking back. I love that verse where they're on their final trip to Jerusalem, and he's walking with his disciples, and it says he went on ahead.

What does that mean? I think the disciples seat were made of lead. The Lord Jesus went on spryly, you might say, determinately, and the disciples were lagging back, dragging reluctant seat. The will of God would include Gethsemane, where he prayed.

Oh, my father, it'd be possible. Let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.

Was he praying to be delivered from death? No, he wasn't praying that. That was the reason for which he came into the world, but it was a rhetorical question. He was saying, Father, now, for the generation that is and for all generations to come, if there's any way of redeeming mankind other than by going to the cross, my going to the cross, show it now.

And there was a great silence. That silence said, there was no other way, no other way by which you and I could be saved. He was betrayed by a friend, denied by a disciple, kissed by a Satan-possessed man, and forsaken by those closest to him.

He would be arrested on trumped-up charges and tried in a trial that will always be the greatest farce in history, where the accused is found innocent and sentenced to death because they could find nothing wrong in him. And yet he was sentenced to death. The verdict was guilty.

He could have called twelve legions of angels, but he chose to die for you and for me. He preferred the will of God to his own safety. Friends, that's commitment.

He had the power to come down from the cross, but he had the power not to come down from the cross. Is that the greater power? It was not the nails that held him there. It was for this cause he came into the world.

What held him there was his commitment to the will of God the Father. The greatest horror would be those three hours of darkness when he was forsaken by God. Can you imagine what that means, to be forsaken

by God? And when he would bear the accumulated sins of all the world and his body on the tree.

You and I will never know what that means. Never know what that means. This is what the will of God, to which he was committed, cost him.

And he was willing to endure it in obedience to the will of God and out of love for our souls. I was enjoying that verse in Isaiah 53 this week. They made his grave with the wicked, but he was with the rich in his death.

That's interesting. The word wicked there is plural. They made his grave with the wicked ones, but he was with the rich.

In the original, that word rich is singular. It refers to Joseph of Arimathea. He was with the rich in his death.

Death in the original is plural. In his death. That touched my heart.

Could it be death for everyone? Death for you? And death for me? Accumulated death of all the people who ever lived and ever would live. Of course, he knew that he would rise from the dead. He knew that he would ascend back to heaven and be honored with the name that's above every name.

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. He knew that. He knew that eventually every knee in the universe would bow to him.

Why, that's a solemn verse, isn't it? That's solemn. I thought of that when I read of the death of Carl Sagan, you know, the astronomer who had no place for God in his scheme of things. I thought to myself, Carl, those knees of yours are going to bow to Jesus.

You who have seen his greatness in the firmament, the heavens, you are without excuse. One day you're going to bow to my Lord Jesus Christ. He knew, the Lord Jesus knew all of this, but he also knew that before the crown comes the cross.

And before the glory comes the suffering. He was willing to do the will of God. He was committed to the will of God no matter what the cost might be.

And he left us an example that we should follow his steps. Whenever we're tempted to complain or retreat, we should call on him to nerve our faint endeavors. The poet says, Lord, when I am weary with toiling and burdensome seeing thy command, if my load should lead to complaining, Lord, show me your hands.

Thy nail-pierced hands. Thy cross-torn hands. My Savior, show me thy hands.

Christ, if ever my steps should falter and I be prepared for retreat, if desert or thorn cause lamenting, Lord, show me your feet. Your bleeding feet. Your nail-scarred feet.

My Jesus, show me your feet. If you want to know what commitment really is, just study the life of the Lord Jesus and you'll see it there in living color. That brings us to our text tonight in Deuteronomy, chapter six, verse five.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. Now, I want to start and go through the Old Testament, first of all, and bring out aspects of commitment as they're found in the Old Testament. It's wonderful to me how when I read my Bible, you'll find threads that begin at

the beginning of the Bible and they go all the way through.

And this by men who never met each other and they never collaborated. They didn't know each other in most cases. And yet, for instance, that thread of worship goes all through the Bible.

You'll be in Genesis 22, find it all the way through. Prayer all through the Bible. There's no textbook on prayer like the Bible itself.

Holiness goes all through the Bible and so does commitment. Commitment is a thread that goes all through the Bible. And here in Deuteronomy, six, verse five, you have an early call to commitment.

And I'd like to think about it with you for a while tonight. An early call to commitment. Nowhere in the Bible is the call to total commitment more explicit and inescapable than in the verse of Scripture.

Unless anyone thinks that this belongs to the legal dispensation and that you can escape the force of it in that dispensational way. And I'm a dispensationalist too. If you think it doesn't apply today, just remember that this verse in one form or another is found in three times in the New Testament.

It's found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. One thing is added there, the word mind. With all your mind.

And in the Gospels, it's not given as law with penalty attached, but it's given as instruction in righteousness for the people of God. And so it really applies to you and to me. Jesus said that loving God is the first and great commandment.

He said that. Loving God is the first and great commandment. And then he said that on two commandments, that is, loving God and loving your neighbor, hang all the law and the prophets.

What does that mean? On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Well, it means that it means that everything in the Old Testament Scriptures is comprehended in those two commandments. And that's what happened in the New Testament.

You know, when that young man came to the Lord, Jesus said, Lord, give me a summary of the whole thing, the whole matter. And Jesus said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength and thy neighbor as thyself. What a voice that is for us today.

He said that these two laws are more than all the Hebraic system of sacrifices. That's good, isn't it? You know, you saw those priests going through all the routine of the sacrifices and Jesus said, More important than all those sacrifices is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And if that's so, they must be more of more than passing importance to us.

So, what is the message for us today? Well, as I said, it's an early call to commitment. And even although we may not obey it perfectly, it should still be the aspiration of our hearts. We should be always moving in that direction.

Even if on earth it's never an achievement for us, it should be an ongoing process. Notice, first of all, you shall love the Lord your God. I emphasize that, the Lord your God.

This is the one to whom we are obligated with love. He's our Lord. He's our Maker.

He's our God. He's our Creator. He's our Sustainer.

He's our Savior and Preserver. And He deserves our love. And when He has it, He will have our obedience.

Notice what it says. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart. With all your heart.

With all your affectionate powers. With all your affectionate powers. It means that God must have first place in our heart.

I've told that story so often, but I love it just the same. One time Spurgeon came to the tabernacle there, young man, he had his fiancée in the carriage with him there, you know, and they came to the door and he was thinking of the souls of people that would be there tonight in need of Christ. And he jumped out of the, I was going to say the chariot, but he jumped out of the carriage and he rushed into the church and he left her sitting on her seat there in the carriage.

His thought was on souls. And when he got up there to preach, he looked around the audience and she wasn't there. And after the meeting and after he had dealt with souls and some had streamed into the kingdom of God, which they usually did when he preached, he made his way out to her house.

Her parents were there. He said he wanted to see her. They said she was upstairs.

She was pouting. He insisted on seeing her and finally she came down. He said, look, I'm very sorry for what happened tonight.

But he said, if you and I are going to be married, he said we should get this straight. Christ must have first place in my life. And you'll have to take second place.

And later at the end of the wonderful ministry, Mrs. Virgin said, I learned a good lesson that night. There was someone in Charles's life that had first place. My job was to take second place to the Savior.

Dear sisters here tonight, if you've got a husband in Christ's first place in his life, you've got the right kind of a husband. And gentlemen here tonight, you have a wife and Christ has his first place in her life. You've got the right kind of a wife.

And you young people that aren't married, that's the kind of a spouse to look for. And not to be jealous of the Savior and that love. Don't pass over the word all here.

It's so easy to slither over that word. It says with all your heart, all your affectionate heart. And in the following expressions too, it says the same thing.

It means to love the Lord supremely. You say, well, what would it be like to have if I loved the Lord supremely? Well, I'd like to take you to the Song of Solomon. There was a girl there and she was madly in love.

They call her the Shulamite. She was madly in love. In my interpretation of the Song of Solomon, she was madly in love with a shepherd lover.

Not Solomon. Solomon was trying to woo and win her with all his blandishments and blarney. But she had a shepherd lover.

And everything is past the natural when he's on the scene, you know. But anyway, I can't go into that. She loved him.

And let me just tell you what her love was like. She was never more happy than when she was in his presence. She just loved to be with him.

Her cup was full when he was around. And his absence really pained her. When he was away, she longed for him to come.

Does that make sense? Ring bells in your heart tonight. She talked about him with great delight. I tell you, her tongue was the pen of a ready writer.

And when the daughters of Jerusalem said, What's your beloved more than another beloved? That's all she needed. That set her off. And I tell you, in marvelous words that ring on down through the ages, she extolled the beauty of her lover.

That's what love is like, isn't it? And she loved to talk to him. As you read through the Song of Song, you find her talking to him. She just loved it.

Sometimes she talked to him when he wasn't there. Love is like that, you know. She was talking to him and he wasn't even present.

That was okay. And she was always pleased to hear his voice. That's lovely.

She dreamed about him and she relished every memory of him throughout the book. This is so clear. And, dear friends, there was no competitor for her love.

Even Solomon, in all his grandeur and all the wealth that he had, and promising, you just follow me and you'll be wearing pearls. Well, he didn't say that, but anyway, that idea, you know, didn't mean a thing to her. All she thought about was her shepherd lover.

He was the object of her affection. We're to love God with all our heart. Follow the example of the Shulamite in the Song of Songs.

We're to love the Lord with all our soul. What does that mean? With all our emotional powers. We think the soul is the seat of the emotion.

And we all have emotional powers. We're justified in understanding this, that we should love the Lord with all our emotions. We should be enthusiastic about him.

I think it's a sin not to be enthusiastic about the Lord Jesus, don't you? No. Thank you. I did that purposely to get that right.

We should be joyful when we hear him exalted. We should be grieved when we hear his name called to be taken in vain. We should be angry at anything that dishonors the Christ of God.

When we remember him, joy and sorrow are mingled. Two emotions, joy and sorrow are mingled when we remember him. Joy to think that his sufferings are over, and sorrow to think that our sins nailed him to the tree.

We're to love him with all our emotional powers. Well, people say, I have a hard time showing, you know, outwardly enthusiasm. No, I like him inside.

He's okay inside, but it's just hard to meet him. Is that the way you are when a Super Bowl is on? You're holding the remote in your hand, you know, and you see a bunch of bullies out there on the field, men from Mars almost, you know, and they're maiming and mauling one another, and they grab something that's shaped like nothing else in the universe, and desperately try to get it across a white line, and you're there, yay, go, you know. This is the person that can't be enthusiastic about Jesus.

Something doesn't matter. Something's out of place. I'm going to tell you, I'm jealous when I see the stadiums, and when I see the auditors filled with people cheering over some worldly nonsense, and I don't hear it from my Savior.

Love the Lord your God with all your emotional powers. And that isn't all. With all your physical powers, too.

With all your physical powers. It's good for us to remember, God doesn't take delight in the strength of the horse. He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.

That's a great book, isn't it? He doesn't take delight in the strength of the horse, or in the legs of a man. He takes pleasure in those who fear him, and those who hope in his mercy. Prowess in spiritual things counts far more than popularity on the athletic field.

This is what's important. A former athlete said, the biggest thrill of my life was when I first scored the decisive goal in a big match, heard the roar of the cheering crowd, but in the quiet of my room that night, a sense of the futility of it all swept over me. After all, what was it worth? Was there nothing better to live for than to score a goal? That guy had his eyes anointed with divine eyesalve, didn't he? Those who live for the world's honors are selling their birthright for a bowl of chili.

That's what they're doing. I don't want the world's honors and a world that gave him nothing but a cross and a grave. Imagine giving one's best for a ribbon, a plaque, a gold cup.

One man who lived for these things said, the dream of the reality was better than the reality of the dream. Found out he was empty-handed. Young people who want to obey the first and great commandments can't express their resolve better than in the words of Thomas Gill in that little InterVarsity hymn book.

It said, Lord, in the fullness of my might, I would for thee be strong. While runneth o'er each dear delight, to thee should soar my song. I would not give the world my heart and then profess thy love.

I would not feel my strength depart and then thy service prove. I would not with swift winged zeal on the world's errands go, then labor up the heavenly hill with weary feet and slow. O not for thee my weak desires my poorer baser part.

O not for thee my fading fires, the ashes of my heart. O choose me in my golden time and my dear joy has part. For thee the glory of my pride, the fullness of my heart.

I shall love the Lord thy God with all thy mind. That means with all your intellectual powers, doesn't it? With all your intellectual powers. You know what it means? It means that I should take my mind as it were, this figurative language, I should take my mind and I should lay it adoringly at the feet of the Lord Jesus.

For you leave it, you use it, Lord, in any way you want to use it. I don't want to give my best to the unworthy world. I want to give it to the Savior.

Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all your affectionate powers, with all your soul, with all of your emotional powers, with all your mind, with all your intellectual powers, with all your strength. Just before I came away I heard of a man and God had given him a wonderful memory and blindfolded, blindfolded, he played consecutively over a hundred different games of chess and won most of them. And I think, what a prostitution of the human mind.

A mind that was made for the glory of God and prostituted for a chess board. Shall we pray? Blessed Lord Jesus, I pray especially for the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength. And teach them day to day how to put this into practice so that their lives might count for you and so that they might make history for God.

I ask it in the Savior's name. Amen. Amen.

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