

Commitment vs. Surrender

The word commitment is in essence not a biblical concept. It is more or less since the 1960's that Christian writers and preachers began to use the word. Today people are asked to make a *commitment* to follow Christ, to commit to go to the mission field, to give financially, to pray for a certain issue.

The word commit means: promised devotion, to pledge devotion or dedication to somebody or something; to be committed to, to entrust something or somebody to somebody else for protection.

The loophole with commitment though, is that we can still decide **what and how much** we want to commit. The decision still lies with us. We are still in control. It is more of a humanistic concept than a Christian concept.

Scripture speaks of **surrender**, not commitment. The definition of surrender is: to give up possession of something: to relinquish possession or control of something, unconditional submission, abandonment of legal rights, an act of willing submission to authority, capitulation, renunciation, to hand over, to give up a fight, an act of declaring defeat at the hands of an opponent.

Let us surrender to God. Let us give up our rights. When we surrender to God, it is not for us to decide what we want to do with our lives, possessions and future. It is only in surrender that God can do with us what He wants to do. Surrender is unconditional commitment. It goes against the grain of the era of humanism. It is in total surrender that we can really pray: "Your will be done." It is through total surrender that we get out of the way so that God can work in and through us or even set us aside to work through someone else to do what needs to be done.

Surrender is an absolute **act of faith**, saying: "Lord I trust you." Praying from a position of surrender, not commitment, allows God to work far above and beyond what we can think or imagine. One of the biggest differences between commitment and surrender is the fact that in commitment things depend on me. In surrender I give all to God. I will fail, but He will never fail. Commitment without surrender is often trying to do what only God can do through me when I surrender to Him.

Commitment comes after surrender. After our unconditional commitment (surrender), we follow through on our commitment, whatever the cost. Sooner or later the Christian life comes to a place where there is a price to be paid. It is here where commitment carries us through, irrespective of our circumstances, lack of faith and strength or unwillingness. We can commit ourselves for instance to do a certain piece of work. As soon as other pressures come, we might feel that we simply cannot do it. This is where unconditional commitment comes in: I keep my commitment, irrespective of the circumstances.

We will often sense that God is asking us to do something. After prayer and consultation, we feel that we need to do it. We put our hand to the plough and start. But then all sorts of difficulties arise and we feel that we cannot go on. Suddenly we start finding excuses: perhaps God didn't speak to me about this issue or maybe it is time to hand this over to someone else. Too many times I hear people say, "You know, God is using me to start things and then move on." I am not convinced that this is true in every situation. The easiest thing to do is to start something. If nothing comes of what I started, I can blame other people for not being faithful or not listening when God speaks to them. Too often the problem is in fact a lack of commitment to finish the work. So many times there is pride in the fact that we have been involved in starting something because then we can say, "You know, I was actually the one who started it." Do not start something if you aren't committed to finish it. We have too many sprinters in the Kingdom of God, but there are not enough long distance runners willing to complete the marathon. The Christian race is a marathon. God's marathon requires training, unconditional commitment and for you to surrender to Him.