

COMMITMENT (PART 1)

By Keith Greer

Being a retired member of the United States Air Force, the idea of "commitment" has been a constant theme in my life from basic training until my active duty time ended. The military is looking for "committed people", not only to a way of life, but also to the freedom that we all cherish. While this may sound like a TV ad, the idea of commitment teaches a very vital and needed truth. When I took my oath, before entering the USAF, I promised to "obey the orders of my superiors and faithfully execute those orders to the best of my ability." Failure to do so would result in severe consequences up to and including court martial and a dishonorable discharge. In my military career I might not have always agreed with the orders given to me but I always knew my duty to carry them out to the best of my ability. In a nutshell I was **COMMITTED**.

What the Lord's church needs today are people who are **COMMITTED** to the cause of Christ. Commitment, by definition, is "to give in trust or charge; consign; to pledge and devote oneself to a position or issue." (Random House College Dictionary) Most of us know, or at least understand, the definition, but how does commitment work in action?

In writing to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul wrote about the liberality of the Macedonians. "Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God." (2 Corinthians 8:1-5) They were **COMMITTED**!

When Peter and John were brought before the Jewish high court, "And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:18-20) "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." (Acts 5:42) What gave them courage? The apostles were **COMMITTED** to do the work God had sent them to do in taking the gospel into all the world.!

Many believe that in order to be a messenger of the cross, a person has to be highly educated. Or, that only preachers, elders, deacons, or teachers can effectively do the Lord's work. And yet, we can read in Acts 4: 13, that "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus." What made Peter and John different? What had they personally witnessed during the 3 year public ministry of their Master? Jesus said in His own prayer in John 17 that "he had finished the work God had given Him to do." The Lord taught them **COMMITMENT** – and they learned that lesson well!

And if you think that only the apostles had courage, think about the early Christians. "Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word." (Acts 8: 1-4) They were **COMMITTED**. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." (Acts 19:20) Why did the early church grow at such a rapid pace in the first century? **COMMITTED** disciples doing the Lord's work! ***