

"TOTAL COMMITMENT"

We frequently hear some speaking of having "total commitment" in their lives. I think most of them expect us to believe that this "total commitment" is to Jesus Christ. There are several different groups who place much emphasis upon their members having this "total commitment." As you examine these groups you will find that they have different teachings and practices. About the only thing they have in common is their criticism and ridicule of those they say are "traditionalists." We sometimes find such attitudes among those who identify themselves as members of the body of Christ.

These individuals who place so much emphasis upon this "total commitment" make claims of sincerity, devotion and love for themselves while, at the same time, maintain that the "traditionalists" (which happens to be anyone who questions their activities) are insincere, not devoted and lacking in love.

One sure way of being classed as a "traditionalist" by these individuals is to stress the need to respect the authority of God's word in everything you teach and practice. I have never been able to understand why you could ignore the authority of Christ and simply teach and practice what you please and you are filled with sincerity, love and devotion. On the other hand, you stress that you should teach and practice only those things authorized by Him and this makes you insincere, not devoted and lacking in love. Can you figure it out?

Maybe what we need to do is go back and look at this matter of "TOTAL COMMITMENT." When you speak of someone having "commitment" this really doesn't tell you much unless you also reveal that to which they are committed. In my talks with those who claim this "total commitment" for themselves I have found that they truly are committed. Let's note some things to which they are committed.

Many of them are committed to doing that which pleases them. If it makes them "feel good" about themselves or brings pleasure to them they are committed to it. Oh, I know they talk about Jesus and would have you believe that He is the center of their lives, however, Jesus, himself, said, *"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* (Luke 6:46).

As we study through the pages of God's word we are made to realize that the teaching of Jesus or the apostles did not make those who heard it feel good about themselves. It made them realize that they were guilty of sin and were separated from God in their present condition. The dishonest and insincere became angry and often resorted to violence against the one telling them the truth (See Acts 7:54-60). Those who were honest were also made to feel bad upon learning of their condition but they received and obeyed the truth and then rejoiced (See Acts 2:41; 8:39).

By what standard do these individuals determine that if you emphasize strict obedience to and respect for the authority of Jesus you are insincere and not serving from the heart? How can they judge the hearts of others? It just may be that those who teach and practice only that which is authorized in the word of God are doing so because they are "totally committed" to pleasing and glorifying the Lord rather than themselves. In fact, this is the kind of "total commitment" we need to have. Don't be deceived by those who say they are "totally committed" to Christ but show otherwise by their actions. The person who is committed to Christ will demonstrate that love by keeping His commandments (See John 14:15,21; 1 John 5:3). To what are you committed?

✍ James Hahn