

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

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"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 such emphasis upon this "total commitment" also make claims of sincerity, devotion and love for themselves while suggesting that the "traditionalists" (which happen to be anyone who questions their activities) are insincere, undevoted 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, undevoted 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

“Why Me?”

Have you ever been in a situation that was unpleasant or in a situation where you were forced to deal with something that you really preferred not to have to deal with? I venture to say that we all have probably been in a situation like that at some point in our lives, and I also venture to say that while faced with such a situation many of us probably also felt like, and asked, “why me?”

You see, often times when one is faced with a difficult or challenging situation in life they will often express and ask the question of “why me?” However, this attitude denotes a sense of self-pity (i.e. unhappiness over one’s own troubles), and we need to be careful about falling into the self-pity trap (Proverbs 17:22).

Now, although it is common for one to seek pity and comfort during a trying time in life (Psalm 69:20) we need to avoid self-pity, and we need to always be mindful of these inspired words of James, “*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience*” (James 1:2-3).

Folks, I know that it is hard for many of us to comprehend the concept of being joyful while experiencing various trails in life. However, James says, count it all joy when you fall into various trials not because they are enjoyable, but rather because they should be regarded as something that can result in a benefit to you. What is that benefit? Well, James says, the testing of your faith produces patience, and the word patience in this verse implies persevering endurance. When persevering endurance is defined, it means “the quality to withstand hardship.”

Ladies and gentlemen, when I think about persevering endurance, I think about the apostle Paul. For, one never reads in the Scriptures where the apostle Paul asked “why me?” You see, Paul was one who withstood hardships (2 Corinthians 11:24-28), he was able to count it all joy when he fell into various trials (Acts 20:18-24), and he

possessed an “I can” attitude rather than a “why me” attitude (Philippians 4:13).

Therefore, let’s strive to have the same mind set that Paul had, and let’s not pity ourselves when we fall into various trials and ask “why me?” Rather, let’s be one who does count it all joy when we fall into various trials, and let’s always remember that the testing of our faith is more precious than gold that perishes (1 Peter 1:6-7).

So, in conclusion, when life presents its challenges, do not be one who is quick to complain and ask the question of “why me?” For, the fact of the matter is, many of the challenges that we face in life often turn into opportunities. Therefore, my friends, “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.”

✍️ Brad Phillips



Workers Or Shirkers

Someone has said that there are two kinds of members; those who willingly do all they can and those who are willing to let them do so. It is so encouraging to see dedicated servants but it is discouraging to see those who do not work. So much more could be accomplished if every member is “*stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*” (I Corinthians 15:58). (JH)

Belleville church of Christ

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www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

James Hahn (317) 443-1938