



The Christian Life

Module 6

Commitment to Christ

MODULE SIX

Commitment to Christ

INTRODUCTION

If you have thoroughly studied the last two lessons on the Bible, particularly lesson Five, you are ready to dig deeper into the word of God. You have probably already discovered that by using sound Bible study methods the Bible becomes much more fascinating and easier to understand.

Therefore, from here on you will be probing the Word more deeply. We will give you longer SELF-STUDIES in each lesson, for one of the purposes of this course is to help you study the Bible on your own.

It is important to know what it means to commit one's life to Christ. Because many Christians do not know the meaning of commitment. They are missing out on countless blessings. We suggest that you study this lesson prayerfully, asking God to help you make a complete dedication of your life to Jesus Christ.

1. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE COMMITTED TO CHRIST

STUDY Matthew 10:34-39.

This passage of Scripture has been difficult for many to understand, but at the same time it is one of the most important passages of Scripture and the key to a successful Christian life. These verses talk about the Lordship of Jesus, now let us see just exactly what this means.

In our last lesson we discussed figuratively language, and that is exactly what Jesus is using here. **He says He came to bring a "sword," yet we know from many other scriptures that Jesus deplored physical violence.** (Study carefully the following scriptures in Matthew 5:5, 5:43-44, 26:51-52, and also Luke 9:51-56 and John 18:36). What did Jesus mean?

Verse 36 is the key to Jesus' use of the word "sword." "Your enemies will be right in your own household!" It sometimes happens that when a person gives his life to Jesus Christ his own family and friends turn against him.

Jesus Opens a Blind Man's Eyes.

This very thing happened to the blind man Jesus healed in John 9. (Read through the entire chapter and note especially verses 18-23 and 34). This man believed in Jesus because **Jesus opened his eyes, which had been blind from birth!** Once the story got out, however, his parents became fearful of the religious leaders because they had threatened to throw out of the synagogue anyone who believed in Jesus.

This young man, however, was not afraid. **He gave credit to Jesus and glory to God for what he knew was one of the greatest miracles of history** (vs. 30-33). But the

Pharisees refused to acknowledge Jesus as God's Son and so threw the man out of the synagogue.

Alienation from one's family and friends as a result of one's decision to follow Christ is the type of "sword" Jesus with referring to. This passage describes what many believers have experienced down through the ages, do not be discouraged by this, we have hope in Jesus.

Our commitment to Jesus Christ does not always turn family and friends against us. Jesus is simply warning us that if this happens we will have to make a choice - **to follow Him or deny Him.**

Furthermore, while Jesus is zeroing in on the choice one must make between Him and his own family. He points out in verses 38-39 that the real meaning of commitment is to **give Him first place in our lives.** It means to put Him first and to put money and possessions as well as family and friends second. It means to put the will of God ahead of our own will, and to follow Jesus in His purpose for our lives.

Some people think their "cross" is an illness, an unsaved loved one, or a job they don't like. **But a "cross" is simply one's decision to follow Jesus no matter what it might cost us.**

Following Christ at Any Cost

When the young man in John 9 decided to follow Christ even though it meant the loss of his family and friends, he had picked up the heavy burden of his "cross". Yet at the same time he was radiant with the joy and the thrill of giving his life to Jesus.

STUDY Romans 12:1 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

To commit ourselves to Christ means to make Him Lord of our spirits, minds, and bodies. Paul appeals to us to **"give your bodies"** to God, not as sacrifice in death, but as a **"living and holy sacrifice."** In other words, he urges us to serve God now in all that we do, whether at church, at work, or at home.

Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 that a Christian's body, not just his mind and spirit, **is a temple of the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us, the power of the living Christ within every Christian.

Do we own our bodies? No! Our bodies were bought by God for a great price. His own Son, Jesus, paid that price when He died on the Cross for our sins. Our bodies belong to God. They are temples of His Holy Spirit. This is why Paul instructs us to "honour God" in our bodies.

Before God ever created us **He committed** to saving our souls. Before Jesus ever came to earth **He was committed** to shedding His blood so that we might have eternal life. Before the Holy Spirit ever came to live within us, on the day we received Christ into our hearts, **He was committed** to living in our bodies as our source of strength and help and power.

Now God asks us in return to commit our lives to Him so that through us others might know that Jesus Christ died for their sins.

Romans 12:1 has yet another message for us. Paul says that the presentation of ourselves to God is our **“worship.”** Many Christians think that worship is limited to an hour or two in Church on Sunday morning. But real worship is not just singing a hymn, offering a prayer, or listening to a sermon.

Rather, **real worship is the giving of our whole selves, spirits, minds, and bodies to Jesus Christ. It is the commitment of our very beings to God.** Real worship comes from our hearts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

STUDY Mark 10:17-25.

The story of the rich man is one of the saddest in the Gospels. Here was a man who was very moral, one who claimed he had kept all the commandments from the days of his youth. He came to Jesus seeking eternal life, and Jesus would have willingly given it to him, for verse 21 says that Jesus loved him, just as He loves each one of us.

But Jesus knew that he had a great love for money and possessions, perhaps greater than his love for God. So Jesus, to see which he would love the most, told him that if he really wanted eternal life he would have to sell all that he had and follow Him.

Jesus is not saying that everyone must sell all his possessions in order to be saved. Rather, He is again asserting that a man must choose between worldly pursuits and Himself.

The Rewards of Commitment

This man chose possessions rather than Jesus. Jesus offered him eternal treasures in Heaven (v.21), but he chose temporal wealth instead.

It does cost us to commit our lives to Christ. But the blessings of commitment and the treasures of eternal life are worth far more than any earthly riches. Nothing, be it friends or pleasures or money, can ever take the place of a life that is committed to Jesus Christ.

STUDY John 4:31-34 and 6:38.

Jesus lived a totally committed, unselfish life. He did not seek His own will, but rather He wanted to be in the centre of God’s will. To Jesus, food was not as important as sharing the Good News of eternal life. His life expressed the ultimate in dedication and service to God, the giving of Himself to live as God had called Him.

2. THE PURPOSE OF COMMITMENT

STUDY Ephesians 2:10.

When most people think of good things (or works) they think of going to church, serving a charity organisation, or perhaps mowing their neighbour's lawn. Others think of good works as the avoidance of sin.

Actually, good works is more than any of those things. **The Apostle Paul's idea of good works is not only living a holy and righteous life, but also serving God as a witness of Jesus Christ.** God could send angels flying about the heavens urging people to repent, but He doesn't. He has instead instructed that Christians take the Gospel to a lost and dying world.

God has, in fact, called each of us to special ministry. Not all Christians are called to serve as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. But each of us has a particular task to perform. No one else can do that job for us. We all have separate and unique gifts from God that are for the benefit of others.

Unless we have committed our lives to Jesus, God's plan for us will never be realised. The very purpose of commitment, then, is, basically, that God might work through us in the way that He desires so that others might know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

SELF-STUDY #1

STUDY Romans 12:4-13 and answer each questions.

- (a) To what does Paul liken the body of Christ? _____
- (b) As members of the body of Christ, what is it that Paul says each of us has?

- (c) What does Paul say we should do with these gifts?

- (d) List the gifts from verses 6-8 and 13. **NOTE:** These ministry gifts are only **some** of the ways each of us can serve Christ. _____

- (e) Vs 9-12 tell us the attitudes we should have in fulfilling our ministries in Christ. Write them down in your own words

NOTE: Remember that you are **valuable person to God. You have much to contribute to His Church.** And it is through your **commitment to Christ** that He will use you in many **very beautiful ways.**

STUDY John 10:14-18.

Briefly we are going to take a look at several people in the New Testament who committed their lives to God. The first of these is Jesus.

Chapter 10 of the Gospel of John is the famous chapter on the Good Shepherd, Jesus. A good shepherd will risk his life for his sheep. Jesus not only risked His life for us, His sheep, but **He give His life for us.** In Romans 5:8, as you will recall from Lesson One, Paul said that a person would hardly risk his life even for a good man. Yet Jesus willingly went to the Cross so that you and all mankind might have eternal life.

Why did Jesus go to the Cross? **Because He was committed to the ministry God had called Him to.** What if Jesus had **not been committed** to serving God?

STUDY Acts 1:8, and 12-14.

Just before Jesus ascended into Heaven He instructed His apostles and disciples to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them; and then they were to be His **witnesses throughout the whole world.**

What did they do? Return to their homes? No! Luke, the writer of Acts, says that they “all met together and were constantly united in prayer” (v.14). Shortly, they were all baptised in the Holy Spirit (the subject of Lesson Nine) and began to fulfil God’s call to share Jesus with the world.

It is because of these dedicated men and women, that the precious message of Jesus Christ is still heard today. Suppose they had **not been committed** to serving God?

STUDY Romans 1:14-15.

The Apostle Paul, one of the greatest missionaries of all time, had a burning desire to take the message of Jesus to the known world. He made at least three missionary journeys, evangelising the world from Jerusalem to Rome. He wrote 13 of our New Testament books, some while he was in prison for preaching the Gospel.

Christianity owes much of its life to the Apostle Paul. What if he had **not been dedicated** to Jesus Christ?

A Ministry for Every Christian

God has a ministry for every Christian. Some He calls to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, others He calls to the ministry of prayer, to be helpers or a wide variety of other roles. **God has a ministry for you** perhaps you have already discovered it.

One thing is sure: **God needs you to help carry the message of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. That is the purpose of commitment to Jesus Christ.**

3. THE BLESSING OF COMMITMENT

STUDY Luke 18:28-30.

Some people do not commit their lives to Jesus out of fear they will have to give up too much. And it is true, as we pointed out earlier in the lesson, that we often have to choose between Christ and the world.

The Apostle Peter was a little fearful that he had given up too much in his decision to follow Christ. He seems to be questioning Jesus' plan for his life when he said, "We've left our homes and followed you."

Jesus immediately sensed his apprehension, for He assured Peter and **everyone who dedicated his life to Him would receive abundant blessings not only in Heaven, but also in this life.**

Commitment of one's life to Jesus involves neither drudgery nor starkness. Rather **the committed life is a blessed life.** There is joy and blessing in serving Christ.

SELF-STUDY #2

STUDY Matthew 6:25-33 and answer the following questions:

- (a) What does Jesus tell us not to do? _____
 - (b) Can we add any time to our life span by worrying over the necessities of life?

 - (c) Why does Jesus feel that if God provides for birds, flowers, and grass of the field He will surely provide for us? _____
 - (d) Could we conclude that God knows about our insurance premiums, car payments, and dentist bills? _____
 - (e) If we simply seek God's kingdom, what will He do for us? _____

-

STUDY John 15:1-9.

There are many lessons in Jesus' analogy of the grapevine. The main truth of the analogy is the importance of commitment to Him.

First of all, Jesus says that He is the vine and we are the branches. On a grapevine it is not the main trunk which bears fruit, but the branches. The branches, however, get their life from the trunk. In the same way, if we are to grow and bear spiritual fruit (minister to others), we must receive our food from the vine, Jesus.

Secondly, Jesus says in verse 7 that if we remain in Him and His words remain in us (i.e., if we are committed to Him), **whatever we ask will be done for us.** Some teachers have taken this out of context and have taught that God gives us a blank cheque for whatever we want. But this is not what Jesus is saying.

Praying According to God's Will

In the first place, God does not automatically give us “anything we want”, John says that God does not hear our prayers **unless we ask according to His will** (1 John 5:14). (He does not mean physically hear in this case, but only that God does not respond).

We also need to take into consideration the context of Jesus' analogy. He is talking about service and commitment. In verse 8 He says, “When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.”

In verse 7, then, the implication is that God will do whatever we ask when we are living in the centre of His will and our prayers are with the growth of His kingdom in mind. And that would include **our own** spiritual and physical well-being.

Ideally, our lives should be so committed to Christ that we are oriented to living totally for Him. Only then will our prayers be a reflection of this commitment so that God will be glorified in us.

Talk about blessing! All of us enjoy material blessings. **But there is no greater blessing than the power of God working in a dedicated life.** Spiritual blessings are the greatest blessings of all.

4. VICTORY OVER SIN THROUGH COMMITMENT TO CHRIST

STUDY John 8:31-36.

One of the greatest struggles of mankind is his constant battle to overcome sin. Neither sociologists, psychiatrists, nor criminologists have ever come up with a solution to the sin problem.

The problem, of course, is not new. The great Apostle Paul had a battle with sin. He found the answer not through society, but on the road to Damascus when he met Jesus. He says, "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 7:24-25).

Jesus has the answer for sin. Believe in Him. Commit your life to Him. And then you shall overcome sin.

Many Christians think they can conquer sin on their own, but this is simply not possible. Paul gives us the formula against sin in Romans 6. In a moment we will look at that, but first we need to see what sin is.

STUDY 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and Galatians 5:19-25.

These lists are by no means complete. The New Testament contains other lists of sins which you will come across from time to time in your studies.

Sin Has Not Changed

There are three things of importance to note about these lists: (1) They mention **specific** sins. (2) Sin can be either an **observable act** or an **attitude of the heart**. (3) **They are all sins today**, just as they were when the New Testament was written.

Some modern psychologists and even theologians have the mistaken idea that they can rewrite the Bible and edit out certain sins, particularly sex sins. **But the sex sins of the Bible are still sins in God's eyes.** Any thinking to the contrary is simply man trying to tell God what is right.

STUDY Romans 6:6-11.

How does one overcome a habit of sin? Let's review Paul's formula in Romans 6 verse by verse.

V.6

We pointed out in an earlier lesson that Jesus Christ shed His blood for our sins. Many people believe that is all Jesus did when he died on the Cross. But Paul says He did more than that. Not only were our sins nailed to **the Cross, but our sinful natures were also crucified with Jesus.** Why? So that "so that sin might lose its power in our lives".

Now let's study Paul's argument in detail so we can get the full picture.

Vs.7-9 (and also vs.1-4)

We have already died **with Christ.** In other words, as Jesus' blood was being shed on the Cross and His body was slowly dying, **our sinful natures were dying with Him.**

(If you are having any trouble following Paul's thought up to this point, go back to our introduction of Romans 6:6-11, many Christians have missed this important concept entirely).

After Jesus physical death, God gave Him new life by raising Him from the dead. This same new life is available to all believers. Jesus, who was sinless, **has a new resurrected body**. When we receive Him as Saviour, as a result of His death on the Cross, **we are resurrected to a changed spiritual nature**. This is the miracle of the new birth. This is freedom from sin. This is real life - eternal life. Someday we shall have a **new resurrected body** just as Jesus has.

Vs.10-11

Paul is not saying here that Jesus sinned. He is pointing out that when Jesus died the possibility of His ever sinning was removed. He is no longer a physical being subject to temptation, but He is now in Heaven seated at the right hand of God.

Victory Over Sin

We must also, Paul says, consider ourselves "**dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus**". The power of sin was destroyed through the shed blood of Jesus! We need to **believe it, accept it, and by faith**, knowing that Jesus has crucified our old nature, **resist the devil's temptations in the knowledge of that fact** (James 4:7).

STUDY Romans 6:12-14.

Here is the crux of the problem with many Christians. While a non-Christian has no power over sin, a Christian does. **But a Christian can still sin if he wants to**. The difference is that in Christ a person has a choice. We can yield to sin, or we can stand up in the power of Christ and conquer sin.

V.12

"Do not let sin control the way you live" is a powerful imperative in the Greek language. It is really a command.

Vs. 13-14

The key to overcoming sin, and this is very important, is **to give ourselves completely to God. Commitment to Christ is God's answer for victory over sin**. Jesus has already conquered sin for us by His death and resurrection. All we need to do is give our lives to Him in faith. If you do that, **you will have victory over sin**.

Sometimes we need help from others as some sins have been passed down generationally, or we have picked them up through our past lifestyles and choices. Prayer ministry from other experienced believers within the body of Christ is helpful in getting deliverance from sin, and gaining the final victory.

SELF-STUDY #3

STUDY Romans 8:1-8 and carefully think through the following questions:

- (a) Do Christians still have to face the condemnation of God for any sins they commit?

- (b) What has set us free from the awful bondage of sin? _____

- (c) What was it that failed to keep man from sinning? _____
- (d) What did God' do to free man from sin? _____
- (e) What two things can we set our minds on? _____

- (f) What will happen if we set our minds on the sinful nature?

- (g) What will we have if we set our minds on the Spirit (or dedicate our lives to Christ)? _____
- (h) Will a person be able to conquer sin it he does not commit his life to Christ?

5. HOW TO COMMIT YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST

It is quite possible that you have already made a total commitment of your life to Christ. However, some Christians never really take this step and others are not sure if they have done so. So, briefly, we will explain how you can know if you are dedicated to Christ.

Are You Dedicated to Christ?

A committed life is one where Jesus has first place. Hebrews 12:1-2 tells us, "... let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ²We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith."

Do you love Jesus more than a husband or a wife? Do you love Him more than golf or rugby, or parties and new clothes? Do you love Him more than money? Are you willing to do whatever he wants you to do and go wherever He wants you to go?

If you can answer "yes" to the above questions, then you have dedicated your life to Christ. If not, you can this very moment commit your life to Him by simply surrendering everything you are and have to Him. The choice is up to you. Why not take a moment and talk to God about it? You will never regret your decision to give Jesus first place in your life.

SELF-STUDY #4

1. Jesus' use of the word "sword" shows that He approved of retaliation. T () F ()
2. The blind man whom Jesus healed in John 9 was sorry that he had believed in Jesus when the religious leaders excommunicated him. T () F ()
3. To commit one's life to Jesus means to love Him more than anything or anyone. T () F ().
4. Give a concise definition of real worship.

5. If you are going to live for Christ, you will have to sell all that you have. T () F ()
6. In Ephesians 2:10 Paul talks about "good things (or works)", which of the following would most adequately describe what Paul means by "good things"?
 - (a) Attending church on Sundays
 - (b) The avoidance of sin.
 - (c) Handing out tracts
 - (d) Living a holy life and rendering service to God.
7. The basic purpose of commitment is that others might know of Jesus through our lives. T () F ()
8. One who commits his life to Christ cannot expect any material blessings. T () F ()
9. It is not possible to grow spiritually in the Christian faith if one does not abide in Jesus. T () F ()
10. What 3 prerequisites need to be met before God will give us "whatever we want"?
 - (a) _____
 - (b) _____
 - (c) _____
11. What does the Bible say about fornication and adultery?
 - (a) They are okay in some instances.
 - (b) They are sins in God's eyes.
 - (c) We need not feel guilty about them.
 - (d) They were sins only in a primitive time.
12. When Jesus died on the cross, our sinful natures were crucified with Him. T () F ()
13. The power of sin was destroyed through the shed blood of Jesus. T () F ()
14. A true Christian is no longer capable of sin. T () F ()

15. What is the key to conquering sin? _____

ANSWERS TO SELF-STUDY #1

- (a) The human body
- (b) Gifts that differ from one another
- (c) Use them.
- (d) (1) Prophecy. (2) Serving. (3) Teaching. (4) Encouraging. (5) Giving. (6) Leading. (7) Performing acts of kindness. (8) Helping others. (9) Practice hospitality.
- (e) (1) Really love others. (2) Hate that which is wrong. (3) Hold to the good. (4) Honour others. (5) Serving the Lord enthusiastically. (6) Rejoice in your hope. (7) Be patient in trouble. (8) Keep praying.

ANSWERS TO SELF-STUDY #2

- (a) Worry
- (b) No.
- (c) We are of far more value
- (d) Definitely!
- (e) Provide for all our needs.

ANSWERS TO SELF-STUDY #3

- (a) No
- (b) The power of the life giving Spirit
- (c) The Law.
- (d) He sent His own Son to die for us.
- (e) Our sinful nature and the Spirit
- (f) We will die
- (g) Life and peace
- (h) No

ANSWERS TO SELF-STUDY #4

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. The commitment of our very beings to God
5. F
6. D
7. T
8. F
9. T
10. (a) That we are living for God OR
(b) That we ask according to His will OR
(c) That our prayers relate to our ministries for Him OR
(d) That we desire to serve Christ.
11. B
12. T
13. T
14. F
15. The commitment of our lives to Christ.