



# The Essentials of Commitment

Romans 12:1-12:2

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**Introduction:** Why do you suppose there are close to 159 million people in America who claims to be Christians and yet the Church is not making more of a moral and spiritual impact? Why is it that on Sunday mornings thousands of churches across the nation have more empty pews than full? Why is it that the average worship attendance is 90% (Barna, 1999)? Why is it that only 50% of the numbers on any church's membership rolls can be expected to attend on any given Sunday? I believe the answer can be found in one word, commitment!

## Romans 12:1-2 (KJV)

<sup>1</sup> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*

<sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

In verse one Paul begins to challenge his readers to move to total commitment.

We have the misconception in our modern day churches that, sure preachers and missionaries and other full time Christian workers should be 100% committed, but for the ordinary church member something less is permissible. The problem with a lot of Christians is that they are at best only participating in church work or at worse are mere spectators.

We cannot remain as spectators looking on. Someone once described a football game as twenty-two men on the field badly in need of rest being watched by seventy-two thousand people in the stands badly in need of exercise. While football may be a spectator sport for most of us, Christianity certainly should never be.

## I. The Appeal to Commitment (v. 1a)

- A. We Respond to an Appeal
- Romans 12:1-2 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.**

Twenty times Paul says “**I beseech you**” = “**I plead with you**” (Beg) That is all in the gospel a preacher can do. There are handcuffs and court orders to get people to do some things in this world, but all the gospel preacher can do to get people to do right and to live for the Lord, is to preach the Word of God and plead with people to obey it.

This section begins with “**therefore**” – it is the third and final “**therefore**” in the book, the others are (**Romans 5:1 and Romans 8:1**).

Whenever a verse begins with “**therefore**” we know that it is intimately connected to what has preceded it and we need to stop and see what it is “there for.”

### **B. We Respond in Appreciation, “by the mercies of God”**

In this case it is giving the motivation for the challenge he gives to his readers in verses one and two. “**Therefore**” we need to take a moment and look back at **Romans 11:33-35**.

Mercy is mentioned by Paul *nine* times in **chapters 1-11**, *four* times in **chapter 11** alone (**verses 30, 31, 32**). He ends **chapter 11** marveling at the mercy of God that saves us, and uses the mercy of God as the basis for his appeal.

### **Romans 11:33-36 (KJV)**

<sup>33</sup> **O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past**

**finding out!**

<sup>34</sup> **For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?**

<sup>35</sup> **Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?**

<sup>36</sup> **For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.**

The motivation for a Christian’s total commitment to Christ is found in all that Christ has already done for us. Paul begins in *verse one* by saying, “**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**”

Notice that Paul does not issue a command here. Paul does not say, “I command you.” but rather “I beseech you or I beg you.” We don’t serve Christ “in order that we might be saved” but because we are saved!

Paul goes on to make some very important points about the nature of our service to the Lord.

David Livingstone wrote in his journal on one occasion concerning his “selfless” life:

People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paying back a small part of the great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind and a bright hope of glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege.

—Giving and Living, by Samuel Young, Baker Book House, p.71

We are told that Henry Clay, the great statesman of another generation, once fell into hopeless debt. Notes for forty thousand dollars, an enormous amount of money in those days, were held by a bank in Lexington, Kentucky. Clay was preparing to sell off everything he owned in the world in order to satisfy that debt, when one day a stranger appeared at the bank asking how much Clay owed. When told the amount, he produced the \$40,000, thereby cancelling Clay’s debt. “Who shall I say has paid this debt?” asked the banker. “Just tell him it was paid by some of his friends,” responded the stranger. When Clay learned that his debt had been paid, according to one historian, “the strong heart melted, the frame shook and the great Clay, who never flinched before countless enemies, nor flinched in the face of any opposition, now wept like a child.” His debts had been forgiven. It may be that some of us are among those Americans who have abused the availability of easy credit terms. Perhaps we are facing our own small mountain of debt. I wish I could say to you that all your financial debts have been cancelled. Wouldn’t that be great—to begin today with a completely fresh slate? I can’t say that, of course. But I can say to you by the power invested in me as a minister of Jesus Christ that, by faith in Him, your sins are forgiven. The slate is wiped clean. Today is a brand new day.— From a sermon by King Duncan in DYNAMIC PREACHING.

### **II. The Act of Commitment (vv. 1b-2a)**

**A. It is a permanent sacrifice “... you present your bodies.”**

The complete nature of this commitment is seen in the way Paul uses the language of sacrifice. The

Word translated “**present**” or “offer” (**paristasis**) is a technical term used for the ritual presentation of an animal sacrifice by the priest. And it is very important that we understand that this word; given in the Aorist tense means that it is a once for all time transaction.

We sometimes think that the individual who is continuously re-dedicating their life to the Lord is a very spiritual person. There is nothing wrong with re-dedicating our lives when we acknowledge that we have somehow lost our way and want God to resume control of our lives. There is, however, something wrong when an individual feels the need to continually rededicate their lives to the Lord, because according to this verse this is intended to be a one-time total surrender of your life to God. **There is not such thing as a partial sacrifice.**

It is purported that a conversation took place in the barnyard between a hen and a pig. The hen and the pig were talking to each other, discussing the problem of human hunger around the world. They decided they would do something about it. So the hen said to the pig, “All right, this is what we’ll do. Because people are hungry, this is what I propose. I propose that every morning, we provide a ham and egg breakfast to hungry people.” The pig looked at the hen, and said, “For you that only requires’ involvement; for me it requires total commitment.”

**B. It is a personal sacrifice  
“... you present your bodies.”**

He says that it is up to you to “**present your bodies**” as sacrifices to God. In fact it literally says “**you, all of you, present yourselves to God.**” When he says “**ye**” here it is a plural

meaning that he is not talking to just a select few, but to everyone.

- **What God wants from you is you!**
- **God does want your money.**
- **God doesn’t want your time.**
- **God doesn’t even want your talents.**
- **He want you.**

**If you give yourself totally to Him, all of those things come along.**

One of the major problems in the church is a lot of church people are still coming to the services, trying to receive something, rather than to give something. You hear people all the time saying things like; “I didn’t get anything out of the message.” “The music didn’t speak to me.” “I didn’t get anything out of the service.”

Whether you realize it or not, these statements reveal a misunderstanding of the whole point of coming to a worship service.

**Worship is not about coming to get something. It is about coming to offer something. Is this beginning to sink in your spirit?**

**C. It is a practical sacrifice.  
“... which is your reasonable service.”**

The word translated “**reasonable**” (**logikos**) is the word we get logic or logical from. Total commitment is the only logical course of action when we realize who God is!

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.  
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my God!  
All the vain things that charm me

most,

I sacrifice them to His blood.  
See from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?  
Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

*Author Unknown*

*Continued in next edition.....*

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