

COMMITTED DECISIONS

Joshua 24:14-19 (The Message)

¹⁴ "So now: Fear God. Worship him in total commitment. Get rid of the gods your ancestors worshiped on the far side of The River (the Euphrates) and in Egypt. You, worship God.

¹⁵ "If you decide that it's a bad thing to worship God, then choose a god you'd rather serve --and do it today. Choose one of the gods your ancestors worshiped from the country beyond The River, or one of the gods of the Amorites, on whose land you're now living. As for me and my family, we'll worship God."

¹⁶ The people answered, "We'd never forsake God! Never! We'd never leave God to worship other gods.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ "God is our God! He brought up our ancestors from Egypt and from slave conditions. He did all those great signs while we watched. He has kept his eye on us all along the roads we've traveled and among the nations we've passed through. Just for us he drove out all the nations, Amorites and all, who lived in the land.

"Count us in: We too are going to worship God. He's our God."

Israel had spent forty years on a journey that could have taken a few days. They had seen signs, wonders and miracles. They watched as, through their hardness of heart and lack of trust in God, their parents had died in the wilderness. Finally, this "Joshua Generation" had reached the promised land of Canaan. Did anything change? Was their commitment and faithfulness to the things of God and stronger?

Not a chance! They fought and conquered but Egypt was still in them! Israel had been in Egypt for over 400 years and much of the lifestyle of the Egyptians was ingrained in them, including idolatry. They had also carried a "mixed multitude" with them when they left Egypt. All of the demonic influences of Egypt were embedded in their hearts. The only thing that would have eradicated those influences would be annihilation of the entire nation! For generations to come it was the same old story as we see in Judges 3:19 (The Message):

18-19 When God was setting up judges for them, he would be right there with the judge: He would save them from their enemies' oppression as long as the judge was alive, for God was moved to compassion when he heard their groaning because of those who afflicted and beat them. But when the judge died, the people went right back to their old ways --but even worse than their parents! --running after other gods, serving and worshiping them. Stubborn as mules, they didn't drop a single evil practice.

Israel never made a committed decision. It was evident to God that these people, who should have been converting the world to serve Him were being converted by the world.

The Book of Hosea was written to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, the nation having been divided as the result of Solomon's turning to idolatry - he was more committed to his wives than to his God. Hosea is a book that illustrates God's love and mercy despite lack of commitment on our part and the evil conditions in our lives that exist as the result of it. God compares our relationship to Him with marriage. There can be much love between a man and a woman, but without the God-kind of love (agape) that comes from a commitment to Him by both parties, that marriage will not be complete.

It is a heart issue and so, God embarked on a plan to give mankind an internal law. He would initiate an alarm system that would convict mankind of sin. This was prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah and quoted by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 8:10-11 (Amplified):

¹⁰For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will imprint My laws upon their minds, even upon their innermost thoughts and understanding, and engrave them upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

¹¹And it will nevermore be necessary for each one to teach his neighbor and his fellow citizen or each one his brother, saying, Know (perceive, have knowledge of, and get acquainted by experience with) the Lord, for all will know Me, from the smallest to the greatest of them.

See also Hebrews 10:15-17

To be at one with God requires a heart change that can come only through the indwelling Holy Spirit, who is received at our

conversion which must be a matter of the heart.

Romans 10:9-10 (Amplified)

9Because if you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

10For with the heart a person believes (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Christ) and so is justified (declared righteous, acceptable to God), and with the mouth he confesses (declares openly and speaks out freely his faith) and confirms [his] salvation.

Without a heartfelt conversion nothing will change. There will be no hunger for the Word. Many individuals outwardly accept Jesus because they are afraid of going to hell, but there is no real conversion. They continue in the same lifestyle as they did before. Such individuals are likely to "die in the wilderness". They will reap the rewards of the world.

What we commit ourselves to is important. Our commitment must first of all be vertical. In other words, we must commit ourselves to God. After conversion, the only way that is pleasing to Him as a means of showing our commitment is to believe His Word - which is by faith. Paul says that Abraham, before the Law, before the Cross, believed God and it was counted to Him for righteousness.

Romans 4:3 says: *For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed in (trusted in) God, and it was credited to his account as righteousness (right living and right standing with God).*

When we get our relationship with God on the right level, we are filled with all of Him and we are then capable of committing ourselves horizontally. Our relationships, finances, and every other commitment cannot help but succeed because they will be created and guided by the supernatural God realm. He is not a failure. He spoke, created everything, including man and "it was good".

Our failures come when we stubbornly refuse, like the Israelites, to let God be our God. We say He is but when the fleshly desires kick in, no matter what they are; there is a tendency to let them take over. Those desires then become our god.

This is where the level of our commitment is obvious. Can we, like Paul say that "we die daily"? Paul admonishes us to "put off the old man".

Ephesians 4:20-24 (The Message) *"But that's no life for you. You learned Christ! My assumption is that you have paid careful attention to him, been well instructed in the truth precisely as we have it in Jesus. Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything --and I do mean everything --connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life --a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you".*

How does God "accurately produce His character in you? This is done through the Word of God. As we hear the Word, read the Word and meditate on the Word, the Holy Spirit goes to work, convicting us of whatever is not right in our lives. It is our duty then to die to those things - let go of them. We die daily.

Jesus made a committed decision to save mankind and nothing and no one could deter Him from that decision. His decision conformed to the Father's will and God said "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

We are the Body of Christ. Is God "well pleased" with us? Have you made a committed decision to let God be God?