

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## COMMITMENT

*Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. John 13:1*

Every characteristic which the LORD intends to perfect in HIS elect children, HE demonstrated when HE walked upon the earth. From a fervent prayer life to an unwavering faith, HE left us an example that we should follow in HIS steps. (see I Pet.2:21-23) HE said love your enemies and pray for those who spitefully use you and then we see HIM hanging on the cross asking forgiveness for those who crucified HIM. (see Luke 23:34) HE said, "*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*" (Matt 5:5) Then HE demonstrated that meekness, "*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.*" (Isa. 53:7) HE said, "*Blessed are the pure in heart.*" (Matt 5:8) and then HE was "*in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*" (Heb 4:15) HE told HIS disciples, if a man would be great, he must become the servant of all. (see Mark 10:42-45) Then HE girded himself and washed their feet. (see John 13:4-5)

Our LORD never expects more from us than HE has given us nor does HE require more than HE has already done in our behalf. HE has accomplished our sanctification before almighty GOD as well as our justification. (see I Cor.1:30; II Thes.2:13) HE has called us by HIS grace and is presently fitting us for our eternal abode with HIM in the heavens. We are indeed a blessed people. "*Happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.*" (Ps.144:15)

Of all the glorious characteristics of the sons of GOD which the LORD demonstrated, none is any more important than that of HIS commitment to HIS people. Our text says, "HE loved them to the end." Partial commitment is no commitment at all. Marriage, as it is given in the scripture is an illustration of the LORD's love for and dedication to HIS bride. As we survey the state of marriage in our society, we almost have to wonder if such can really be the case. The concept of commitment is by and large lost on a society that considers divorce as an escape clause even while the marriage vows are being spoken. It has become a very viable option which one almost expects to use, as is witnessed by pre-nuptial agreements which are a matter of course for those with property. The greatest hypocrisy which is spoken in most weddings is "til death do us part". One almost anticipates the congregation bursting out in raucous laughter when these words are spoken. Since we have come to accept these words as little more than ceremonial chatter; is it any wonder the concept of true commitment has been watered down in the minds of most?

As we listen to most modern day preaching we are led to believe that, those who are followers of CHRIST can do so on their own terms or at least without any sort of absolute commitment to HIM and HIS way. Men are urged to "believe" in order to be "saved" and then offered an upgrade to first class accommodations by "making HIM lord of their lives". In addition to having no scriptural foundation, this sort of doctrine makes a mockery of true commitment to CHRIST. The

LORD said, *"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."* (Luke 9:62) HE told the rich young ruler to sell all that HE had and come and follow HIM. HE told the woman taken in adultery *"Go and sin no more."* HE said to the multitude, who followed HIM temporarily, *"whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."* (Luke 14:33) The way of CHRIST is a radical path which in reality is not appealing to any but those who have been awakened to their desperate need of HIM. It is impossible that any man could convince another to go in that way. And it is equally as ludicrous to think that soft music and emotional appeals should do the deed either.

Paul gives us a description of CHRIST's commitment to HIS elect: *"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:7-8) It is unusual (to say the least), but not unheard of, that a man would give his life for someone who was his true friend or loved one, but it is totally absurd (in the reason of men) for a man to do so for HIS enemies. Paul said that we *"were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* (Eph 2:3) Why did HE do such a thing? The scripture says *"for the joy that was set before him (HE) endured the cross, despising the shame,"* (Heb 12:2)

We often hear those who lean towards legalism admonishing GOD's people with, a recitation of duties, to be committed to HIM as though the law can somehow compel men to obedience. Then we hear the conditionalists warning them of the dire consequences of failing to be devoted to HIM as though fear can do what the law can't. But ultimately, what is the true impetus for our commitment? Plain and simply, HIS example. *"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. "* (Heb 12:2-3) CHRIST gave himself for us gladly when we deserved to die. Can we do any less than give ourselves to HIM as we consider what HE has done for us? Can the prospect of service and devotion to HIM be greeted with anything less than joy by the true sons of GOD? When we feel ourselves growing cold in our devotion or our hearts becoming hard, may we not "consider HIM" and be renewed in the spirit of our mind and heart.

*"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:"* (Phil 3:20)

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