

Devotion

The NEWSLETTER topic today is not a new one with me. I've preached numerous sermons that deal with it in one way or another. And although I have repeated it on many occasions, it still bears repeating. I feel as if many of us still have no idea of the seriousness of it—our fervent NEED for it in our lives. The topic, as the title makes obvious, is devotion.

I used to talk to people and preach sermons on the need to have a “commitment” to Christ. To be committed. I quit doing that a long time ago. The word commitment doesn't exist in Scripture. Commitment is defined as “a pledge to do...the state of being bound emotionally or intellectually to a course of action...the trait of sincere and steadfast fixity of purpose.” The problem with commitment is that it sounds temporary. There's often an end to one's commitment—you finish up the course of action with a conclusion. And sometimes you're committed to something you don't necessarily believe in or even agree to, but out of some sense of loyalty (or because you shot your mouth off and volunteered) you feel obligated to continue. This cannot be what our relationship to God is built upon.

So what word best describes the permanent, lasting, sincere relationship we should have with God? DEVOTION. See if this definition doesn't sound more appropriate: “Ardent, often selfless affection and dedication, as to a purpose or a principle...religious ardor or zeal; piety...eager inclination; strong attachment of love or affection; zeal; especially feelings toward God appropriately expressed by acts of worship; devoutness.”

David said to his son Solomon in **1 Chronicles 28:9**:

“Acknowledge the God of your father, and serve Him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.”

Good King Hezekiah spoke to God about his relationship to God in **Isaiah 38:3**:

“Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before You faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.”

Paul's first letter to the **Corinthians** had as its aim: that they might not feel restricted by what he was telling them, but that **they “may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.”** (1 Corinthians 7:35) He feared, as expressed in **2 Corinthians 11:3**, that they might be deceived by the devil and that their minds might **“somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”**

The adjectives attached to the word devotion are as important as the word itself, for they help draw a distinction between real devotion and simple commitment. Wholehearted, undivided, sincere, pure. These describe the type of devotion we should direct toward the God who is so devoted to us.

We are, according to scripture, devote ourselves to:

1. Teaching, fellowship, communion, and prayer (**Acts 2:42**)
2. One another (**Romans 12:10**)
3. The service to the saints (**I Corinthians 16:15**)
4. Again, prayer (**Colossians 4:2**)
5. To doing what is good (**Titus 3:8, 14**)

When looking at your relationship to God, can you truly say that you are devoted? If not, revamp and renew your relationship to Him.

--Johnny Stephens