

# **LifeWay Bible Studies for Life Series for February 12: The center of life's storm**

January 31, 2012

In this Scripture, the Apostle Paul lays out the commitments and priorities that were driving forces in his life. He mentions 10 commitments we ought to make.

Commitment One: I will rejoice to suffer for Christ's church. Paul said, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake" (Colossians 1:24). The church is the central place where God applies the blessings of salvation to the hearts and lives of his people, a centrality that can't be denied. And, if it means anything to you that Christ suffered in his body on your behalf, you will long to give up your flesh completely for the sake of his body, the church.

Commitment Two: I will serve Christ's church with the gifts God has given me. In Colossians 1:25, Paul said "... of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known." Paul was serving the church according to the stewardship from God that was given to him. Specifically, God gave him gifts in evangelism, preaching, teaching and exhorting.

Commitment Three: I will grow in my knowledge of the gospel: "... the mystery hidden for ages and generations, but now revealed to his saints" (v. 26). Paul said his job was "... to make the word of God fully known." Because the gospel has been revealed to us, we have a responsibility to know it and to make it known.

Commitment Four: I will further the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus

Christ. This commitment is woven into Colossians 1:27: "To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.'

It's among the currently unsaved that the riches and glory and hope of the gospel is the "greatest." God intends to save many in this world who still are lost in their sins, and you have this blessing of salvation within you to share. You have "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Commitment Five: I will pursue the sanctification of every member of Christ's church. Colossians 1:28 says, "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ."

Paul's goal in proclaiming Christ was to see Christ transform the lives of his people, to make them more and more holy. So he warned of the dangers of unbelief, of the dangers of an ungodly lifestyle and taught everyone the details of faith and obedience.

Commitment Six: I will work hard at this in God's strength. Colossians 1:29 says, "For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me."

Amazingly, God's sovereignty does not mean we can sit back and let him do all the work. No, God's sovereignty means he works within us with an incredible, awesome power that becomes our strength when we actively toil and struggle at serving him. It's not easy, but we can handle it because it's done with all of his awesome power.

Commitment Seven: I will pray for the members of Christ's church. The power we exercise is God's power, so we must ask him to work powerfully in his people, and we need to pray in his strength. Colossians 2:1 says, "For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face."

Commitment Eight: I will pray for the spiritual maturity of all members of Christ's church. There are many things we can pray for, but Colossians 2:2 tells us at the heart of our prayers we must pray for the spiritual maturity of fellow members "... that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Commitment Nine: I will not be led away from Christ. In Colossae, there were false teachers who claimed to be able to explain the basic principles of the world and how to use them to one's best advantage.

Any discipline that follows the traditions of men and the basic principles of the world instead of Christ will cheat you and take you captive. Christ is the one in whom all knowledge finds its foundation and norm, and it is from Christ alone that true knowledge comes. Colossians 2:4: "I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments."

Commitment Ten: I will rejoice in the unity and faithfulness of Christ's church. If we love Christ, we will love his church. Colossians 2:5 says, "For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ."

If you're a Christian, you should rejoice to see other Christians growing faithful and steadfast in their faith in Christ. Colossians 2:6-7 says, "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

So make it a priority to walk in him, to be committed to him and to his church. Are you willing to make one or more of Paul's commitments?