

Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. It is an honor to have you worshipping with us today! This information is provided to help you feel welcome and "at home."

Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship some people remain seated, some stand, others kneel, many clap, and some lift their hands. The outward expression is not the issue - it is what is in your heart that counts. Just relax and enjoy the presence of God.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{turn page over}

Pastor Bob Wine

March 8, 2009

FOUNDATION OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

"Commitment: without it you have a spiritual growth lid"

Luke 8:15

- The most important single factor in individual success is **commitment**.
- Without commitment, you have an invisible lid on how far you can go -- how much Christ will be formed in you.
- **Luke 8:15** "... the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop."
- Persevering requires serious commitment.

1. WHAT IS COMMITMENT MADE OF?

- Commitment is saying "No" to competitive opportunities.
- Two basic components of commitment:
 1. Having a solid set of **core beliefs**.
 2. Faithful devotion to those beliefs with your behavior.

Commitment is "perseverance with a purpose"

- Living a committed life is **hard** work and NEVER easy.

Luke 9:23 (GW) "Those who want to come with me must say no to the things they want, pick up their crosses every day, and follow me."

- If you want your child to be able to someday say "Yes" to God's call, you **MUST** train them early to be able to say "No" to their own desires.

2. WHAT DOES COMMITMENT LOOK LIKE?

Philippians 2:29 (GW) "Make sure you honor people like Epaphroditus highly."

- Epaphroditus gave so much of himself that he got sick and nearly died. This revealed his level of commitment to what God wanted him to do.

Acts 20:24 (CEV) "I don't care what happens to me, as long as I finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do. And that work is to tell the good news about God's great kindness."

• Epaphroditus was not a **super saint**. He was a common ordinary person.

3. HOW DO I BUILD A COMMITTED LIFE?

• We build commitment to God by going through **confusing** and **painful** experiences with Him where we discover more of His character, ways and values.

Psalm 9:10 “Those who know your name will trust in you ...”

- How Jesus developed commitment within His disciples ...
 - First, He invited them to “*Come and see ...*”
 - Then, He invited them to “*Come and follow Me*”.
 - After a few years of going through confusing and difficult times, Jesus asked for increasingly more difficult levels of commitment.
 - The disciples then became willing to sacrifice their very lives for Him.
- Each time you take more responsibility for your own spiritual growth and say “No” more often to good opportunities and “Yes” to what God is asking, it intensifies the joy deep within your spirit.
- Commitment doesn’t reveal itself until you face serious **temptation** and **trials**.
- **You’re as close to God as you want to be.**
- The lid that keeps you from becoming more spiritually mature is not the church or anyone else -- it’s you.

Matthew 5:6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for **they will be filled.**”

What must I do now?

- Take a look ... how much are you doing of what you already know God wants you to do? This will determine if your commitment level is shallow or not. If it is, it is decision time.
- Remember, we commit to and sacrifice for what we love the most.
- Committing to following Christ may not be an easy trek to follow, but the risk will be well worth the joy and inner satisfaction it will bring.
- This week, take responsibility for the next step of commitment God has been asking of you. Begin with the initiative to draw closer to Him. It will strengthen your journey with Christ.

Digging Deeper - “Foundation of Spiritual Growth”

For personal or small group study

Week of March 8, 2009

What was the most important thing you heard from the sermon or read from the sermon notes? Why and how did it impact you?

GROUP DISCUSSION or PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Describe a time you wanted something so much that you took a huge risk to accomplish it. Was it worth it? How can you relate your story to a person’s pursuit of their relationship with God?
2. Define the word commitment. If you are serious about your spiritual growth, what will your level of commitment look like?

In what ways does having a lack of commitment cause you to have a spiritual growth lid? [Luke 9:23-26; John 11:14-16, 45-48; Hebrews 3:7-11]

3. How important is passion in relationship to commitment? How can procrastination destroy your passion and commitment? What are some other passion and commitment killers? [Jeremiah 29:13-14; John 14:15; 15:10-11, 18-21]
4. *Persevering requires serious commitment.* Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

Name some people in the Bible, or others that you are aware of, who are known for their perseverance. How did their commitment help them persevere? [Luke 8:15; Job 1:20-21; 2:9-10; 13:15; 2 Corinthians 11:23-26; 12:10]

5. What are you most committed to in your own life? Do you believe that people commit the most to what they love the most?

What are your commitments telling you that you love the most? What is keeping you from becoming more committed to your own spiritual growth?