

Psalm 119:106 I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.

Central idea – If we hope to make any progress in the pursuit of holiness, commitment is essential. One reason we do not see more progress in holiness in our lives is because we have for the most part lost sight of the necessity of commitment.

Developing the Discipline of Grace

1. You're about to leap from the ledge of a high-rise apartment building with a suicide not in hand but with a parachute strapped to your back. Your spouse, leaning out the window, says to you "Just can't make a commitment to anything – can you?"
 - a. Although intended to be humorous, the situation makes a serious point. What are some commitments you have made, or intended to make, during the past year or so?
 - b. How faithful have you been to those commitments? In what ways have you hedged your bets or failed to follow through?

2. This chapter poses quite a challenge: to present our bodies as living sacrifices; to take an oath to obey God's righteous laws; to resolve to allow no exceptions to our obedience. How do you respond to that call to commitment?

-I'm struck by the impossibility of totally keeping such a commitment.

-I am reluctant to make a commitment I know I will not keep.

-I am willing to make pleasing God in all ways my aim or goal in life.

-I am content to remain on "cruise-control" obedience and merely avoid scandalous sin and not worry about the "refined" sins that I consider unimportant.

-I want to aggressively pursue holiness like the race car driver who is totally focused on winning and finishing the race, going all out for God.

-Other (describe your response)

3. Some sins come as a result of the environment in which we live or work. If most used-car dealers turn back the odometers of cars taken in as trade-ins, then a Christian car dealer who renounces this unethical practice will be at a disadvantage relative to his competitors.
 - a. What temptations do you face in your school or work?
 - b. When have you paid the price for being a Christian and acted ethically in one of those tempting situations?
 - c. When have you given in to a temptation because “everyone does it”?
4. What are some areas in which you need to make some specific commitments to resist sin or show Christlikeness? Ask the Holy Spirit to make His list apparent to you.
 - a. Do you need to make a covenant with your eyes about what you look at?
 - b. Do you need to covenant with your mouth about what you say?
 - c. What about with your mind about what you think?
 - d. Is there a particular temptation that arises in your work or school?
 - e. Is there a particular area in your marriage or in your relationship with your children, your parents, or even a friend, or with an associate at work, where you are not demonstrating the Spirit’s fruit of love, patience or kindness?
 - f. What else would you add to this list?
5. How do you feel about making these commitments? Do you expect yourself to follow through? What will be your major obstacles to follow through, and what will you do about those obstacles?

6. Lest the reader get the wrong impression and give up in despair at ever following through on such commitments, Bridges reminds us that the discipline of commitment is always called for in the context of the gospel of grace. See Romans 6:13 and 12:1 in context. How does this grace relate to the discipline of commitment?

7.
 - a. In Psalm 119, the psalmist prays to God for help in obeying His laws. Now read through all of Psalm 119, this time looking for expressions of the psalmist's vow or pledge to commitment. To what does he commit himself?
 - b. Does the psalmist's commitment suggest any similar commitments the Lord might be calling and enabling you to make? Explain.

What's the point of all this?

This discipline of commitment complements and is fulfilled by the discipline of dependence. Without commitment, progress in the pursuit of holiness is not possible.