

## **COMMITMENT OR COMPLACENCY?**

A motivational phrase used by the Shearson Lehman Brothers and adopted by the Internal Revenue Service is "Renewed Commitment". They said about commitment: "Commitment is what transforms a promise into reality. It is the words that speak boldly of intentions. And the actions which speak louder than words. It is making the time when there is none. Coming through time after time after time, year after year after year. Commitment is the stuff character is made of; the power to change the face of things. It is the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism."

In the business world there is a recognized need for both management and employees to re-dedicate themselves to their jobs and the organization. Why? Complacency is the primary reason. Human beings have a tendency to drift into patterns of behavior where mediocrity is the norm. The "fire" leaves the spirit and the energetic outlook that we once had is no longer there. Things still get done, but not as well. Morale suffers, attitudes become more negative and performance is marginal at best. We just try to get by, not really caring about the quality product of our efforts. This is a real concern in other areas of life as well. Many marriages fail for the same reasons. Family relationships and friendships drift into stagnation for lack of concerted effort. Children see complacency in their parents' lives and duplicate the behavior in their schoolwork and personal lives. Rather than buckle down and work, we all tend to look for the path of least resistance, stay comfortable and non-confrontational and go through life avoiding anything that would involve substantial work and an all-out effort to succeed.

Nowhere is this outlook on life more prevalent and more dangerous than in our spiritual lives. Dante said, "*The hottest places in Hell are reserved for those who remain neutral in a time of moral crisis.*" Edmund Burke said, "*All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.*" Jesus warned the church in Laodicea that they would be spit out of His mouth for being lukewarm. (Revelation 3:14-16) In Luke 16:19-31. Jesus uses the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus to teach against indifference. The rich man was not shown to be evil, but he apparently went to Hell for being indifferent. Our Lord, also, told us that the pathway to Heaven is narrow and that few will find the way. (Matthew 7:13-14) Jesus later taught that He did not come to bring peace, but that He came with a sword. (Matthew 10:34) And the parable of the talents in Matthew 25 and Luke 19 clearly teaches us that God expects us to productively use our gifts and abilities and not just drift through life without taking risks. God despises complacency and we must guard against it.

Commitment is what Christianity is all about. Failure to consciously make a commitment to Jesus and His eternal cause will result in the condemnation of our souls. This is a fact. In John 8:42-48, Jesus says that anyone who does not learn His Word and live accordingly are children of the devil. This leaves no middle ground, no approval for straddling the fence on relevant issues and no room for

complacency. We must be committed to our spouses, to our children, to fellow Christians and, above all, to God. We must be fully committed with all our hearts and minds, relying on this commitment every time we make a decision. We should periodically step back to re-examine our commitments to make sure that our energies are focused as God would have them, and then be willing to change our lives as necessary. Commitment or complacency? It is a lifelong challenge that we must meet every day.

*-Richard Bartholomew*