

The Prattmont Church of Christ is just what the name suggests, a church that belongs to Christ. We are not a denomination; we are simply a group of Christians trying very hard to practice the teachings of our Head, Jesus Christ. The New Testament offers a complete pattern for what each local church should be like—its organization, its worship, its work, etc. We are committed to following that pattern. We cordially invite you to attend our services. We would also welcome any comments or questions about this bulletin.

TIMES OF SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Study 9:00 A.M.
 Worship 10:00 A.M.
 Training Class 5:00 P.M.
 Worship 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 P.M.



Weekly Bulletin
 October 9, 2016

The Blessing of an Absolute Commitment

by Bill Hall

There are two relationships in life in which God demands absolute commitment: one's relationship with Christ as a Christian and one's relationship with his companion in marriage. One can give up his citizenship for another, or his job, or his residence, or his congregational affiliation. But one's commitments to Christ and to his companion are lifetime commitments. Desertion of either results in God's disapproval.

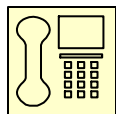
When one becomes a Christian, he pledges his allegiance to Christ as his Lord and King. Persecution may come, or discouragement, or temptation, or church troubles, but he promises to be faithful—faithful as long as he lives. Similarly, when one marries, he pledges to his companion his love and faithfulness “so long as they both shall live.” Problems may arise, or sickness, or financial difficulties, or pressure from family members, or misunderstandings, but he promises to be faithful. He will not depart. Divorce will be unthinkable. He is committed to his companion—he is hers and she is his—and the commitment is absolute.

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God's will concerning the permanence of marriage is clearly revealed. In marriage, a man **leaves** his father and mother and **cleaves** to his wife (Genesis 2:24). They are **bound** (Romans 7:2-3). They are **joined together** by God and are not to be **put asunder** (Matthew 19:6). They become **one flesh** (Matthew 19:6). One cannot think of stronger terms to describe permanence of relationship. No wonder Malachi would say that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16).

The greatest happiness man can experience upon this earth is found in these two realms of absolute commitment. Happiness is not found in half-commitment. A man who is constantly considering other jobs, never becoming committed to his present job, is an unsettled man, torn between options. So with that person who tries to serve the Lord with semi-commitment. He is bored and disinterested, having just enough religion to make him miserable. He tries to hold to the world with one hand and to the Lord with the other, and finds joy in neither. One needs but to look at the apostles and earliest disciples, on the other hand, to see that absolute commitment, the kind of commitment that can accept persecution and render sacrifice, is a basic element of joy in the Lord (Acts 2:41-47; 5:40-42; 16:25).

So it is with marriage. God knew that happiness in marriage could be found only in absolute commitment. So he decreed through the apostle Paul, *"Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband"*—one man for one woman until death separates them (I Corinthians 7:2). His decree may be troublesome to those who have, in the past, ignored His teaching (the consequences of sin are always terrible—Galatians 6:7-8), but it is for the good of mankind, proceeding from God who commands for our good (Deuteronomy 10:13).

Absolute commitment provides trust in marriage. The husband does not have to worry about his wife's faithfulness to him, nor does the wife have to worry about the husband, for their commitment to one another is open and obvious. Because of the openness

of their commitment, temptation to be unfaithful is practically non-existent. The half-committed, on the other hand, will be frequently tempted, for temptation is inherent in partial commitment.

Absolute commitment provides security in marriage. Security is an outgrowth of trust and permanency. It is when one doubts the strength and permanency of his relationship with another that he feels insecure.

Absolute commitment provides a settled life in marriage. Gone are the troubled, unsettled, insecure days of courtship, replaced by a lasting, secure relationship with one's partner. Naomi described this settled life beautifully when she said of Ruth, *'My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?'* (Ruth 3:1).

Absolute commitment provides a solid foundation upon which to build in marriage. Without this foundation, no quality home can ever be built.

Gus Nichols once wrote that he and his wife had been present for Bible classes the previous Sunday and for both worship periods. He went on to say that they had not made their decision on that Sunday, but had made that decision forty years before when they had first become Christians, and that, in being present for all services, they were just being true to the commitment they had made forty years before. Similarly, I pillowed my head beside my wife last night and awoke this morning by her side. If the Lord wills, I shall do so again tonight and shall continue to do so as long as we both shall live. Not that we are just now making that decision, for we made that decision twenty-five years ago and are merely being true to that lifelong commitment we made so many years in the past.

'Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge' (Hebrews 13:4).