

Comm_tment:

What Is Missing?

by Ronald G. Davis

Commitment. Church leaders search high and low for it, and too often they do not find it. Few church members today choose to make a commitment to church ministries that demand persistent presence and active participation. Could it be that few Christians are truly committed to God, to God's demands for a life of doing right? The teacher of adults should always be on the lookout for an opportunity to challenge commitment in the learners. Some simple learning activities may be a step in the right direction to "getting the *I* back into *commitment*."

How Am I Doing?

God's prophets had a primary task: to call God's wayward people back to his ways. If you are studying the prophets, consider having your class members maintain a journal during the series, a record of their own responses to the truths studied.

Make multiple copies of the following form so you can provide one to each student each week. At the end of the first week's study, introduce the concept by saying, "At the end of the week ahead, sit down and ponder how well you are doing in relationship to the commitment we have studied today. Fill in the word *Justice* (or some other key word in the first lesson) on the lines marked with an asterisk (*); then write your thoughtful responses in the other spaces."

When it comes to being committed to * _____, I rate myself a _____. [Use a scale of 1 for "barely noticeable" to 5 for "giving daily evidence."]

One occasion this week when I gave evidence I am committed to * _____ was when I _____. This event or behavior best exemplified such a commitment because it _____.

One occasion this week when my behavior or words demonstrated a lack of commitment to * _____ was when I _____.

The verse from this week's text that has the greatest impact on me is _____ . The reason for this impact is _____ .

Have students use the same form each week. Some key words or themes that may come up in a series on the prophets are (1) justice, (2) God's ways, (3) true worship, (4) seeking God, (5) God's requirements, (6) righteousness, (7) hope, (8) accountability, (9) trusting God, (10) hope even in pain, (11) taking responsibility, (12) returning to God, and (13) doing right. If these do not match your series, it's easy enough to replace these with your own key words.

What Is Lacking?

This weekly journalizing will allow students to confront their own levels of commitment. Ask for volunteers to give candid self-assessments to the class as a whole. The problems that your students reveal may be symptoms of a deeper problem: a lack of knowledge. God's lament, through the pen of Hosea, was, "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). When disciples thoroughly know the person and will of God, commitment should be a by-product. In Simon Peter's words, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

Consider how you can facilitate greater knowledge through memorization of pivotal verses. In the first week of the study, for example, tell your students, "I have found some significant thoughts of God in my preparation for this series of studies in the theme of commitment from God's prophets. So I have committed to learning some of those great ideas by heart." Then quote, for example, part of Amos 5:15: "Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts." Offer your class an opportunity to join you in your quest to increase their own knowledge of God as found in the prophets. To this end, you can distribute commitment cards like this:

Dear God, thank you for revealing your will through your prophets. I hereby commit to learning at least ___ verses of beauty and challenge during our class's study. My prayer is that your Word will cure my lack of knowledge.
Signed _____; date _____.

Indicate that this commitment activity is strictly a personal matter and that the cards can be carried in one's Bible. Make suggestions for good verses to memorize. Regularly talking about your own progress will encourage participation.