



*For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)*

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## Committed to Christ

There is one basketball player I played against in high school that stands out in my mind. I was told how hard he worked to become the best he could be. His father built him an asphalt basketball court behind their home. He could be seen on that court for hours at a time shooting baskets. He would shoot at one spot until he hit twenty-five in a row. He was an all state and all American high school basketball player when I played against him. He later became a collegiate all American and ended up playing professional basketball in the NBA for several years. To be that kind of player took great dedication. However, that dedication yielded great rewards. On of the greatest keys to success in anything is commitment, or dedication. That is true of my Christian life, as well. To be successful as a Christian, I must be committed to God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. I must be dedicated in my Christian life.

Bill Bradley was seen on that basketball court almost daily. If I am to be the Christian I need to be, I must daily commit myself to Christian living (Luke 9:23). I must daily give myself to prayer and reading (1 Thessalonians 5:17 and 1 Timothy 4:13). I must spend time in the presence of God that I might become more aware of my dependence upon Him for both my physical life and my spiritual life (2 Corinthians 3:5). I must meditate upon His word, not just read it (Joshua 1:8). I must become familiar with and knowledgeable of His word. For it will lift me up and encourage me (Hebrews 13:5-6). It will give me the answers to the life that I live (2 Peter 1:3).

I must daily realize that Christ is my redeemer (1 Peter 1:18-19) and that God is my Creator (Acts 17:25). I cannot forget for one moment what I am and why. I am a Christian because Jesus left the glories of heaven to come to this earth in the robe of flesh and

suffer on the cross for my sins (Philippians 2:5-8). He shed His blood as that perfect sacrifice that was without blemish that He might be the propitiation, the appeasement, the atonement for my sins (1 John 2:1-2).

Another key to success — one that accompanies commitment — is sacrifice. If I am to be the successful Christian I want to be, and the Christian God wants, there are sacrifices that I am going to have to make.

Bill Bradley had to sacrifice other things in order to spend the time on the practice court that he did. I, too, as a Christian, to be the best I can be, will have to make sacrifices (Romans 12:1). I must realize that I no longer belong to myself (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). I can no longer live for myself, but I must live for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Therefore, there are sacrifices that must be made in my life. The ways of the world must be sacrificed (Romans 12:2). Family cannot come before Christ (Matthew 10:37). In fact, in all things we should have the attitude of Paul when he wrote, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that (life) which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, (the faith) which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Jesus put the whole matter in perspective when he said, “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life” (Matthew 16:24-27)?

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