

Commitment—What Have I Gotten Myself Into?

Bible Study of the Month

The thing I learned about contracts is that once you sign them, you have to do what they say or you get in trouble with ... I dunno ... someone important somewhere.

*Riley doesn't want to do the shoot," Mom said. "She wants to go to softball signups instead."
"I didn't say I didn't want to do it. I just asked if we could change it."
Dad put his hand on my shoulder. "Of course we can't change it. And have you looked at your schedule for spring? You're not going to have time to play softball anyway."
Well—he might as well have hit me over the head with a softball bat!*

Excerpts from Riley Mae and the Rock Shocker Trek

Have you ever said you would do something, and then you found out it wasn't something you really wanted to do after all, and then you tried to get out of it? You're not alone. We've all done it! Opportunities to "sign-up" to do things are everywhere: music lessons, sports teams, scouts, dance, cheer, student council, church programs, parties...whew! The list goes on and on!

But everyone on earth only has twenty-four hours in a day. Everyone. And when you subtract sleeping, eating, school and homework hours from that, it leaves...well, not much time! So, sometimes, even well-meaning people find themselves over-committed! The truth is that we can't do everything!

What does God want us to know about commitment?

And...

What does it look like in the life of a Faithgirl?

Before we wrestle with those two questions, let's answer a couple of our own. If you had to list five things or activities that are important to you—I mean really important—what would they be?

We're going to call the things you just listed **priorities**. A **priority is something that is of high importance, or something that is given special attention**.

Okay, now that you've listed those things, write down some things that are in your schedule every day or week. Are you on a sports team? Do you participate in an after school club? Do you take care of babies in the church nursery on Sunday?

We're going to call the things listed above **commitments**. A **commitment is pledge, a promise or an obligation to do something**.

Okay, now here's an interesting exercise. Look at your priority list, then look at your commitment list. Do you see any similarities? For example: Let's say one of your priorities is "being active." Does anything on your commitment list help you to "be active?" If you say that helping people is very important to you, do you have anything on your commitment list that includes helping people? If you listed that your family is a priority, does your commitment list include time spent with family?

Hopefully, you do see some matches. And the good news is, if most of your commitments match your priorities, you will probably be satisfied with your week! But if **nothing** matches, you may find yourself saying to yourself:

"What have I gotten myself into?"

Did you just figure out that you are committed to some things that you don't want to be committed to? Don't worry! It happens to everyone. And it happens because we say "yes" to things without thinking things through and because we don't stop to ask God about it first.

"But I do want to ask God about it!"

Okay, that's awesome! So let's go back to the questions at the beginning of this study:

What does God want us to know about commitment?

And...

What does it look like in the life of a Faithgirl?

Whenever you want to find out what God thinks, get out your Bible. Why? Because...

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16 NLT

The Bible has a lot to say about commitments, promises, and even "covenants." A covenant is more than a regular promise—it's a solemn pledge. At the end of this study, you will find a list of verses you can look up to learn more about God's promises to us. There are really too many to list, but that's a good thing!

One thing is for sure—**God has your name on his priority list!** It says so all throughout the Bible. And then, just in case you were wondering, **he also has you on his commitment list.** In fact, God committed the ultimate act of love by sending his one and only Son Jesus to die on the cross so your sins could be forgiven and so you could have eternal life. (Look that up in John 3:16.)

So, what does God want us to know about commitment? Does the Bible say *anything* about whether you should join the softball team, or sing in the choir? How about how many times you should babysit in a week, or how many hours you should commit to playing video games? Does it help you figure out what to do when your grandma's birthday party and your best friend's birthday party fall on the same day?

No. Sorry about that. The Bible doesn't always give specifics. But it does lay out *principles* (which are general laws or truths) from which we can base our decisions.

Here's an example. Look up Deuteronomy 6:5 (Deuteronomy is the fifth book in the Old Testament.) Write the verse below.

This was a command that God gave to Moses to give to the Israelites. In fact, you might want to read all of chapter six later. The whole chapter is about God calling his people to wholehearted commitment to him.

Okay, let's turn to the New Testament now. Look up and read Matthew 23:36-40. (Matthew is the first book in the New Testament.)

Write verses 37 and 39 below.

These words were spoken by Jesus when teachers of religious law asked Jesus what the most important commandment was. As usual, they were trying to trap him into saying something that would get him in trouble later. But instead, Jesus said something that every Faithgirl should have on her priority list!

**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.
And...love others!**

"But," you may say, "to be totally honest... that's a hard thing to do sometimes."
Of course it is. Nothing worthwhile is ever easy! But here's a hint that will help:

If loving God and others is on your priority list, make sure that you also have something on your commitment list that will help you follow through with that!

Here are some suggestions:

- Attend church or a Christian youth group each week
- Read your Bible a little each day
- Pray (talk to God)
- Take part in a service project

Give help, money or time to someone who needs it
Memorize a Bible verse

This is how God told the Israelites to do it:

“You must commit wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on your doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Does that sound like a commitment list to you?

“But when will I have time to do these things? My schedule is soooooo busy!”

This is where you have a choice. What *have* you gotten yourself into? Look at your commitment list again. Most likely, everything you have on that list is a “good” thing. It’s fun, it’s responsible, it’s what most girls do at your age. But...are all those “good” things crowding out the “best” things—like loving God and loving others? And if God is getting crowded out of your life, how will you put him back in? Will you have to stop doing some of those “good” things?

Hmmm. That’s a question only you can answer, with God’s help. So why don’t you ask him?

The lines below are for you to write a prayer to God. Don’t worry about having perfect spelling or grammar. Just tell God what you are feeling about your commitments and your priorities. Do you have anything you need to change in your life in order to give more attention to loving God and others? If so, ask God to help you!

Until Next Month:

Read some of these verses which contain some great promises from God. They will make you smile!

Psalm 91, Joshua 1:8-9, Proverbs 3:5-6, John 8:12, John 11:25-26, Romans 5:11