

This week, Pastor Sharon presents the first of a five-part series entitled "Transformations." In this message entitled "Living Positively," Pastor Sharon explores what it takes for you to make a concrete commitment to live the life God wants for you. You live in a society that consistently emphasizes leaving your decisions "open-ended" or you might miss something. This idea is in direct opposition to what the apostle Paul is saying in Romans 6:13, "...give yourselves completely to God -- every part of you -- you want to be tools in the hands of God, to be used for His good purposes." Commitment means that you give all that you have to someone else for them to care for and to use.

Why should you even consider committing yourself to God? What does your life mean to God, to His plans, to His purposes? One reason to commit yourself to God is that He is the only one who truly knows the condition of your heart. Even you, yourself, don't fully understand what is going on at the center of your life. There are decisions you can make that seem to be right at the time but later prove to be terrible. The answers to life's questions are not found inside of you. Instead, those answers can be found only outside of yourself and inside Jesus Christ.

A second reason to commit yourself to God is that He knows what is best for your life. You were created by the Father with a purpose in mind. You are uniquely prepared to do something that no one else can do like you. Only God can answer your question, "Why am I here?" "What should I be doing?" He knows what's best!

If you commit yourself to God wholeheartedly, He promises to reward that commitment, which is the third reason to commit your life to God. If you put God first in your life, He promises to direct you and to crown your efforts with success (Proverbs 3:6). With such good reasons for commitment, what stops us from committing?

Pastor Sharon points out that "short-term values" (are constantly being pushed by the world. It may be the latest style, the trendiest job, "that house," "that car," or just "enough financial security," that draws your attention away from the things of eternal worth. Eternity lasts forever. The objects valued in the short term will be replaced by new objects that will, all too soon, need to be replaced with still newer objects. Pursuing these things crowds out God's purpose for your life.

Your own fears can also get in the way of your commitment. Maybe you fear that you won't measure up to God's expectations. Maybe you remember past failures. Maybe you believe the world's point of view and think you have to be smarter than everyone else, more educated, more "with it," or have the perfect family. Ephesians 3:20 says, "God can do anything, you know - far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, His Spirit deeply and gently within us." (Message Translation). Sharon reminds you that Psalm 37:5 says, "Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust Him to help you do it AND HE WILL."

If you want to live positively, then dedicate your life to God. He offers you the opportunity to work with Him, to be a part of what He is doing in this world, to let Him work in and through you to change the world around you. Is that what you want to do? Take Him at His word; commit yourself!