A TIME FOR COMMITMENT

TRANSCRIPT
PASTOR SCOTT SALM

Well greetings everyone. I'm grateful for the opportunity to offer a word of encouragement on this 20th day of our *Call to Character* journey together. Doug and others have offered some great challenges and encouragement each day. Today we're going to focus on *commitment*. What does it mean to commit to someone or some goal or purpose?

Commitment is defined as the state or quality of being dedicated to a cause or activity. You may have heard a business say we're committed to providing the best product, or we're committed to providing the best service. We all have commitments, appointments that bind us in some ways. In my personal battle against diabetes I committed to exercising every day. Make no mistake. When you commit to something it'll cost you something, but it will offer you some free time as well with that. What are some synonyms for commitment? Allegiance. Dedication. Devotion. Faithfulness. Loyalty. Steadfastness. As a leader in our Celebrate Recovery group I often use this phrase to challenge our people: **Erase *try* from your vocabulary and replace it with *I commit*.**

REFLECTION

When I catch myself saying *I will try* or when I hear others say *we will try* or *I will try,* I immediately tell them to replace it with *I'll commit.* We already have set in motion—when we say *I'll try*—we have already set in motion the escape hatch or the ability to say, "No, I couldn't do it." For instance, when I'm visiting with someone in the jail, many times I'll hear the prisoner say, "When I get out, Pastor, I'll try and come to your meeting," or "I will try to do something different in this recovery journey this time." Well—I think many times the person has good intentions and that they just are subliminally already keeping an option of not following through or not taking action. Thirty-nine years ago, soon to be 40 in October, I stood before a church filled with people, and I was very nervous and I recited vows to my spouse and I said, "I'll commit to you." I didn't say, "I'll try." If I had said *I will try* that probably wouldn't have went real well. But I committed to my most important horizontal relationship on this earth—a covenant relationship with my wife.

I also have a covenant relationship with the Lord, as you do as well, and that's one's most important relationship. But many times—and you may be like me—you may have been guilty of saying, "I'll try. I'll try to read my Bible more;" "I'll try to pray;" "I'll try to serve;" "I'll try to be there." Why would we even consider something less than complete commitment to the Lord's direction for our lives.

So I'm speaking to you today asking you to commit to this—this call to character. As we prepare for a year of seeking to be more Christ-like in our character, building and strengthening our vertical relationship, for sure, but also building our horizontal relationships with one another and our community all to glorify God and build his kingdom, our commitment to this will not only be life-changing. I believe it will also become contagious as we build one another up and glorify God. Philippians 3:12-16 in *The Message* under the heading "Focused on the Goal" says this:

> *I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made, but I am well on my way reaching out for Christ who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong, by no means do I count myself an expert at all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal where God is beckoning us onward to Jesus. I'm off and running. I'm not turning back. So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind—something less than total commitment—God will clear up your blurred vision. You'll see it yet. Now that we're on the right track let's stay on it.*

As we approach our Friend Day on May 4th, I'll leave you with a *Star Wars* quote, one that Yoda said to Luke Skywalker motivating him to be totally committed to his training. "Do or do not. There is no try." So won't you commit to doing more than trying. Trying is not enough. We have set a huge goal, but one that we are not alone in. God will provide. We just need to be willing to take action on all that He is offering us in this call to character journey. And then be ready for all that He will do and the blessings that will come. And we make this commitment and confidence before the Lord and He will empower us. For the Lord is good, and His love endures forever. Thank you for spending a few minutes with us today. Erase *try* from your vocabulary, and have a great day.