

# Bible Studies for Life: November 8

*Committed to His Church • Romans 12:3-16*

*By Becky Brown*



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Our focus for this series of lessons is, “commitment.” In week one, we agreed that God is fully committed to us. In week two, we affirmed that it is our joy and privilege and responsibility as believers to be committed to Him. Last week, we attested to the fact that we must be committed to God’s spoken Word through the life of Jesus and His written Word as provided and preserved for us in the Bible. This week, we will explore what it means to be committed to His church, the bride of Christ.

To love God is to love the church. We cannot be committed to God without also being truly committed to His church. Recently, I spoke with a young man (a local cable guy) who assured me that he knew Jesus. I listened for a few minutes to hear his life story. He said that he loved God, but he didn’t want to have anything to do with the church. That broke my heart.

A true commitment to God will include a love for His Son and the church for which Jesus died on the cross. Yes, Jesus died for individuals. He also gave His life for the church. He knew He would soon ascend to His Father. He provided a way for His

followers to find family and fellowship in a place where they could learn to serve and live life and grow together. How else could they be nurtured so they could reach out to others with the Gospel story? The church is the plan of God.

Romans chapter 12 contains a powerful capsule of get-better-and-get-with-it for the church and for the people who love her. The first two verses of this chapter compel us to present our bodies (our whole, complete selves) as a holy sacrifice to God. This is true worship. Worship is best expressed corporately in the fellowship of a body of like-minded and same-hearted believers.

The Apostle Paul wisely begins with a dose of humility. Commitment to God is proved as folks put Him first and others second and themselves last. Every church is made up of many members. The beauty shines brightest when the body of Christ recognizes that each member has something unique to contribute to the growth of the whole. Paul's letters are literally FILLED with the phrase, "in Christ." To be *in* Christ means to be in a state of rest in relation to Christ. At rest *in* Christ – that's exactly where I want to always be!

To be *in* Christ also means that He has shared spiritual gifts with us that we are to employ in service to Him, by serving one another. First, He shares the best gift of all with us: He provides us with God The Holy Spirit to live inside us. He empowers us to say no to temptation while He helps us grow in faith and service as we seek to be more like Jesus. When we are committed to Christ and His church and each other, we take the next step to share this family with those who need to connect with God the Father.

Some of the spiritual gifts are found here in Romans 12: prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, and mercy. Other gifts are listed in Ephesians chapter four, 1 Corinthians chapter 12, and 1 Peter chapter four. Added together, these gift lists are certainly not exhaustive. To

say these are the only spiritual gifts would be to limit the Giver of all good and perfect gifts.

Those who are committed to the church will display characteristics that reflect Christ: faith, service, truth, liberality, diligence, cheerfulness. Their love rejects hypocrisy. They detest evil and cling to what is good. Their devotion is that of true brothers in Christ. They honor one another.

As they serve each other, they serve the Lord. They rejoice in hope. When tribulation comes their way, they persevere to the end. They devote themselves to a life of connection to God through prayer. Committed people contribute to the needs of others. They make it a practice to open their tables and homes to others, showing willing hospitality. They bless their persecutors, rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Committed believers savor the opportunity to think in harmony with other committed believers. They shun haughty attitudes. They consider others more important than themselves. God smiles.

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