

COMMITMENT

by Tom Wacaster

Lafayette, the Frenchman, is remembered in the history books as a bold, courageous individual. During the French Revolution he was dismissed from the army. He tried to escape to America, but was captured and imprisoned in Germany. It is reported that he was offered freedom on the condition that he join the conspiracy against France. Even though he was threatened with long confinement in prison should he refuse to cooperate, Lafayette replied: "Never! I am still Lafayette." History is replete with examples of courage, heroism, and determination on the part of men and women who were willing to give their lives for a cause. The framers of our declaration of independence were men of such character and determination. They knew that if they won the battle for freedom that the best they could expect would be years of hardship in a struggling nation. If they lost, the best they could look forward to was the end of a hangman's rope. But because of commitment and sheer determination for a cause they considered worth more than life itself, they engaged the battle, and won for our nation its desired freedom. Such commitment is lacking in our society. Rare is the man or woman who can be depended upon to follow through with their promise. For example, a baseball player might make a "commitment" to honor a contract for some specified salary, only to "renegotiate" that contract after one year of service. Marriage ceremonies, in many instances, have removed the phrase "for better or for worse, till death do us part" because of a lack of commitment on the part of either party. Financial indebtedness finds an easy out through chapter eleven bankruptcies, and companies usher out the 20 or 30 year employee with an early retirement. The problem lies in a lack of commitment.

Heaven's call for commitment on the part of the child of God is best stated by our Lord in Matthew 5:33-37. Yes, there were some who would swear with an oath that they would do thus and so. Some swore by heaven, but in their mind the oath was not binding. Others would swear by the throne of God, but that too was like playing games with one's fellow man. It was sort of like the little game that we played when we were children where we would cross our fingers behind our back while making a promise - we were so immature that we thought that crossing the fingers relieved us of any obligation to keep the promise. These were the games that dishonest men and women played with God. But the Son of God tells us, "Let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one" (Matthew 5:37). It seems to me that there are entirely too many Christians who play this silly game of making promises with little or no intention of following through on our commitment. "Yes God, I give my life to you! I surrender to You and Your cause!" Out front we make promises, and put on a great show with our oaths of dedication and determination. But all the while, we have our spiritual fingers crossed, knowing full well that if something should "come up" that interferes with my service to God, then the promise is not really that binding. The problem lies in a lack of commitment.

When our Lord returns to gather us into the eternal abode that is reserved for those who have followed through on their commitment, there will be a great host on that Day who will be somewhat surprised that the reward will not be theirs to enjoy (Matthew 7:13-14, 20-21). The thorns will have choked out their faith, and the lack of determination to follow through with their once-made promise to serve the Master with all diligence will

echo throughout eternity with the tragic words, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I never knew you." The problem lies in a lack of commitment.