

Tools But Not Trophies (Cont. from pg. 3) – While certainly a place of glory awaits those who submit to God, now there is simply too much work to be done for any of us to rest as “trophies.” Our lives will face frustrations and disappointments in this age as we struggle to see the spiritual in a land of the material. But perhaps if we will begin to view these trials not as unexpected hardships but simply part of the nature of the work of an instrument of righteousness to God, it will give us a much different perspective on the significance of such trials. After all it is an honor to be used as a tool of God.




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www.lenexachurch.org

COMMITMENT (Cont. from pg. 3) - No one can fully foresee the difficulties that await us in commitments we make. That is much the reason we make commitments to begin with. We declare – “Whatever may come up I commit myself to this cause!” The New Testament church didn’t grow because of its efficient evangelism program but because of the commitment of its members. May each of us “commit ourselves” to truer allegiance to the commitments we make.

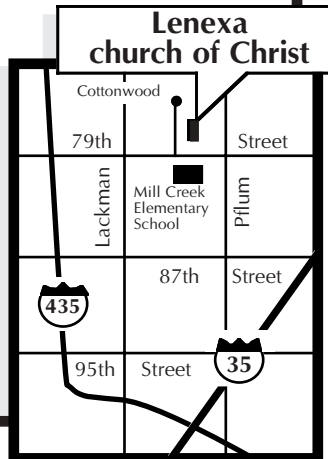


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MEETING TIMES
Sunday – Bible Classes 9:30 AM
Worship Services 10:20 AM & 6:00
Wednesday – Bible Classes 7:00 PM



The Lenexa EDIFIER

...Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. – Romans 14:19

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COMMITMENT

By Kyle Pope

There is an account in the Old Testament of following through on a commitment that seems almost impossible to carry out. The book of Judges tells of a man named Jephthah. Before going to battle against the Ammonites Jephthah made a rather rash vow to the Lord. He promised – “...If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace...shall surely be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering.” (Judges 11:30,31, NKJV). Jephthah perhaps expected that the livestock wandering loose in and around his house to be the first to meet him. When Jephthah returned, and the Lord had given him victory to his horror his daughter and only child met him at the door! Most of us would give little thought to this and quickly change our vow or “renegotiate our contract.” Not so with

Jephthah. After giving the girl a period of mourning she was given to the Lord. Most likely she was not offered as a burnt offering. Human sacrifice was strictly forbidden under the Law of Moses (Leviticus 18:21, Deuteronomy 18:10). Instead the woman probably became a lifelong servant at the tabernacle and never married. The text says – “...he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man ...” (Judges 11:39).

We could learn a great deal from Jephthah in our day. First of all that we should be cautious regarding to what we commit ourselves. The book of Ecclesiastes tells us – “When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed. It is better not to vow than to vow and not pay” (5:4,5). Jesus teaches – “But I say to you (Cont. on pg. 2)

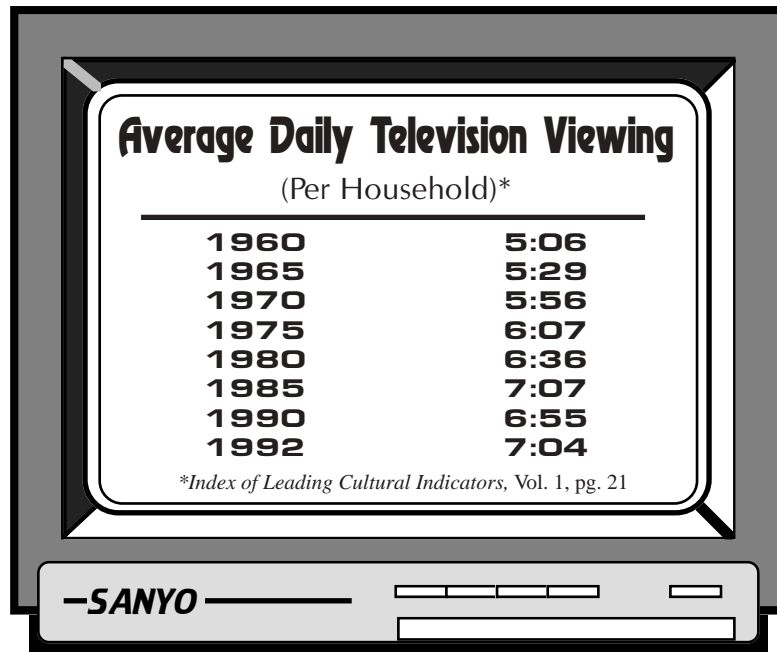
COMMITMENT (Cont. from pg. 1) - **do not swear at all...But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.**" (Matthew 5:34-37). If we make a commitment it must be carried out! Whether it is a marriage commitment, a financial commitment, a job commitment or the commitment to the Lord that comes in obedience to the gospel. No commitment is forced upon us. We have the right to count the cost before making the commitment. Jesus shows this regarding obedience to the gospel in Luke 14:31. He says - "...what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?"

We also learn from Jephthah the importance of following through on a commitment even when it becomes difficult. Many a man or woman who has become disillusioned with their marriage may say - "I never should have married them to begin with!" Life does not revolve around what we should have done but what we do. When a

person has decided to commit their life to a mate that is a binding commitment to love, care for and be with that person until death. To break such a commitment is a shame and a disgrace!

When a person decides to obey the gospel they make a similar lifelong commitment. They pledge themselves unto submission to the Lord out of love, respect, fear and the hope of salvation from sins. Such a commitment is not a minor thing. It is declaring to Almighty God - "I give myself to you forever!" (Cont. on pg. 4)

No Time For The Lord's Work?



Tools But Not Trophies

by Kyle Pope

James 5:17 makes the simple statement "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours..." How true this is! We remember back in I Kings chapter nineteen, what happen to the prophet Elijah after his triumph over the prophets of Baal. The wicked Jezebel (who had already sinned against God by turning her husband Ahab to the worship of Baal) set out to take Elijah's life. Jezebel had massacred many of the Lord's prophets and after Elijah killed her own prophets of Baal, he had good reason to fear her threats. Elijah fled to the wilderness near Beersheba and cried out to the Lord "...It is enough! O Lord now take away my life..." (19:4, NKJV). Undoubtedly like many servants of the Lord who had gone before him, and many who would come after Elijah exhibits a "nature like ours" when in frustration and desperation he seems to ask why service to God must often be so difficult?

Perhaps one reason we often struggle with this question comes from a failure to see ourselves as God sees us. While certainly the Lord exhibited great love in the sacrifice of his Son on our behalf, we might note how the Spirit refers to those who would serve

Him in Romans 6:13 - "And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." Here the Spirit refers to our bodies as "instruments" (i.e. tools) of "righteousness". How does that change our image of ourselves? As tools we may be used in many different ways. Sometimes we may be needed to hammer away at some type of falsehood. Other times we must chisel away elements of worldliness in ourselves or those around us. Sometimes we may have to be used as a crowbar to pry apart a conflict among those we love. Whatever the work a tool always remains simply an instrument used by the builder.

The problem is we don't like to see ourselves in this way. Tools are not glamorous, precious or beautiful. They are often scarred, bent, rusted and worn. We would much prefer to see ourselves as God's "trophies", polished, protected and safely displayed on a shelf of honor behind glass, and away from concern. - (Cont. on pg. 4)

