

“From Flabby To Fit: The Place Of Human Effort In Experiencing God” * July 8, 2007



I. The Effort To Find The Titanic

What qualities did Ballard & his crew possess to pull this off?

**Perseverance. Commitment. Knowledge.
Dedication. Willpower. Stamina. Strength.
Determination. Problem-solving skill.
Vision-casting. Discipline.**

They're the same qualities a believer must show to experience God.

*“If you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and **search for it as for hidden treasure**, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.” ~ Proverbs 2:3-5*

II. God Expects His Sons And Daughters To Show Commitment

A. The Old Testament teaching

1. What's the first commandment?

“You shall have no other gods before me” – God will brook no rivals from us. He expects total allegiance.

2. What instructions did God give about sacrifices? They were to be “without defect”.

***B. What about Jesus – did he expect commitment? Verses:
Luke 9:23, 9:62, 12:48; John 14:23; Revelation 3:16***

***C. What about the rest of the New Testament – is commitment expected? Verses:
Philippians 3:12-14; Colossians 1:29, 3:23-24; Heb.12:1***

III. Why Should I Show God Great Commitment?

1. Great commitment proves that I am saved.

***A. What is it that saves me?
Faith through grace alone.***

B. What's the point of doing good works then?

Good works is the fruit which proves the seed of salvation is there.

C. How do you know if someone is a real Christian or not?

Listen to their words – do they say they've repented of their sins and accepted Christ as their Savior and Lord? That's what gets the ball rolling. Their words do matter. Then, look at their life – do you see any sign, any indication, any hint that their words carry any weight? That will tell you something. “By their fruit you will recognize them.”

D. Doesn't this contradict the idea that we're saved by faith?

No, it complements it. Faith alone saves us, but faith never leaves us alone. Real faith plants the seed of salvation in my heart which begins a transformation within me.

2. Great commitment makes this life go well.

A. What will God do with lukewarm believers? (Zeph.1:12)

He will “punish” complacent” believers, meaning he will pull the rug out from under them. He will resist them to the point where they realizing that living without God is folly.

B. Why is it that lukewarm Christians are the most miserable of people?

You can't enjoy the world the way you used to, because you have enough of the gospel in your heart to feel guilty when you do something wrong. But because you're half-hearted and lukewarm, you can't enjoy the fullness of knowing Christ either because you have so little of his power and presence in your life. And so you go around miserable.

3. Great commitment is the only appropriate response to Christ's great commitment to me.

A. What always happens at the end of “Extreme Home Makeover”?

Families receiving these new homes are overwhelmed with

gratitude for what they've received. what would you think of someone who, when they *moved that bus*, stood there and yawned. Or took a cellphone call. Or how said, "Yeah, yeah, Ty, whatever. Let's get this tour thing over with." Yet how many Christians treat Jesus Christ just like that.

B. *Do you think Jesus Christ gave His all for you?*
Without question. Just review Isaiah 53.

C. *How should I respond to such love as this?*

With tears in your eyes, and gratitude overflowing in your hearts, and a determination to give Jesus Christ anything and everything that he asks of you? "You are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." ~ 1 Corinthians 6:19.

4. Great commitment will be rewarded in the next life.

A. *What did Paul expect to receive after his life was over?*

2 Timothy 4:7 – *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but to all who have longed for his appearing."*

B. *When Peter asked Jesus if it was worth sacrificing for him, how did Jesus respond?*

"Peter said to Jesus, 'We have left all we had to follow you!' 'I tell you the truth,' Jesus said to them, 'no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life.'" ~ Luke 18:28-30.

5. Great commitment will lead to a greater experience of God in this life.

A. *In the parable of the talents, what shocking thing did the Master do? And what's the principle behind it?*

The master said, "Take the [thousand dollars] from him and give it to the one who has ten [thousand]. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him." ~ Matthew 25:28-29. Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit." ~ Matthew 21:43.

The only ones who get to experience God's power and provision are the ones who are going to do something with it.