

Day 1
Commitment #1
God sees me

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight." Hebrews 4:13

In the book *Knowing God*, J.I. Packer reminds us that "God's love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery now can disillusion Him about me, in the way I am so often disillusioned about myself, and quench His determination to bless me."

Simply stated this means that God can never be "disillusioned" about you because He is never "illusioned" about you in the first place.

God sees you.

After acting in an inappropriate way you may have heard someone say, "I'm surprised at you!" That person was disillusioned because they were under the illusion that you would never do something like that. It is natural to turn this against ourselves. We look at ourselves and shake our heads in frustration and surprise. We imagine that God feels the same way.

Perhaps you imagine that God looks at you and says, "I'm surprised at you!" You imagine God shaking His head in frustration.

God is not frustrated with you.

God is not disillusioned with you.

God sees you.

God sees you fully and yet loves you deeply.

Day 2

Commitment #2

God sympathizes with me

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses." Hebrews 4:15

God sees me.

This could easily feel unsettling, disturbing. Something like being placed under surveillance and having your home and office "bugged." With God, though, He is able to "tap" your brain, not merely your phone. He knows our thoughts and attitudes. He knows our words before we speak them.

God sympathizes with me.

This changes everything!

God's watchful gaze is like that of a loving parent or a caring shepherd. The light of God's scrutiny is like that of a doctor's office, not that of an interrogation room.

God's sympathy assures us that He understands our weaknesses. He understands the pull of conflicting desires that each of us deals with. *He is able to sympathize with us because Jesus Christ, God the Son, experienced this conflict personally.*

God's sympathy is not the distant pity of one whose hands have never been dirty. His is the close compassion of one whose hands have touched our soil and whose lungs have breathed our air.

You can speak freely with God.

Pull up a chair!

Day 3

Commitment #3

God deals gently with me

"He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray." Hebrews 5:2

What is God going to do with us?

We know what we should do, but we don't do it. Paul put it bluntly, "I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate." Romans 7:15 We know the right road. We stray from it anyway.

What's wrong with us? Do we need to be yelled at? Scolded? Punished?

Jesus, while traveling through a village, shed light on our problem and His solution. "Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." Matthew 9:36

We are like sheep. *This is our problem.*

We need a shepherd. *This is His solution.*

Sheep require a great deal of care. They need a shepherd because they cannot successfully fend for themselves. To be "ignorant" and "going astray" is the inescapable cause and effect of being a sheep without a shepherd.

We need to be dealt with gently.

Spiritual influence, as God designed it, is to be gentle, not harsh. Those who represent God, be it high priest, minister, parent, mentor or friend, are able to be gentle because they understand the challenges of harboring an immortal spirit within a mortal body. *Jesus understands this.* God the Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to inhabit a mortal body so that He would understand.

He is what we need. He is a shepherd.

He provides what we need. He deals with us gently.

Day 4
Commitment #4
God loves me

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need."
Hebrews 4:16

A time of need is an unwelcome, unscheduled reminder that our resources are limited. A time of need reminds us that neither friends nor finances can fully protect us from what life throws at us.

A time of need is also a time when God invites us to approach Him . . . confidently.

In God's dictionary, love is a verb, not a noun. It is something He does rather than something He feels. It is active. God shows love by coming to the aid of those in need.

Why do we hesitate to approach God? Why do we remain distant when He lovingly beckons us to come close to receive mercy and grace?

Shame and fear keep us from approaching God.

We can feel ashamed to approach God. He is perfect – we make mistakes. He is strong – we are weak. However, when we remember that God sees us and yet sympathizes with us, we can more easily move toward Him.

We no longer need to be ashamed.

We can feel afraid to approach God. He is holy and sinless – we are sinful. However, when we remember that God deals gently with us, we can more easily approach Him in times of need.

We no longer need to be afraid.

Shame keeps us from approaching God openly.

Fear keeps us from approaching God freely.

God's love enables us to approach God confidently.

Day 5

Commitment #5

God changes me

"I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts."

Hebrews 8:10

This is the hardest commitment to take seriously! The evidence that it isn't true stares back at us each morning when we look into a mirror. We have areas of sin and struggle that have not changed. How are we to believe that God changes us when we are living proof that He doesn't?

If God changes us, why haven't we changed?

Our "gaze" and our "glance" are upside-down. This prevents change.

When Moses received the commandments from God on Mount Sinai, the experience changed him. His glowing face furnished visible proof. This change occurred because Moses gazed at God, not because he gazed at himself and willed the changes to occur. In fact, Moses didn't even realize that he had changed!

God wrote His law on stone tablets when He met with Moses. Now God writes His law on our hearts. He changes our lives by changing our hearts. *He changes us from the inside-out. God begins with thoughts and attitudes and moves outside to influence behavior.*

It is natural to gaze at behaviors that we are trying to change. We resort to determined effort and self-will to try to make needed changes occur. While it is possible to change behaviors this way, the resulting change is skin-deep and short-lived. It is not change that results from God writing on our hearts. Change that is heart-deep and long-lived cannot be willed. It is the by-product of increased awareness of and confidence in God's commitments.

God changes us as we gaze at His commitments.

"Gaze" at God and His commitments; "glance" at your conduct and your circumstances. When your "gaze" and "glance" are in the right place, God will change you and you may not be fully aware that He has!

Day 6
Commitment #6

God chooses me

***"They will be my people, and I will be their God."* Jeremiah 32:38**

God chooses me because . . .

God does not choose me because . . .

How would you complete these sentences?

Most of us would complete the sentences using the word "I." Whether furnishing reasons why we should or should not be chosen, we would describe what "I" do or what "I" don't do.

God does not choose us because of what we do for Him.

When we base God's choice on what we do . . . it leads to comparison and competition. We compare our lives with others. If we do more than they do, we feel confident about being chosen by God. If we do less than others do, we cease to feel confident. When we feel insecure, it is challenging to love and serve others.

God does choose us because of what He does for us.

God chooses us not because of what "I . . ." but because of what "He . . ." God tells us about His commitments to us. When we focus on His commitments we gradually trust Him to keep them. We begin to base our confidence on His commitments rather than on our comparisons. We gradually trust Him to be "our" God. Increased security and confidence increases our capacity to love and serve others.

Why does God choose you?

God chooses you because . . . *He wants to tell you about His commitments to you.*

God chooses you because . . . *He wants to teach you to know and trust Him.*

God chooses you because . . . *He wants you to be part of His eternal family.*

Day 7

Commitment #7

Good is ahead of me

"I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them." Jeremiah 32:40

Good is ahead of you.

A covenant is a treaty that nations enter into with one another. It is like a contract or an agreement. A covenant clarifies the responsibilities that each party agrees to honor.

God makes covenants with us. These covenants clarify the commitments He will honor. God takes these covenants seriously. He takes His commitments seriously.

What is God's commitment?

You----God. *An eternal connection with God.*

God----Good. *An eternal connection with good.*

This is God's commitment. Being connected to God means being connected to good . . . eternally. Because it is an "everlasting covenant," God will "never stop doing good."

You----God----Good.

This is His commitment. He takes it seriously. *He asks us to believe it . . . in spite of evidence to the contrary.* When we look at our lives, there is much that appears to be "not good " We look around and see difficult relationships and dwindling resources. We attempt to protect ourselves from being pulled more deeply into "not good" in the future.

In spite of how things appear, *God's commitment is to "never stop doing good."* The road might be rough at the present time but God guarantees your arrival at a "good" place.

This is His commitment. *Good is ahead of you.*

Day 8

Commitment #8

Good is guaranteed to me

"I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more."

Hebrews 8:12

What does God think about when He thinks about you?

In fact, at this very moment, as you are reading these words, God is conscious of you. He is thinking about you. What is He thinking about you right now?

Is He thinking about that sin that you can't seem to overcome? You know the one. It is the sin that makes you cringe when you imagine that God is thinking about you. Is that what He is thinking about?

God is not thinking about that sin!

In fact, He is not thinking about any of your sins. He moved past that long ago . . . about 2,000 years ago. *Wickedness forgiven! Sins remembered no more!*

He is not thinking about your sin. *He is thinking about His commitments to you.* Thinking about what you will become as you grow in your ability to call them to mind and believe them in spite of evidence to the contrary.

He is thinking about the love that will flow from your heart towards Him and toward others.

He is thinking about the good plans that He has for you.

Your sin cannot cause Him to rescind His commitments to you. He remembers your sins no more. They cannot sever the "You----God----Good" bond.

Good is guaranteed to you!

Day 9

Commitment #9

God gives me the power to persevere

"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak."

Isaiah 40:30

The past. Look at the road that stretches out behind you.

Whether it is a carefully orchestrated series of events or a chaotic array, it is natural to wonder whether we are where we "should" be. Have we walked along the "right" road?

As we look to the past, it helps us to reflect on God's commitments to us. He sees us, sympathizes with us, deals gently with us and lovingly supports us . . . today . . . right where we are!

The future. Look at the road that stretches out ahead of you.

Whether the road is carefully mapped out or yet to be determined, it is natural to wonder whether we will arrive at a good place. What does the future hold?

As we look to the future, it helps us to reflect on God's commitments to us. He changes us and chooses us. Good is ahead of us. Good is guaranteed to us. We will not crash on the rocks of some "God-forsaken" circumstance because *God will never forsake us.*

That leaves the present.

Calls to make. Children to care for. Work to accomplish. Bills to pay. Health problems to deal with. Relationship concerns to cope with. As soon as you finish reading this article, you will get back to it. You wonder where the strength will come from. How will you be able to keep on going?

God gives strength to the weary. Strength that produces perseverance, that allows us to put one foot in front of the other. That will come in handy *today.*

Strength for one who is weary.

Power for one who is weak.

Day 10
Commitment #10

God gives me the power to be content

"I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength." Philippians 4:12-13

Contentment! The wonderful state of satisfaction, of having "enough." We look in different places, by different means, but *we are all looking for the same thing . . . contentment.*

There is a "secret" to being content.

Contentment comes from strength, the strength that only God can give.

Problem!

Many of us have already tried to find contentment with God and have come up empty. We may have pretended to be content, but searching for contentment in God has proven to be as frustrating as searching elsewhere.

It seems that there is always more we should learn about God. More that we should do for Him. We imagine that contentment will come on the far side of being fully committed to Him.

Contentment cannot come from focusing on our commitments to God!

Contentment can only come from *focusing on God's commitments to us!*

Focus on God's commitments to you. As you do, God will give you strength. His strength will be accompanied by an unexpected guest . . .

. . . *Contentment!*