

# COMMITTED TO FIDELITY

It's an honor to share with you today. And today we are looking at the blueprint for manhood and specifically what it means to be a man of our word, our vows, our commitments and therefore being a man of integrity.

## I. We are called to be true to our word.

1. In the Old Testament, a vow was for **FUTURE ACTION**. There was an implication of follow through. God is not just concerned with what we do He is concerned with what we say we are going to do.

*Numbers 30:2: "If a man vows a vow to the Lord or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth."*

*Deuteronomy 23:21-23: "If you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin. But if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin. You shall be careful to do what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth."*

What does it mean to be a man of your word? {Movie Clip Josey Wales}

2. Psychologically, you are bringing into alignment of who are by doing what you say you will do. You also conveying your principles or lack thereof with your actions or inactions.
3. In the New Testament, we see that failure to be a man of our word does more than just present a credibility problem among our friends and families.

*Matthew 5:37 Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.*

*James 5:12 But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.*

One of the most subtle problems that humanity faces is the propensity to **“OVER-PROMISE AND UNDER DELIVER.”** It comes from the desire to be liked and to be a people pleaser. Sometimes, it comes from a desire to not be rude. That's why we have 25 ways of saying yes that all mean no.

# COMMITTED TO FIDELITY

## II. We are called to keep our commitments.

Often times commitments, which can be as great as marriage and small as volunteering, are broken due to emotions.

Jordan Peterson states that our values regulate our emotions. I agree. And I am not correcting him in the slightest because much of his work would also support that our values actually regulate our thoughts, actions and inactions as well. More specifically the value of commitment is what provides restraint from impulsive deviance. So, commitment to unconditionally follow through, a form of trust, supersedes our emotions which always pushes us to something easier, or something more expedient or something more selfish. Again Romans 7&8

1. The intrinsic value of **COMMITMENT** is the governance of our emotions by our strength of character.

But what if our character is weak? Our character actually grows stronger in the accountability of each other. It's called discipleship, discipline, and the bond of trust that the healthiest relationships provide. And the relationship you have with Jesus does this better than any other to grow in your strength of character.

*Prov. 3: 5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." ESV*

Romans 7 – 8 is also a pretty good passage that substantiates my next statement:

2. Our true character should be **OUR TRUST IN JESUS CHRIST**. We are trusting him to become our true selves.

That means we are dependent upon our daily relationship with Christ to fulfill our vows and our commitments including and especially marriage. Therefore, our vows are for every day not just the day of our wedding.

Married dudes...do you find yourself asking why she does the things she does? The answer is simple. She doesn't know. In general women don't know what they want more than how they feel. That's why there is a popular restaurant outside Tulsa called "I don't care." They serve man food in large quantities. We need a franchise here. I probably won't shut up about this until we get one. We guys are the opposite. We don't know how we feel, and honestly, we don't care about how

# COMMITTED TO FIDELITY

we feel more than we know what we want and how often. Read into that as much as you like.

God did that on purpose. I think He did not to confound us but to keep us from boredom. I think it worked.

There was relationship studies in the 90s that focused on Decision Making and Goal Implementation by Peter Gollwitzer and Ron Kinney. They discovered the competing mindsets on decision making.

For example, it has been long suspected that the decision to get married occurred in men when they had to fork out the deposit for the tuxedos. But they still deliberated about getting married up until after the honeymoon. Whereas women decide to have a wedding at the age of 5 and were in full goal implementation until then and then women start to deliberate if they married the right person. Now days they move in with each other before marriage. Which is the #1 variable for divorce hands down. Couples rob themselves of a true courtship and a true honeymoon and set themselves up for disappointment.

So why do people fail in their fidelity in marriage?

1. Some believe it's **CHEMISTRY**. And they are partially right.
2. Some believe it's **EMOTIONS**. Again not quite the bullseye.
3. Some believe it's **FATE** and that is simply flat out ridiculous.
4. But what is closer to the truth is that people **DECIDE** to have an affair.

But they only do that after asking the question why? There are many that are truly committed to their spouse, their jobs, and they don't waste time deliberating. Those stuck in a cycle of deliberation perpetually ask the question of 'why.' When we ask the question 'why' it puts our brain into deliberation mode which as a survival mechanism tries to find alternatives. And then our hearts, minds and eyes are on the hunt for a better alternative. We men do this. Until we have an alternative.

But if you are a man of character you will keep your vows daily as scripture mandates, you will stay in Goal orientation and implementation mode. Those who do that are committed to the mission they ask the right questions of how and what and when.

# COMMITTED TO FIDELITY

You say Stew, we are both miserable. There is help and it is prideful to think you should innately have the answers to how, what, and when.

The best part is this: Dr. David Schnarch has validated research confirming that Marriage with a growth mindset is supposed to get better and better over time. That sound like our God. I am certain He designed marriage to do just that -- to get better and better over time.

Heed the warning in Proverbs chapter 5. *Prov. 5 says be satisfied with the wife of your youth...*

### **III. We are called to fidelity in our relationships (marriage).**

Scripture says let your yes be yes and your no be no because our word and our commitments are much more important to God than we might realize. In fact, it says in do not swear to anything but simply let your yes be yes and your no be no.

The principle that Jesus declares in Matthew that James echoes in his letter to the church point to a total commitment and fidelity or faithfulness in carrying out that commitment.

*To commit in marriage means to secure the future all parties by deciding 'against' all future deliberations, all future alternatives, all future temptations, and all future escapism.*

“It is not your love that sustains the marriage, but from now on, the marriage that sustains your love.” ~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Marriage is a commitment to implement the verb ‘love’ unconditionally which is our marriage vow.

### **Application Questions:**

1. When were you ever let down by someone else’s commitment to you? Other than anger what did you experience?
2. When did you not follow through on your word to someone? Other than shame what did you learn?
3. How can we grow in our discipleship and accountability to one another to strengthen our character and model good character to our families?