

LEARN FOR LIFE BLOG

COMMITTED BEYOND CIRCUMSTANCES PART 2

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Continuing from part 1, this idea needs more than reflection. It needs grounding.

The Biblical Pattern

This commitment beyond circumstances has biblical precedent. The prophets spoke truth whether anyone listened. Jeremiah preached for forty years with virtually no visible fruit. Paul planted churches knowing he might never see the full harvest. The disciples followed Jesus even when his kingdom looked nothing like they expected.

Faith, after all, is "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1)—not the guarantee of immediate results.

Like the tribe of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do, we're called to discern faithfully and act consistently—not just when times are urgent, but as a way of life. Our commitment flows from our identity, not from our circumstances.

The Principle Applied

This principle is timeless and applies across contexts:

- Exercise because you want a healthy body, not simply to achieve a goal weight.
- Save money not just for a vacation, but because life is expensive and you want to be prepared for the unexpected.
- Engage in what is happening in our society because we share the land with each other and we have an ethical obligation to each other—not just to the person in the mirror but the person across the street, in the store, at the bank, at the light.
- Pray because you are a person who prays, not just when crises hit.

- Give because you are a generous person, not just when you feel moved by a particular need.
- Show up because you are someone who shows up, not just when it's convenient or urgent.

The commitment transcends the circumstances.

Practical Ways to Live Committed Beyond Circumstances in 2026

So how do we actually do this? Here are seven practices to help you move from circumstance-driven living to sustained commitment:

1. Establish Rhythms, Not Resolutions

- Don't commit to "protesting every injustice" or "staying informed about everything." That's a recipe for burnout.
- Do commit to one regular, sustainable practice:
- "Every Tuesday, I read one article about immigration policy and contact my representative."
- "Every month, I volunteer 4 hours at the food bank."
- "Every Sunday evening, I pray specifically for communities facing injustice."

The key is sustainability over intensity. A small fire that burns consistently provides more warmth over time than a bonfire that consumes all its fuel in one night...

2. Build Ritual Into Your Commitments

Make your commitments liturgical—something you do whether you feel like it or not, whether the news cycle is talking about it or not.

This could look like:

- Daily prayer for a specific community or issue
- Weekly financial giving to an organization doing justice work (set it up as an automatic transfer)
- Monthly attendance at city council meetings or community forums
- Quarterly volunteering at the same organization

Like brushing your teeth: you do it regardless of how you feel, regardless of whether it feels urgent. It's just what you do.

3. Create Accountability Structures

Don't rely on motivation alone; build architecture around your commitment.

- Find one person who shares your commitment and check in regularly (weekly text, monthly coffee)
- Join an existing group with established practices: mutual aid networks, community organizations, church justice committees, neighborhood associations
- Put it on your calendar as a non-negotiable appointment

Motivation fades. Structure sustains.

4. Measure Faithfulness, Not Outcomes

This is perhaps the hardest shift to make, but it's essential.

Track: "Did I show up?" not "Did I win?" or "Did things change?"

Celebrate: Years of sustained presence, not dramatic victories. The activist who shows up for twenty years matters more than the one who burns bright for six months.

Remember: You're building muscle, not winning battles. Muscle builds slowly, through consistent effort over time. Some days you'll feel strong. Other days you won't. But if you keep showing up, you will get stronger.

5. Integrate, Don't Separate

Your commitment shouldn't be "extra"—something you add on top of an already full life. It should be woven into the fabric of your life.

If you're committed to economic justice, that shapes:

- How and where you shop
- Which banks and credit unions you use
- How you budget and give
- What you teach your children about money

If you're committed to racial reconciliation, that shapes:

- Where you choose to show up
- Whose voices you amplify and listen to
- How you speak in meetings and conversations
- What you read and learn

The goal is integration, not addition. This commitment becomes part of who you are, not just something you do.

6. Practice Sabbath From the News Cycle

Being committed beyond circumstances means not being enslaved to the news cycle.

Set boundaries:

- Check news once or twice a day, not constantly
- Designate news-free times (during meals, before bed, first hour of the morning)
- Unfollow accounts that exist only to outrage or panic you
- Give yourself permission to not know about every crisis immediately

You cannot sustain commitment if you're constantly in crisis mode. Protect your capacity to sustain by not burning out on information overload. Your sustained presence over decades matters more than your frantic attention in any given week...

7. Anchor Your "Why" Beyond Results

Write down and keep visible: "I do this because of who I am called to be, not because I think I'll solve it."

Your "why" might be:

- "Because I am made in the image of a God who sees and cares for the vulnerable"
- "Because love of neighbor isn't conditional on whether my neighbor appreciates it"
- "Because this is the person I want to be, regardless of outcomes"
- "Because faithfulness matters more than effectiveness"

Post this somewhere you'll see it regularly. Return to it when you feel discouraged or when victories tempt you to coast.

Moving Forward

As we enter 2026, I'm not making resolutions. I'm not waiting for circumstances to improve or crisis to demand action. I'm making commitments—quiet, sustainable, integrated commitments—to practices that reflect who I am called to be.

I will pray. I will show up. I will give. I will speak. I will listen. I will learn.

Not because 2026 will be easy or hard. Not because I think I can fix everything or because I've given up trying. But because these practices shape me into the person God is calling me to be, and because sustained faithfulness—not heroic moments—is what actually transforms the world.

The prophet Micah said it simply: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)

Notice the verb: walk. Not sprint. Not collapse. Walk. One foot in front of the other. Consistently. Humbly. Over the long haul.

Whatever you are committed to in 2026—whether it's justice work, spiritual formation, physical health, financial stewardship, creative practice, or care for creation—I invite you to consider: How can you practice this commitment beyond circumstances?

Not when you feel like it. Not when crisis demands it. But as a rhythm, a ritual, a way of life. Because peace need not cost us our strength. And victory need not defeat us.

Not if we learn to walk.

