

COMMITTED TO CHRIST

What does it mean to be committed?

Loyal and willing to give your time and energy to something that you believe in: (Cambridge dictionary)

Committed to Christ means you are willing to give your time and energy to follow Christ

You can therefore choose in 2026 to first of all be a committed Christian, committed parent, committed business person. The list is endless.

The Lord requires us to totally devote ourselves to Him in 2026. We know in Him we live, move and have our being .

Acts 17:28 (ESV)

for “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed his offspring.”

We were made by God and we came from Him, we therefore need to be committed to God because our existence depends on Him.

John 1:3 (NIV)

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Job 12:10 (NLT)

For the life of every living thing is in his hand, and the breath of every human being.

As our lives depend on God, we cannot afford not to be found in **His will and His presence.**

To be in God’s will and presence, there are things that we will need to embrace in 2026 and there are also things that we will need to let go of

Example1

A few days ago my son and I were feeling fluish and I went to the cupboard I keep medicines looking for some medication for flu symptoms. As I looked through that cupboard I saw tonnes of medication in the cupboard but none of those meds were still usable as they had all expired. I could not find a single medication that had not expired and I had to throw out all the meds in that cupboard. As I was throwing out all these meds in my spirit I had a sense that God is saying, “ A lot of us might be carrying out a lot of baggage and expired things, habits, attitudes that will not serve us any purpose in 2026 and we need

to let those things go as they are not going to serve us any purpose. As we let go of those weights, there are certain things that God wants us to embrace in the season ahead.”

- **There are things to let go of, and there are things to be embraced.**

What are the things we need to rid ourselves of?

Our sinful nature

Hebrews 12:1 (ESV)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Cloud of witnesses- The OT believers who lived their lives faithfully and were committed to the Lord.

Colossians 3:5-9 (NLT)

5So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. 6Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. 7You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. 8But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. 9Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.

What are we to embrace?

1. Embrace knowing your creator

Colossians 3:10-11 (NLT)

10Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. 11In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

- **As believers our new nature means we are renewed and becoming more and more like Christ.**
- **When it comes to knowing Christ it doesn't matter your background as long as you have committed to follow Him we are all equal and we can also have a solid relationship with Him.**

2. Embrace your identity

- **As believers, we may not have fully embraced our new identity in Christ, which is the new nature described in Colossians 3:10.**
- **This is the starting point if we are to fully commit our lives to Christ.**
- **If our identity is solid, we will not be loaded with weaknesses**

- We will be rich in Christ

What is your identity?

Ephesians 1:3-7 (NIV)

3Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. **4**For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love **5**he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— **6**to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. **7**In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

Our new identity in Christ is that

- 1. We are chosen by God (v4)**
- 2. We have been made holy and blameless (v4)**
- 3. We have been adopted and we are sons of God (v5)**
- 4. We have been redeemed through the blood of Jesus and our sins have been forgiven (v7).**

Where we have been held kept captive we have been set free. If you have not yet given your life to Jesus, you also may be set free and you can get a new identity.

Revelation 1:10-11 (NIV)

10On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, **11**which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

- Starting from the book of Revelation 1 (John- the son of Zebedee, the author of the gospel of John and 3 NT epistles). John was in the spirit (v10 Strong influence of the Holy Spirit which should be our posture if God is to speak to us in 2026).
- John referred to here is John the apostle and he had a personal relationship with Jesus
- He referred to himself as "The one Jesus loved"
- John was actually on the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9) under imprisonment on account of the word of God when he heard a voice speaking to Him.

- The voice was that of Jesus (v12). John was instructed to write down things seen and those to take place (Rev 1:19) to the seven churches.

Can God speak to you and use you when you are in difficult spaces? He can still use you if you avail yourself just as he used John when he was on the island of Patmos.

God wants to use you in 2026 even when you are in a difficult season. What is important is to avail yourself.

Lets focus on what God saw as strengths and weaknesses of 4 from the 7 churches in Asia which we can learn from to **embrace or not to certain habits** so that we deepen our **commitment to Christ**

Ephesus-Strengths

Revelation 2:2 (NIV)

I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don't tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars.

- The church at Ephesus **could identify falsehood and false apostles.**
- They were **very alert and could identify false doctrine.**
- Are you able to **identify false teachings?**
- **How** are you able to **identify false teachings?**
- By knowing **God's word.**
- This means you need to diligently study the word of God daily, do indepth studies of specific subject matters (topical studies to understand certain teachings and to strengthen your doctrine
- **Listen to sound teachers of the word**, ask mature believers where you don't understand.

Revelation 2:6 (NIV)

But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

The church at Ephesus also hated the the teachings of the Nicolaitans who were heretical Christians that encouraged sexual immorality and idolatry.

Like the church at Ephesus, be a Christian who hates sin in all forms . Flee from sexual immorality and don't worship idols, e.g job, entertainment

Choose to worship God in 2026

Ephesus-Weaknesses

Revelation 2:4 (NLT)

“But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first!

- a) You have lost your first love for God
- b) You have lost your love for each other

Love the lord your God also found in Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37 and Mark 12:30 (The great commandment)

It is a commandment and as believers we have no choice but to obey the commandment of God

Mark 12:30 (NLT)

And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.'

What does it mean to love God ?

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (NIV)

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

- Israel was being told that there is only one God in v4 (monotheism). v4 was a commandment central to the Shema (a foundational declaration of faith in Judaism)
- Monotheism-the doctrine or belief of having only one God
- V5 Therefore **emphasises** that there is only one God and Israel needs to be totally devoted and pay attention to the Lord.
- No other god was Israel to pay attention to except Yahweh the name of the LORD, which reflected a personal relationship.
- Loyalty and obedience to God was important
- Loving God with **one's heart means** the way you think, the decisions one makes and how you live is influenced by God.
- Your life is not **compartmentalised** and all aspects of your life are given to God

- Loving God with all your **soul** means all that you are as a person is given to the Lord.
- With all your strength means you use your **capabilities and material resources** that you have to **serve** the Lord
- Offer your body as living sacrifice to the Lord (Romans 12:1).
- **Joshua** is a good example of a person who urged the Israelites to worship only God and not serve the gods their fathers served

Joshua 24:14-15 (NLT)

14“So fear the LORD and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD alone. 15But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.”

“When we do not serve the Lord wholeheartedly, we are choosing to serve other gods”

Examples.... Money, our relationships, and entertainment.

The second commandment we need to embrace

Mark 12:31 (NLT)

The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.”

- The second is equally important. You cannot say you love God and you do not love your neighbour. How can people turn to God if you don’t show them love?
- The way God loves should be the standard that Christians love other people.

1 John 4:8- 10(NLT)

8But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. 10This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

- **Love for fellow believers is very important.** Choose to love fellow believers in the house of God. This shows your commitment to Christ.

- Loving fellow believers means that you pray for them, you fellowship with them, you do not neglect the gathering of the saints
- **Do you know that someone is encouraged by seeing your consistency in church?**
- In as much as you come to church for your own **edification**, you also do so to **strengthen** others
- Are you concerned about the **well-being** of fellow believers or are you **self-centred**

Choose to make time for fellowship and edification with fellow believers

Acts 2:42-47 (NLT)

42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

The early church loved each other. May there be love for each other.

- We don't necessarily have to **be very close or friends but let us care for each other enough to fellowship with each other and pray for one another.**

1 John 4:20 (NLT)

If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?

John 13:34 (NLT)

So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.

God's people may have weaknesses, but let's make a quality decision to love them, and this means we need to spend time in fellowship with them, praying for them and encouraging each other.

Make a quality decision to connect with fellow believers in 2026. You can start with one but do something to connect with the people of God.

Smyrna- Strengths

- **No negative thing** was said about the church at **Smyrna they were poor in the natural but were spiritually rich**

What is being spiritually rich?

James 2:5 (NLT)

5 Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren't they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him

- **It is being rich in faith and being an heir of God's kingdom**

Revelation 2:9 (NLT)

9 "I know about your suffering and your poverty—but you are rich! I know the blasphemy of those opposing you. They say they are Jews, but they are not, because their synagogue belongs to Satan

Are you rich spiritually? Or you are poor spiritually

Is your life in right standing with the Lord

Sardis-Weaknesses

Revelation 3:1-2 (NLT)

1 "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Sardis. This is the message from the one who has the sevenfold Spirit of God and the seven stars: "I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead. 2 Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God

- The church at Sardis had a reputation of being alive but Jesus actually knew that it was a dead church spiritually
- Are you **alert spiritually** or you are in a state of slumber?
- Are you able to be alert **to identify when the enemy wants to attack you?**
- **Actions do not meet the requirements of my God-** other translations speak your **deeds or works are not complete in the sight of God**
- **Are there things that you should be doing for God** you have **neglected** to do because you are not spiritually alert.....e.g. be woken up by God in the middle of the night to pray because you are not **spiritually alert.**

Sardis- strengths

Revelation 3:4 (CEV)

4 A few of you in Sardis have not dirtied your clothes with sin. You will walk with me in white clothes, because you are worthy.

- **Have you separated yourself from sin and chosen to be loyal to the Lord?**
- If you have not dirtied or soiled your clothes it means you consistently obey God and you are consistent in your faith

- A few people in Sardis were committed to God and even in our world today many profess to be Christians but do not obey and follow Jesus wholeheartedly.
- **Are you choosing to follow Jesus?**

Laodicea-Weaknesses

- The church at Laodicea was neither hot nor cold, but was a **lukewarm church**.
- **Nothing positive** was written about the church at Laodicea.

Revelation 3:15-17 (NLT)

15‘I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! 16But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! 17You say, ‘I am rich. I have everything I want. I don’t need a thing!’ And you don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

- **A lukewarm believer is not fully committed to Christ** as read in Deuteronomy 6:5 or Mark 12:30 where loving God means total devotion to God
- Laodicea was near the Lycus river, which was a muddy river, and the water was not drinkable, and the waters of this river were lukewarm when they reached Laodicea
- In the same way, Jesus found the state of the church at Laodicea bad, as they were lukewarm.
- **A cold drink refreshes on a hot day, whereas a hot drink provides warmth to someone cold**
- Being hot might mean being zealous for the things of God, and being cold might mean being dead spiritually.
- When someone is **lukewarm** as a believer, they do not grow spiritually but remain in the same **spiritual state**.
- They are not **an effective believer**. They are not able **to thrive** as they are **wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked** (v17)
- They do not have a personal relationship with Christ.
- The solution is to open one’s self to the Lord by spending time with Him and letting him in into one’s space.

Revelation 3:20 (NIV)

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

- **Jesus desires fellowship with you as a believer.**
- **He pursues relationship with you and he knocks at the door of our heart.**
- Hearing God and opening your heart to Him causes sweet fellowship with the Lord
- In 2026 open your heart to Jesus and improve your relationship with the Lord

Plan of Action for their weaknesses-Ephesus church (A church with a loss of first love)

Revelation 2:5 (ESV)

5Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

- **Repentance**
- **Do the works you did before**

God is saying that we need to repent which is confessing our sins and make a turn away from the life we lived before a life of sin. Go back to their first love for God and loving one another

God's Promise for the Ephesus Church

Revelation 2:7- Granted the tree of life in the paradise of God.

Plan of Action for the church at Smyrna

Encouraged to be faithful until the end

God's Promise for the Smyrna church

- The church at Smyrna was going to face persecution and some were to be thrown in prison for 10 days and would have tribulation but they were encouraged to be faithful unto death
- Jesus promised the church at Smyrna in later verses that He would give them the crown of life if they remained faithful

Plan of Action for their weaknesses- Sardis Church (A church with deadworks)

Revelation 3:3

3Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

- **Keep Gods word- So as to be made alive again and not be a dead church- (memorise scripture, read God's word)**
- **Repent- (Repent from a state of slumber)**

God Promise for the Sardis Church

In Revelation 3:5, the church at Sardis was promised that the one who conquers will be clothed in white garments and the Lord would never blot out their names from the book of life.

Plan of action for the church at Laodicea (A church spiritually blind and lukewarm)

Revelation 3:18 (ESV)

18I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. 19Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

- 1. Buy gold refined by fire and white garments-** Seeking God and turning to him for purification by His Grace and totally relying on Christ for sustenance as a believer.
- 2. A call to be zealous for God and repent**

Promise for the church at Laodicea

Revelation 3:20-21 (NIV)

20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. 21 To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.

- 1. Christ will dine with that person**
- 2. The right to sit with Christ on His throne**

Conclusion

- In all these churches we have seen strengths and weaknesses and in order for us to be committed to Christ in 2026 there are things we have been encouraged to keep on doing from the strengths mentioned and where we are weak we are being encouraged to let go of certain things. Make a quality decision to take heed of what
- **God is saying and embrace or let go of certain things that may pause as hindrances to your commitment to Christ.**
- **Eternal life is promised for those who want to stay committed to Christ**
- In Matthew 6:33 we are also encouraged to seek first the Kingdom of God and all other things will be added to us
- As we commit our lives to Christ in 2026, God will open doors in our lives- marriage, job, financial provision etc
- Let us truly be committed and give our **devotion** to Christ in 2026
- **Try it and see what God will do for you in 2026**

Song-Heart of Worship

Prayer – Consecration to the Lord

- Commit yourself to love the Lord with all your heart, soul and mind in 2026 (Mark 12:30; Matthew 22:37; Deuteronomy 6:5)
- Commit to love your neighbour as you love yourself (Mark 12:31)
- Commit your plans to the lord for 2026; Pray that the Lord establishes your steps as you plan the year (Proverbs 16:3;9)
- Pray for the church to be committed to loving God, loving people and accomplishing the plans of God as a collective. (Mark 12:30-31; Proverbs 16:3;9).

