

Stories of Healing

How God has worked in our Church Family

Week 10

I'm So Glad I Made the Commitment to Follow Jesus

Dick Kelso's Story

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.

Numbers 30.2

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

2 Timothy 4.7

Dick has been an incredibly important figure in the history of the Kettering Church of Christ (now Cornerstone). He was born right here in Dayton, Ohio and has served faithfully as a member of the church for many years, and spending a good deal of time as an elder. Dick has left no room for anyone to doubt his faith in Jesus. A true straight-shooter with a heart of gold, there are so many things we can learn from his walk with Jesus. He has been a Christian since 1954.

Dick grew up in depression times and though his parents did their best not to show any stress, he knew that they had many struggles. He and his parents lived different places around the Dayton area. When he was around twelve, Dick's father passed away.

After the passing of his father, Dick's mother stood in the gap and worked hard to keep the family afloat. They were tough people. Around that time, Dick started having his first bible studies at a nearby church down the street.

Fast forwarding a bit, Dick met a girl in high school. Her name was Barb, and their relationship began because of the fact that he always seemed to forget a pencil for Geometry class, and she always seemed to have one to loan. Before Dick decided to leave for the Navy, he asked Barb to marry him, and she said yes... the rest, as they say, is history.

Dick says "we made a commitment—that I think is kind of old fashioned now—that we would stay together until death do we part." It should be said that they honored that

commitment. He went off to the Navy, and she stayed home with his mother. When Dick went out on his first tour in France, he met his friend Norm.

Dick left his wife and first child, Kathi at the barracks in California while he went off to Korea to serve. He knows that even though they were separate, they were not truly alone. *"God was with us."* By the time Dick got home from Korea, their son had been born as well.

The place where the Kelso family ended up landing after Dick came home was down the street from his friend Norm, who had been going to a church of Christ in Sunnyvale, California. The minister of Norm's church began to talk with Dick and Barbara and helped them to see their need to give their lives to Jesus in the waters of baptism.

The Kelso family eventually returned home to the Dayton area, this time as a dedicated Christian. They began their search for a church. After looking around, they eventually settled at the Haynes Street church of Christ. Dick eventually assumed the role of a deacon at that congregation.

After moving to Kentucky for a brief stint, the Kelso family returned to the Dayton area and this time found their home at the Kettering church of Christ, where Dick eventually accepted the role of an elder alongside other faithful men. He has since resigned from many faithful years of service, but he says he trusts that the congregation is in good hands now.

He says he wants those that are coming in behind him to remember to "stay the course and stick to their commitments."

Applications and Takeaways

- **If you say yes, mean it.** Dick's closing words match his own walk. He urges us to honor all of our commitments and follow through. *Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil (Matthew 5.37).*
- **Say yes to the Lord of Heaven.** When we make a commitment to God, we can be sure he's even more committed to us and bringing us exactly where we need to go. Dick said it to himself, "I know God was with us." *Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act (Psalm 37.4).*
- **Honor your commitments to others.** Even though we could be hurt by others, and the pain of losing someone we've invested a lot in can sting, Dick would tell us it's been worth it for him.
 - He committed himself to his wife in marriage—and he still loves her to this day.
 - He committed himself to Jesus in repentance, confession and baptism—and he kept seeking God.
 - He committed himself to be a servant in the church—he was a deacon, an elder and remains a great encouragement to so many.

What do you think? Would Dick say following all these commitments were worth it? There can be no doubt.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6.19-21).

1. What stands out about this story to you?
2. What stops us from making big commitments—such as in baptism and marriage? What makes it hard to honor those commitments?
3. How can we be sure that God will help us work through keeping our promises?
4. What are some things we can learn from Mr. Kelso's Christian example?