

Keep the Faith: Lessons from Africa (Week 2)

July 14th, 2024

“CONSUMERISM VS. COMMITMENT”

Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Last week we contrasted materialism to faith ([John 6:27, 29, 33](#)).

Materialism leads to consumerism

- Consumerism can have positive and negative connotations.
- We are built with a need to consume – food and water, etc.
- To be a consumer is to be one who takes but doesn't give back.
- They consume something until it's gone, or they consume it until they are done with it and throw it away.
- We are told by God that we must be careful what we consume.
- We are told to put some things higher on a priority scale than others.

1 John 2:15-17 (NLT)

¹⁵Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. ¹⁶For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. ¹⁷And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

If you choose to consume the wrong things, they do not satisfy and lead to ruin:

- Money, pleasure, people ([Proverbs 21:17](#); [Ecclesiastes 5:10](#); [1 Timothy 6:10](#)).

The bottom line: **WHAT YOU CONSUME AFFECTS WHAT YOU PRODUCE!**

- Empty, dissatisfied people have empty lives, distracted lives, broken relationships, bitterness, disappointment, etc. ([Jeremiah 2:13 \(ESV\)](#); [1 Peter 1:18 \(NLT\)](#))

Faith leads to commitment:

- The antidote to consumerism is commitment to consume the right thing.
- Jesus says we are to consume Him ([John 6:35, 53-58](#)).

Definition of **ABIDE**:

⇒ To remain in; to continue in ([John 15:5](#)).

When you **ABIDE** in Him it creates something beautiful ([Galatians 5:22-26](#)).

ARE YOU WALKING BY THE SPIRIT? ARE YOU A CONSUMER, OR A COMMITTED LOVER OF GOD AND OTHERS?

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

1. What does it mean to you to abide in Christ, as referenced in [John 15:5](#), and to maintain a steadfast commitment to Him? How does this dedication to Jesus influence the choices you make each day and the way you live out your faith?

2. How have you observed materialism affecting your spiritual life or the lives of those around you, as cautioned in the message? What strategies can you employ to prevent becoming spiritually consumed by worldly influences and instead prioritize feeding on Christ?
3. Can you recall a time when you felt spiritually depleted or disconnected from Christ? How did you recommit yourself to consuming Christ and drawing strength from Him? How did this renewal impact your spiritual journey?
4. Reflect on instances where distractions or worldly pursuits have hindered your relationship with Jesus, in line with the warning not to drift away from feeding on Christ. How do you maintain focus on Him amidst life's busyness?
5. How do you differentiate between beneficial activities and those that may lead you away from a deep connection with Jesus, as mentioned in the message? What measures can you implement to ensure that Christ remains your central focus?
6. Explore the significance of faithfulness and commitment to Jesus in your spiritual journey. How does your loyalty to Christ influence your relationships, your ability to resist spiritual temptations, and your overall sense of fulfillment and purpose?
7. Share your reflections on the rewards of prioritizing Christ above material possessions. How have you experienced the fulfillment of God's promises by remaining devoted and loyal to Him? In what ways does trusting in Jesus offer a more meaningful and satisfying life compared to pursuing worldly desires?
8. The message talks about the importance of living a faith-filled life rather than a materialistic life. How do you prioritize spiritual things over material things in your daily life? What practices or habits help you cultivate a faith-filled mindset?
9. Share examples of times when you may have sought fulfillment or satisfaction from relationships or material possessions that ultimately left you feeling empty. How can turning to God as your ultimate source of strength and satisfaction change this dynamic in your life?