

Commitment:

The action of fulfilling one's promises.



Many people are quick to make commitments; *promises to do something*, but our culture today does not value the *fulfillment* of those promises. Commitment is foundational to a strong marriage, yet too often commitment is seen as a by-product of one's satisfaction in his or her marriage. One definition of commitment reflects the culture's view and defined it represented as an equation:

$$\text{Satisfaction Level} + \text{Investment in the Relationship} - \text{Available Alternatives} = \text{Commitment}$$

A person's commitment to the relationship is based on his or her level of satisfaction and the amount of investment in the relationship (time, children, etc.), less the alternatives available to him or her. The reality of this view happens every day; people are committed to their marriage relationships only if satisfaction level and their investment are better than the alternatives.

Commitment is much more than a promise; it is (or should be) an action - the fulfillment of one's promises. In marriage, that means fulfilling the promises we made to our spouse on our wedding day: to be faithful and true, to work with our spouse through all the problems we may face. Contrary to the culture's view of commitment, Biblical commitment is the basis for the marriage relationship. A couple committed to each other invests in their relationship which raises satisfaction level. This can also be seen in an equation:

$$\text{Commitment} + \text{Investment in the Relationship} = \text{Satisfaction Level}$$

If satisfaction in the relationship is low, one or both need to make an investment into the relationship. This may be emotional; meeting needs or actively listening and communicating openly and positively, or it may be something tangible; spending time together or doing something for one's spouse. The "investment" will vary from couple to couple, but the important thing is to remember that marriage must be viewed as a life-long *commitment*. Satisfaction level will fluctuate over time and it can be raised with a purposeful, ongoing investment into the relationship. The *committed* spouse will act in ways that will build the relationship rather than tear it down.

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Articles to check out:

Commitment In Marriage by Gregory Brown - bible.org

Strengthening The Commitment In Your Marriage by Steve Carr - www.covenantkeepers.org