

Commitment

Ready:

"Elijah left there and found Elisha son of Shaphat as he was plowing. Twelve teams of oxen were in front of him, and he was with the twelfth team. Elijah walked by him and threw his mantle over him. Elisha left the oxen, ran to follow Elijah, and said, 'Please let me kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow you.'

"Go on back,' he replied, 'for what have I done to you?'

"So he turned back from following him, took the team of oxen, and slaughtered them. With the oxen's wooden yoke and plow, he cooked the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he left, followed Elijah, and served him."

-1 Kings 19:19-21

Set

This is an agonizing time of the year for college football coaches and fans. Star high school athletes are making decisions that will determine where they will spend the next four years of their lives. They are taking official visits to college campuses around the country and are being given the royal treatment. Each school hopes that the recruit will commit to signing with them, and many do long before the official signing date. Even with commitments declared, college coaches continue to pursue these athletes, causing some to change their minds and sign with other schools. Recruits can state that they are a "soft" commitment to a school and continue to make visits to other campuses. The definition of commitment is "to bind" or "obligate," which implies that the decision is firm and final. But obviously, that meaning is diluted in the world of college recruiting.

Without question, commitment meant something totally different to Elisha. He was plowing in a field when Elijah found him. Elijah threw his cloak around Elisha, indicating that Elisha was to be his successor. How did Elisha respond? He asked permission to go back home to prepare a farewell feast for his family. He took the oxen and slaughtered them. He then burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people to eat. Then he followed Elijah and became his attendant. We certainly would not call Elisha's response to the situation a "soft" commitment. He was decisive and left no doubt that he was obligated and bound to Elijah.

Many times in our faith and as competitors, we make commitments that are less than "firm." We say yes, but often move in other directions if something more attractive comes along. And too often, we make these "soft" commitments, but ask fellow Christians and teammates to believe otherwise. It may hard to be honest with others and ourselves, but God knows our hearts. So, next time you commit, remember Elisha and stand firm!

Go

1. How does it affect you when a player displays a commitment like Elisha's?
2. Who is the most committed player you've known? To what or whom was he/she committed?
3. How have you recently demonstrated commitment to someone or something in your sport?
To God?

Workout

Proverbs 20:25

Mark 10:29-30

Luke 9:57-62

Overtime

Almighty God, I'm grateful that You sacrificed Your only Son out of a committed love for me. Empower me today to show the same devoted love to others! Amen.

Bible Reference:

Luke 9



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