



Huddle Up

Part 4

July 11, 2021

Biblical Loyalty - Developing Loyalty and Unity within the Church

When someone thinks of the term “Loyalty”, many definitions may come to mind. Loyalty can be described as many different things by many different people, but how does the Bible describe Loyalty? What, biblically speaking, is a determining factor of Loyalty? In Genesis chapter nine, we discover one clear perspective of what loyalty is, and what loyalty is not.

Point #1 - Loyalty Covers

Genesis 9:18-25 - ¹⁸The sons of Noah who went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed. ²⁰Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. ^[c] ²¹He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. ²²And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. ²³Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. ²⁴When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers."

Clearly, we can see, per this text, what Loyalty is and what it is not. Here we find Noah, whose obedience saved his entire family, having a moment of weakness and succumbs to too much wine. He, therefore, passes out in his tent. One of Noah's sons finds his father in a moment of vulnerability and shame, and instead of covering his father in a moment of weakness; he exploits it.

He runs to his brothers and exclaims to them the current condition of their father. Notice the lack of loyalty to cover his father at a moment of weakness. We must understand that Loyalty prohibits the exploitation of another's weakness in their time of weakness. Noah's Son made a terrible mistake; Two covered his shame and one exposed it and the one who lacked loyalty was cursed.

Loyalty doesn't justify the poor decision, but loyalty does demand intervention. When the other two brothers heard of this, they immediately throw a garment over their shoulders, back into Noah's tent, and toss the linen over him to cover their father's shame. Consider this for a moment, two covered their father's shame and one exposed it.

Could loyalty be a determining factor between blessings and curses? Could our actions towards another person not only affect our lives as an individual but also impact coming generations? It surely was a determining factor in this text.

Loyalty prohibits the exploitation of another's weakness in their time of weakness. Clergy and Christians should always see the value in covering for the sake of correction and not exposing for the sake of destroying. Let us be like the loyal brothers who, upon hearing of their father's shame being exposed, went to cover him.

If our congregations can't trust us to cover one another as leaders, then what is the factor that is to compel you to believe that we will cover you in a moment of weakness? And furthermore, if those around you heard your conversations, would they be compelled to follow you or abandon you?

As individuals, we should always see the value in covering shame for the sake of recovery and not exposing shame for the sake of destruction. Let us be like the loyal brothers who, upon hearing of their father's shame being exposed, went to cover him and not partake in the revelry of disloyalty. I close this point with this thought... If our family and friends cannot trust us to cover them in moments of weakness and trial, then what is to compel them to cover us in our moments of weakness? Remember, Loyalty Covers for the sake of confronting and correction so choose to see the value in being Loyal.

Point #2 - Loyalty Calms

Have you ever been at a place where life was so overwhelming that you wanted to quit? It seems like every time we turn on the news or view social media sites, chaos and crisis is the central theme of every headline. Where, in a world of confusion, can we find a place of Peace with God?

The Prophet Isaiah declared in Isaiah 26:3, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.”

One of the most beautiful things about the Peace of God is the calming factor of knowing that somehow everything is going to be all right. In Exodus chapter 17, we find the story of the Israelites traveling through the wilderness and they come up against a warring King by the name of Amalek. Notice with me Exodus 17:8-13

Exodus 17:8-13 - ⁸Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. ⁹So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.” ¹⁰So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹²But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.

Notice the later part of verse 12, “So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.” It was Aaron and Hur’s discerning of Moses’ weariness that caused their intervention to steady the weary hands of Moses until the battle was over. Aaron and Hur were the Brother and Brother in Law of Moses and it was their loyalty to Moses that enabled him to stay steady until the going down of the Sun.

A nugget of truth we can draw from this text is simple; Loyalty prohibits our desire to be blind to our brother or sister’s warfare. Our loyalty to our family, our church, and our friends can bring calmness into the raging tumult of their crisis. And our loyalty demands that we turn not a blind eye to it. Loyalty prohibits our desire to be blind to our brother’s warfare.

If we desire for our church family to be loyal in our times of grief or weariness then we, first, must be willing to go to the aid of those within this church. We all need a helping hand during certain seasons of our lives. I know I do.

Remember that if Aaron and Hur had not held up Moses’ hands then Aaron and Hur would have lost their own lives in the defeat of Israel at the hands of Amalek.

We must bear in mind that we live and die as a team, as a Church Family; and if we don't hold one another's hands during the trials that we all face, and heal as a church, then we will die as individuals. We all know the golden rule that encourages us to "do unto others as we would have them do unto us" and this rule becomes a powerful truth in light of this text.

If we desire for other's to be loyal in our times of grief then we, first, must be willing to go to the aid of those who we know are struggling. We must be willing to assist them in keeping their arms lifted until the battle is over.

It is important that we remember that our brother or sister's warfare can easily become our own if we are not willing to stand with them. The greatest victories in our individual lives come when we see the value in being loyal to one another because loyalty calms...

Point #3 - Loyalty Covenants

What does it mean to covenant? What does it mean to be a promise keeper? What does it mean to be integral in word and deed? Regrettably, these concepts aren't prevalent in our society and it is a very difficult thing to find a "true" covenant partner; whether it is a family member, friend, or otherwise.

We truly need a resurrection of authentic covenant partnership; those who will stand with us, pray with us, and even walk with us when we are the ones who may be out of line.

In 1 Samuel 24, we find the story of King Saul scouring the dessert in search of David and his mighty men. Saul has sought David for quite some time with a desire to kill him because there were those who were speaking lies to Saul concerning David. In 1 Samuel 24, there seems to be a major turn in the plot when David clings to Covenant and stays his hand of destruction.

1 Samuel 24:1-22, “When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, “Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.” ²Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks. ³And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. ⁴And the men of David said to him, “Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, ‘Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.’” Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. ⁵ And afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of

Saul's robe. ⁶ He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed." ⁷ So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way."

After a short discourse from David to Saul, notice verse 16...

1 Samuel 24:16-22, "As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. ¹⁷ He said to David, "You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. ¹⁸ And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the Lord put me into your hands. ¹⁹ For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. ²⁰ And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. ²¹ Swear to me therefore by the Lord that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house." ²² And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold."

One of the most unique aspects to this story is that David, though he had opportunity to destroy Saul, restrained himself and made the decision to honor Covenant above Saul's actions towards him. Loyalty prohibits us from turning our backs on our covenant relationships and seeking to commit "spiritual homicide" against either those we serve equally with or those who are over us.

Notice that though David did not agree with Saul, rightfully so because Saul was in the wrong, he refused to lay his hand or even his words against the Man who God chosen to be in the position as King.

Simply put, David's Covenant with Saul did not die when Saul began to make poor decisions in life.

Now I'm not implying that those that we are in covenant with are going to start trying to throw spears at us or chase us down with an army but we must remember that we, as Christians, are in covenant with one another and that we are not always going to make the right (or best) decision concerning a situation.

Nor are we always going to agree on everything but it is imperative that we remember our covenant with one another and not be ugly or divisive or mean. Proverbs 29:11 says, "A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back." Like David, we must be

willing to live as Covenant people who walk in loyalty to our covenants with God and one another through Christ. Let our loyalty to one another outweigh our opinions of one another because that is what Covenant does.