

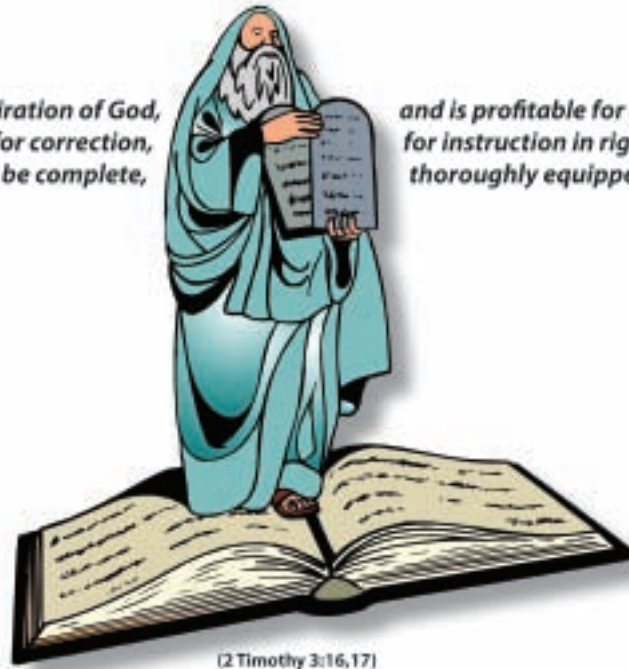
Teaching E-mails

Prophetic Warnings From a Righteous God

42. Develop Loyalty—Giving Up Your Life For Someone (July 22, 2008)

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,
for reproof, for correction,
that the man of God may be complete,*

*and is profitable for doctrine,
for instruction in righteousness,
thoroughly equipped for every good work.*



(2 Timothy 3:16,17)



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Christ-like Loyalty Is Wholehearted Commitment To Another Person

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

When you read these profound words of our Lord Jesus, you probably think it refers to someone dying in order to save another person’s life. Images come to mind of a courageous soldier jumping on a hand grenade or a loving mother leaping in front of a truck to push her child out of danger. You certainly have to be *dead to yourself* to respond so heroically!

In Teaching E-mail 22. *How Eager Are You?*, we wrote how we used to toss a simulated hand grenade into groups of people at our retreat center. We wanted them to see who would jump on it so that others might live. The scenario was this:

“You have three seconds before the hand grenade blows up. One...two... three...”

- 0% of the clergy ever jumped on the grenade. Not one!!!
- 10% of non-clergy men jumped on the grenade.
- 50% of the women and teenagers jumped on the hand grenade.

When people don't have time to analyze the pro's and con's, their true heart is often revealed!

Nobody is born prepared to die for others. This is an acquired character trait that calls for deep humility and love. Yet dying to ourselves and becoming more like Jesus through His Spirit is the essential purpose of our sanctification—our Father’s goal for us each and every day we live.

Many Christians eagerly look for the “out there” type of miracles that they read about in missions magazines. These *are* wondrous testimonies to our God’s

amazing power! But the most ongoing miracle Sue and I have witnessed over the years is the transformation our Lord Jesus has made in each of us through the working of His Spirit. The grateful testimonies of *who we once were* and *how our Lord has changed us* gives hope to others.

The painful process of dying to the sin nature and taking on the character of Jesus is *hardly mentioned* in western Christendom, never mind being emphasized as an essential part of our life journey in Jesus. And, if we’re to judge by recent communications, many who do want to follow in the steps of Jesus have also missed this all important truth.

(Please review Teaching E-mail 37. *Are You Violating Our Holy God’s Law?*, for more on the importance of personal sanctification.)

God’s Word makes clear the nature of loyalty which sanctified hearts produce:

Loyalty calls you to lay aside your personal desires and wants so that you lovingly and willingly meet the needs of others.

Loyalty is developed and deepened throughout the life of anyone who yearns to become more like Jesus. This is the work of the indwelling Spirit as you yield to Him. The character trait of loyalty is learned, not inherited. And, the depth in which loyalty is instilled in you affects the intensity of your commitment to others.

“A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother”

(Proverbs 18:24).

Saul’s son Jonathan and David the son of Jesse experienced deep loyalty with each other, an allegiance so intense that they entered a covenant together:

After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became **one in spirit** with David, and he loved him as himself. From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. And Jonathan made a covenant with David because **he loved him as himself** (1 Samuel 18:1-3).

Not only does this impassioned type of loyalty apply to friendships, but even more so to the covenant of marriage. In his fervent passage in Ephesians 5 on the marital relationship, Paul stresses the underlying message of loving your spouse with the same intensity of devotion as Christ loves His chosen, called-out ones: *"In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself"* (5:28).

In essence, the apostle is directing a husband to the kind of covenant love he should offer his wife — sacrificially responding to her as he himself wants to be treated. Anything less would be disloyalty in their relationship.

Another insight into the life of King David displays loyalty at its finest:

At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. David longed for water and said, 'Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!' So the three mighty men broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the LORD. Far be it from me, O LORD, to do this!" he said. 'Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?' And David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty men" (2 Samuel 23:14-17).

Does it seem foolish to you that these men risked their lives to satisfy a longing of their beloved commander? Their willingness as well as David's recognition of the precious love that lay behind this hazardous mission reveals a mutual devotion to lay down their lives — not because they *have* to but because such profound loyalty *compels* them.

- **Can you name any people you personally know who would risk their lives for you? Would you risk yours for someone else? What would it take for you to lay down your life, your ambitions and desires to wholeheartedly meet the needs of another?**

Biblical loyalty is personified and summed up in the person of our Lord Jesus. He intentionally and purposefully lived in total loyalty to His Father, and then exemplified sacrificial loyalty on behalf of those He loved. How do we as His beloved display loyalty to Him and to others? When we willingly and lovingly yield to His Spirit in us so He can mold us to be like our King and Master.

Again, loyalty is a learned character trait as we decide to heed the righteous path He sets before us. It comes about and grows as we make sacrificial choices:

- **Loyalty grows and deepens as you continually set aside your own desires and perceived rights in order to meet the needs and desires of another person.**
- **Loyalty increases with each sacrifice you choose to make on behalf of someone else.**
- **The loyalty found in the Bible impels you toward a relational belonging that's**

marked by **mutual cooperation**. And, your **willingness to be inconvenienced** expresses in a very real way your heartfelt love for the other person. As **mutual cooperation and willingness to be inconvenienced** become more deeply engrained in your character, so will the trait of loyalty be more firmly rooted in you.

A Disloyal Person Serves The Ambitions Of His/Her Sin Nature

It seems self-evident that a disloyal person has little or no desire to serve the interests of others. Their inner ambition is basically to take care of themselves and meet their own wants and needs regardless of how that selfish focus affects others in their life.

Scriptural examples confirm that bitter people lack loyalty. Rather, they use other people to achieve their own ambitions. Acts, chapter 8, offers a clear picture of unrighteous disloyalty in Simon the Sorcerer. This man had long enjoyed the acclaim of the people of Samaria, not only proclaiming himself to be great but hoodwinking them with his sorceries as well. This man was full of pride in his ongoing lust for power!

Philip, moved by a heart to bring the good news of the Messiah, journeyed to that city and became a vessel through which mighty miracles were done by God. Simon himself believed — but not with a repentant heart of obedient trust! His disloyalty was amply proven when Peter and John arrived to pray that the Holy Spirit come upon the baptized:

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, 'Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' But Peter said to

*him, "Your money **perish with you, because you thought** that the gift of God could be purchased with money!*

*You have no part or share in this ministry, because **your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps He will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are **poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity****' (Acts 8:18-23).*

Simon's heart was wicked from God's holy perspective. The thoughts of his heart were tainted by the pollution of bitterness. He was captive to sin which had been fed by pride and worldly values.

If you hold bitterness toward another person, then you have failed to grasp the depth of the sin that you needed to be forgiven. Remember, it only took *one sin* of any of us for Jesus to willingly pay the death penalty we each deserve. Just one of our sins put Him on the cross so that we might be reconciled to our Father. In light of such sacrificial love, how can any of us be bitter toward another?

No bitter, unforgiving person can cooperate with the interests and purposes of our Lord Jesus. As we've written in our Hebraic Article, *Is Interpersonal Apprehension Hindering You From Experiencing The Love Of Jesus?*, bitterness often underlays co-dependent relationships. (See Diagram 1 on the next page.) The bitterness that's imprisoning the heart of each person nullifies the atoning work of Jesus on the cross on their behalf. The bitter person's refusal to forgive means that the Father will not forgive them.

How does disloyalty lodge within a person's heart? As we'll discuss, an **Independent Spirit** and a **Wounded Spirit** lead to the foul fruit of **Bitterness**.



Various forms of bitterness can plague the unforgiving. The most common and hurtful type is **begrudging bitterness**, which is manifested by seething resentment. [See Teaching E-mail 10. *Apprehension: The Silent Destroyer*, for more on begrudging bitterness.]

However, keep this caveat in mind: Any form of bitterness reveals pride, a motive which compels our Father to oppose its holder (see James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). As we warned in our Hebraic Article, *The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*, our Father will not consummate His Covenant with a bitter person who refuses to forgive.

In co-dependent relationships, all who have allowed the unrighteous relational prison to go on have missed the grace Jesus offers them (Hebrews 12:15). As a result, in one way or another, all those involved have defiled themselves with begrudging bitterness. Unable to love in spirit and in truth, their bitterness traps them in the prison of co-dependency. They may be together, but their relations are mired in fear and bitterness rather than infused with loyalty.

Note: Because of the lack of emphasis on *sanctification* within western Christendom, vast numbers of marriages and families are held together not by love or loyalty, but by fear and apprehension (co-dependence). So few evidence the love defined in 1 Corinthians 13 as the hallmark of those who follow Jesus as their Lord and King.

Let's revisit bitter Simon the Sorcerer who couldn't see the depth of his own sin. Peter's instructions to him were pointed: "*Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord.*" However, the unrepentant Simon wanted neither the righteous requirement to turn from his sinful wickedness nor the relational responsibility of an authentic walk in Jesus. Instead, he sidestepped by calling upon the apostle to do it in his place: "*Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me*" (Acts 8:24).

Over the years various Christians have asked us, "Would you pray that I would *repent*?" This request is as deceitful as it is unscriptural! Whenever someone asks you to pray that they'd repent, in their pride they have no intention of repenting! They may not like the consequences of their willful sin, but they're still captive to enjoying it.

If they truly intended to turn away from their sin and turn to God for forgiveness and reconciliation — *biblical repentance* — their burdened hearts would drive them to respond to the Spirit and repent.

"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them”
(Romans 1:18,19).

The above passage has particular application to the begrudgingly bitter. What has God *made plain* about Himself? His eternal power and identity as the only true God. He commands His people to love Him as their God, and to pass that love along to others in the way they want to be loved themselves (Matthew 22:37-40). This is the truth that the unrighteous suppress in order to hold onto their dark attitudes toward others.

Our God, ever true to His Word, keeps those who are deliberately disobedient in their bitter unforgiveness under His wrath — a prison of emotional torture (Matthew 18:34,35). But there’s good news! The bitter person has the key to free him/herself by humbly and trustingly turning to Jesus for the power to love God and others as they want to be loved.

Among the thousands we’ve ministered to over the years, the number one source of bitterness is a person’s parent(s). Unresolved bitterness toward parent(s) is the root from which other unforgiveness springs. NO healing can occur until

the bitter person completely and without reservation fulfills the command of God to “forgive” (Matthew 6:15) — and only by the grace of our Lord Jesus can that occur.

Intensity of heart and will is needed to have the kind of relationship with Lord Jesus that brings about His healing: *“You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with **all your heart**”* (Jeremiah 29:13; see also Hebrews 11:6). You can never heal yourself, but you *can* purpose to forgive and cast off that bitter spirit.

When Jesus sees that you take the command to forgive seriously, He will begin to heal your emotions. It is only then that you can say, **“My parents did the best they could with what they had going for themselves.”** With this emotional release of understanding, the bitterness no longer has a foothold.

Never forget that your particular parents birthed you as an act of God. You were conceived as an egg and a sperm that He ordained to come together. You may find that you can’t fully trust Him until you settle that *He* gave you to the parents you have.

(See Diagram 2 below to help you be free of bitterness and receive blessing in its place.)

DIAGRAM 2

Turning Bitterness to Blessing

Comparison of the Hebraic and Nicolaitan Approaches

[From Lesson 31 of *Discussing How to Restore the Early Church*]

Hebraic: The Bible mandates that you forgive from your heart *without exception*; to belong to Jesus *is* to forgive. Forgiveness gets you out of *negative* territory on the chart to ‘0’. The emotional healing accomplished by Jesus occurs as you enter *positive* territory through prayer for, and good deeds toward, the one who has hurt you. The further a forgiving person goes into positive territory, the less likely that bitterness will return.

Unforgiveness										Forgiveness										Blessing									
-100	-90	-80	-70	-60	-50	-40	-30	-20	-10	0	+10	+20	+30	+40	+50	+60	+70	+80	+90	+100									
seeing bitterness, hatred, begrudging, resentment										prayer for, compassion, acts of love and kindness																			

Nicolaitanism: Forgiveness is optional, and bitterness is seldom confronted; past circumstances such as *“abuse”* and *“dysfunctional family”* are cited as grounds for not forgiving. The unforgiving arrogantly believe their offender has to ask forgiveness first. Few even get back to ‘0’; those who do usually return to negative territory—unforgiveness.

Something to memorize

Like all human beings, you'll find your feelings hurt by others from time to time. Just remember, your unforgiveness puts the other person into a relational prison in which you're unable to bless them or be available as our Lord's instrument in their life. For holding on to this bitterness and resisting the grace to forgive, God puts you into a dungeon to be tortured (as noted before, see Matthew 18:23-35).

Your forgiveness is the key to freeing both you and the one who has offended you. You need to humbly lean on the power of Jesus to forgive someone from your heart. If you try to do it in your own strength, you'll march right back into your prison cell at the first sniff of perceived offense.

Keep this pattern of reflection in mind when your feelings are hurt by other people:

1. Did the person do it with malicious intent, or did he/she hurt you unintentionally? The vast majority of hurt feelings are caused by unintentional acts. In fact, your offender may even be unaware that an offense has occurred!
2. If they are unaware and haven't asked your forgiveness, do you have the grace to just forgive them in your heart and walk away from it? (1 Peter 4:8)
3. If you won't be able to let go of it, then you need to go to the person to clear up the matter or else forever shut your mouth. If you don't do this, you'll tell others what happened, causing you to sin through slander and gossip.

The Slide Into Disloyalty

"For you, brothers, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other."

(Galatians 5:15)

On the next page you'll find Diagram 3, *The Slide Into Disloyalty*. You'll notice that there are two inner attitudes that predispose a person toward disloyalty: an **Independent Spirit** and a **Wounded Spirit**. These two attitudes confound the foundations needed to become more Christ-like.

Our Lord Jesus ordained that His followers live like parts of a human body, each one lovingly serving the interests of others (1 Corinthians 12). A person who is controlled by an Independent Spirit can be around other people, but NEVER fully belongs to them. With little concern for how they adversely affect others, a person oppressed by an Independent Spirit is truly a bull in a china shop.

If you're influenced by a Wounded Spirit, you're plagued by a "woe is me" attitude. Many of your motivations and actions compensate for your painful self-pity, and you can't trust Jesus enough to turn to His power to heal your heart (Isaiah 53:5; Luke 7:22,23). In a sense, holding onto a wounded spirit is a form of pride in which Jesus has no viable place in your life beyond lip service.

Example Of A Husband's Disloyalty

Our Father created women with fast-moving mental capabilities that make them both intuitive and impulsive.

DIAGRAM 3

The Slide Into Disloyalty

Satan thrives on disloyalty. After all, his key objective is to *destroy relationships* between both man and God, and man with his fellow man. An emotionally isolated person is easy for him to manipulate to extend his domain into the hearts of others. It only takes two inward attitudes for you to become Satan's agent: an **Independent Spirit** and a **Wounded Spirit**.

An *Independent Spirit* causes you to act with little or no consideration of how your actions affect others. A *Wounded Spirit* causes you to focus primarily on your own hurt feelings, again with no regard for how you are hurting others. Your motivations and actions are aimed at compensating for your "Woe is me" feelings.

Underline the symptoms that apply to you:

1. Independent Spirit

- You're overly concerned with your own rights;
- You use people for personal ambitions;
- You have wrong expectations about others;
- You're frequently frustrated and annoyed by the perceived failure of others to meet your needs or demands.

2. Wounded Spirit

- You're habitually plagued by feeling sorry for yourself;
- You're filled with distrust toward authority figures and avoid them whenever possible;
- You often require detailed instructions to do a task and still fail to completely follow them;
- You have difficulty establishing biblical priorities;
- You are generally more focused on completing tasks than being concerned for people's morale;
- You may be friendly, but you keep relationships emotionally distant;
- Around others your positive emotional support for them is minimal;
- You refuse to get close enough to anyone to be accountable;
- You readily acknowledge your shortcomings (confession), but don't change (repentance);
- You often exaggerate how you were hurt in the past to make yourself look innocent, so it's harder to restore an impaired relationship.

Both an Independent Spirit and a Wounded Spirit are the essential ingredients needed for you to learn how to be disloyal. Your suspicious inward focus keeps you from recognizing (or caring about) how your attitude is hurting others around you. Sadly, you end up enticing others into disloyalty as well. Since the disloyal don't trustingly turn to Jesus for the emotional healing **ONLY** He can give, these *seemingly needy* people are used by Satan to recruit others into their bitter prison of hurt feelings.

How You Rally Discontent and Woundedness In Others

- You readily sympathize with and incite others who have a Wounded Spirit (see the tactics of Absalom in 2 Samuel 15:2);
- You are most comfortable with others who are also in bondage to a Wounded Spirit (co-dependence) because they won't dissuade you from continuing in your ways;
- Your relationship is based on mutual commiseration, and you often take up their offense against others even though the others have not hurt you;
- You hinder others from fully turning to Jesus in loving, obedient trust;
- Everything in your life is done on your terms and your time frame, which breeds disloyalty. Neither you nor those in your relational realm choose to cooperate or be inconvenienced on behalf of others, so any sense of belonging evaporates.

Research has proven this out. The cord that connects the two hemispheres of the brain, the corpus callosum, is larger in women than in men so females can more speedily process information.

As women simultaneously access both sides of their brain, they're able to immediately recall past experiences from both hemispheres and come to rapid conclusions. But this ability can be a terrible detriment *if* it's combined with an unredeemed sin nature and any persistent demonic strongholds.

Have you thought about this? Women in general entertain more negative thoughts about themselves than men do. This is why a loving husband helps his wife overcome these nagging cares and worries (1 Peter 3:7). He not only helps her feel better about herself, but his encouraging intervention benefits their Covenant marital relationship.

A man who is controlled by an Independent and Wounded spirit will breed disloyalty in his marriage. Rather than intervening with warmth and encouragement, he'll use his wife's negative misgivings about herself against her. In other words, he controls his wife by fanning her feelings of guilt and her fear that she'll let him down in some way. This manipulation of his wife is diabolical! The strained facial expression on these emotionally abused women makes them look like prisoners of war.

(For more, see our July 2003 Newsletter, "*You Belong To Me*"; and May 2001 Newsletter, "*Jesus Versus The Queen Of Heaven*".)

Example Of A Wife's Disloyalty

When couples marry, they often don't completely grasp the commitment they're making to each other. Through the covenant of marriage a couple

belongs to each other in such a way that no one else should come between them. To help them grow in intimacy and loyalty, other relationships should do all they can to support the couple's relationship.

Sadly, in this nation too many wives share negative information about their husbands with other people — most often with their mother. And, too often the wife's mother sympathizes so deeply and detrimentally with her daughter that the resultant discontent leads to divorce!

We cite contemporary mothers-in-law because of the epidemic of destructive impact they are having in disrupting the peace of their daughters' homes. When a daughter complains to her mother about any dissatisfaction she has with her husband, the older woman will generally take the wife's side without even hearing the husband's perspective! This is gossip and slander, and puts BOTH women in a position of violating God's ways.

GOSSIP Sharing detrimental information about someone with those who are not part of the problem or the solution.

SLANDER Telling only part of the truth or error with the intent to cause hurt.

(For further discussion, see our July 2000 Newsletter, "*Lashon hara: Bad Mouthing*".)

Example Of Disloyalty In Children

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth"

(Ephesians 6:1-3).

In this nation, when many children become teenagers they begin to bad mouth their parents and listen to their friends do likewise. Over time they devel-

op a case of discontent against parents in general. This sour attitude often increases their peer-dependence and diminishes the righteous influence of their parents.

The fertile soil of gossip and slander against parents is often where an Independent Spirit and a Wounded Spirit become fully developed in teens. These attitudes fester long into adulthood, often providing the seed for marriage problems. And, true to His Word, our God makes sure nothing goes well for them because they have dishonored their parents.

Loyalty Is Experienced

One of the deepest forms of loyalty we can demonstrate for others is to help them meet their seven God-given needs. As we've described in our workbook, *Demolishing Strongholds* (a free down-

load), once the strongholds have been demolished, the seven needs must be met in order to keep the strongholds from coming back.

In order to help others, you need to spend a considerable amount of time in prayer yourself asking our Lord Jesus for insight and wisdom into how you can help meet their needs. Your efforts will help fill in the old, ungodly ruts of attitude and behavior that the strongholds induced.

Your loving willingness to be Jesus' agent in filling in these ruts by helping to meet another's needs is one of the most endearingly loyal things you can ever do. But keep in mind that this will require sacrifice and inconvenience that only the grace of Jesus can give you! Are you willing?

DIAGRAM 4

How well are your God-given needs being met?

If you and those close to you are free from strongholds, it is imperative that you help each other meet your seven God-given needs in the manner our Lord has ordained. Remember that one source of strongholds in your lives is a result of trying to meet one or more of these needs *apart* from God's will for you. Strongholds will return if meeting these needs goes unfulfilled. One facet of true loyalty is helping those close to you meet these needs as appropriate. (For further discussion, see Chapter 1 of *Demolishing Strongholds*.)

Below, circle the level at which you think your God-given needs are being met.

Need

Need	Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Not At All
<i>Dignity</i>	Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Not At All
<i>Authority</i>	Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Not At All
<i>Blessing & Provision</i>	Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Not At All
<i>Security</i>	Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Not At All
<i>Purpose & Meaning</i>	Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Not At All
<i>Freedom & Boundary</i>	Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Not At All
<i>Intimate Love & Companionship</i>	Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Not At All

If you're stronghold-free, list ways in which others can help you meet these needs. Share your list with those who are close to you.
