

Loyalty

By Hendrik Joubert

As a boy growing up loyalty was very important to me. Over the years I had a few bosom friends, a phrase referring to the type of friendship John had with Jesus. I cannot remember if the story of David and Jonathan had anything to do with it, but it was very important to me that I showed loyalty to my special friends. Although I desired for them to be loyal also, I did not demand it. I often found myself disappointed.

What if you could find that one special friend, the one you would go through that blood brothers type ceremony and never be disappointed? One whom you know you could always depend on to be there for you? It is much more appealing to be there for someone you know will be there for you. I have had one friend whose father came out to help me when I really needed it. We are still close friends today, long after his father passed away. Then there was a brother in Christ who asked me did I really expect him to drive 20 miles to come to my aid? I would run that distance - and more - to help any person in need. During my life there was more than one time where I was alone, wishing I had someone to turn to for help in this life. On one such an occasion I made the resolution to be there for people who find themselves in such a position, whenever I had the opportunity. (Consider this an invitation.)

One of the most disturbing passages of Scripture to me reads: Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. ²⁴ *But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,* ²⁵ *and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.* (John 2:23-25.)

I find this passage disturbing as I look back over my life. Instead of feeling good about the times I was able to help others, it is the times I failed my Lord that keeps me from feeling good. If there is anyone who gave me the motivation to be loyal to Him, it is the Lord: ⁶ *For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.* ⁷ *For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.* ⁸ *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* ⁹ *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.* ¹⁰ *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.* ¹¹ *And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.* (Romans 5:6-11). And I felt badly about my friends not returning the loyalty?

Why are we so capable of seeing the splinter in our brother's eye - past the beam in our eye? Why do we consider the weaknesses of a brother spiritual weakness, while ours was temptation not common to man? Why was there a way out for him, but not for us? (1 Corinthians 10:13) Why do we criticize Judas, Peter and Thomas while we are able to remember times when we have denied the Lord? Why do we emphasize the grace of God at the expense of resisting the devil so he may flee from us? (James 4:7).

Let us in true humility (Matthew 5:3) realize who and what we are in the light of the Scriptures. (James 1:23-35) Let us fully understand our sinfulness so that we may be reduced to mourning (Matthew 5:4; James 4:8-10) so that we may find true comfort as we meekly and gently (Matthew 5:5) approach God so we may learn of His grace, offering us salvation. Let us hunger and thirst (Matthew 5:6) after His righteousness and learn of His mercy - so we would be merciful to our brother. (Matthew 5:7). Let us do everything with a pure heart, and not merely for what we may stand

to get from it. (*Matthew 5:8*) Let us worship God in spirit and in truth. (*John 4:24*). Let us go out to preach the gospel of peace to our neighbor so he may have peace with God. (*Ephesians 6:15*)

Let us resolve to, with the help of our Lord, become the light of the world and the salt of the earth. (*Matthew 5:13-15*) Let us become loyal servants of Christ who are serious about being transformed by the renewing of our minds. (*Romans 12:2*) Let us present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is our spiritual service of worship. (*Romans 12:1*)