

# The LOYALTY and FRIENDSHIP of OUR GOD

The word loyalty brings to mind a powerful sense of belonging, fidelity and oneness. Oneness, is stronger than being in unity. It is an agreement among individuals who have a common interest. It is a wholehearted fellowship coupled with unswerving devotion and duty to someone or some thing.

In the Bible this means to be in and to have, a pure relationship with someone – especially with our God. It means that our very being is thoroughly committed to a certain cause or to someone – our God. It is a choice made by an individual. It means that everything they are, their entire life, is totally given to that someone that they chose to give their very life to.

It is a “quality” decision made by an individual. In essence it is as if they are married. Yes, even though it may seem strange to some, that is what a marriage is all about. It is being loyal and faithful to the one you chose to marry. It is “two becoming one.”

This was the type of decision that we see in the book of Joshua that Joshua actually made to the Lord in front of all the people. Joshua made his decision and declared it for all to hear concerning who he was going to be totally loyal, faithful and committed to.

In Joshua 24:15, Joshua declares, *“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, **choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.**”*

This type of loyalty is expressed to us by Jesus as He takes His followers back to the two most basic and fundamental aspects of God and His Law, *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength,”* and *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”* (Mark 12:29-31) This is the loyalty, faithfulness and commitment to the Lord, our God, that each of us must live by.

This type of loyalty was first brought forth to man by our living God. He declared to Moses in Deuteronomy 7:9, *“Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which*

*keeps covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations...*” God declares that He is faithful and He will be loyal to those who choose to keep His covenant with Him.

The definition of the term “loyalty” or “loyal,” is as follows: It is a total faithfulness and it is being totally committed or obligated to someone or something.” It is interesting to note that the word “loyal” or “loyalty” are actually not found in any verse in the King James version of the Bible. The word that is commonly used is the word “faithful.”

We see the term faithful used throughout the scriptures. As we stated previously, in Deuteronomy 7:9, it tells us that God **IS** God and that He **IS** faithful. In our English language this literally means that God is so very, very loyal to all of His people. God will keep all of His promises. God will keep His Word!!!

In other words, God is committed to each one of His people, to each one who has made Jesus their personal Savior and Lord. This means that our God is totally committed to the fact that He will keep us in, and through, every single trial or situation that we may find ourselves in. It doesn't mean that we will not go through difficult moments or difficult circumstances. However, it does promise us that our God will be with us as we go through those times.

This is very interesting. We have all gone through situations that it seemed as if our God was no where near us. Yes, it may have seemed that way. Yet, the fact of the matter is that our God is always with His people – in the good times and in the difficult times. He is always there!!! Why? It is because God is always faithful to His Word and ultimately, His people.

However, we must note that in Deuteronomy 7:9 it also states that there is a condition that God states to those that He will be loyal to. You see, it is a two way street. It also says in that same scripture that, yes, God will be our God, however, He can only do this if we keep the covenant that He made with us.

Notice, that it tells us that He will always be our God. However, there is one minor condition. This scripture also states, that He will be God to those who, “...***keeps covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations...***” Wow!!! You see, our relationship with our God is a two way street. God will be our God but we

need to also love our God and choose to allow Him to be our God. We show and express our love for our God by keeping His commandments – loving Him and loving others!!!

We know that simply trying to keep God's commandments will not bring us back into relationship with the one and only true and everlasting God. That only can happen when we accept Jesus as our Savior by believing all that He did on the cross. That He went to the pit of hell in our place by taking all of our sin upon Him. That Jesus defeated satan and took the keys of death and life away from him. But Jesus wasn't done. Jesus then rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father, waiting to return once again.

Now, because of all that Jesus did for us, we choose to make Him, not only our Savior, but now you and I choose to make Him our Lord- the absolute, supreme and final authority in our life. Yes, we do have a part in it all. It is not just accepting all that Jesus did for us, but now it is choosing to make Him our Lord and yielding to the ways of our God within my life.

That is where loyalty comes in. God desires loyalty from all of His people. In the Old Testament, God had made it clear that *"...if you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed."* (Deuteronomy 8:19) What this meant was that if anyone chose or chooses not to follow after God and His ways, there would be a consequence – destruction – and ultimately – death, both physically and spiritually. In other words there would be a total separation between God and man.

However, now through Jesus, we are able to enter into and have a deeper and even greater personal relationship with our God. He is not just our God but He is now our Father, our Abba Father. For the true believer, we now have the promise that even if we are at times faithless, he will remain faithful, for he will not disown Himself to us. (2 Timothy 2:13)

That is how much He has chosen to love His people through Jesus. However, that should not give us a license to be disloyal. Rather, it should encourage each one of us to know how much God truly now loves His people that it should encourage each of us to be absolutely loyal and faithful to God our Father and all His ways. We need to also know that the Word tell us that those who prove to be disloyal to God are those who prove that they do not truly belong to Him (1 John 3:24). Hmmm...

Yes, loyalty and faithfulness are the very same thing. Faithfulness means that we are absolutely loyal and will remain totally loyal to God and all of His ways, even to my own hurt. That is what true loyalty and faithfulness represent. They both mean that, if necessary, we are to give our lives for our God and for His people, as well.

Yes, I did say that. We must understand that now as a child of God, my life is no longer my own. My life is for my God. The commandments of God are true. Jesus stated that the first commandment is to love our God but that the second was just like the first, we are to love others. This means that these two commandments are equal to each other. We all are aware of this when we talk about love. However, I am speaking also about loyalty.

When we speak of loyalty, we therefore are speaking about being loyal to God but also it should be that we are to be loyal and faithful to each other. If we are to love God and therefore, we are to love others, then the same holds true about being loyal to each other. Oh boy!!! That seemed to have come out of no where!!! Well, lets see...

We must know that the Word is very clear on this aspect of the believer's life. In our relationships with one another, we are called to a steadfast love and therefore, loyalty to each other. John 15:13 tells us, "*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.*" That is what true loyalty and what true love, truly is!!!

Being loyal, however, does not always mean that you are to be in agreement with each other. This is where true loyalty comes in to play. Let's say when another child of God is doing something incorrect, true loyalty to that person would be to go and tell that person that they are doing something wrong or incorrect. This may be difficult but yet it encompasses what true loyalty is. It is love in action!!!

Isn't this what we all expect the Holy Spirit to do with us. When we are doing something that is incorrect we expect, and even though it may be difficult, we want the Holy Spirit to tell us where we are going wrong. The thing is, sometimes the Holy Spirit will cause another believer to be used to tell us that we are incorrect. That is where loyalty to God on our part comes into play. Are we going to listen to God, even if it comes from another person or are we going to go our own way? Hmmm.....

Believe it or not, we are not always correct in everything we do. That is why we need each other in the Body of Christ. We need to work together. We need to be there for each other and to know that I am not always correct in what I may be doing or thinking. We need God and sometimes God will use others to bring the correction to us. Will we be open to it?

That is the difficult part for many of us. Especially those who are in leadership. We all are never correct in every and all situations we may be in – even though we may think we are. That is why we need everyone in the Body of Christ. No one is above or smarter than anyone else when it comes to the things of God. No one knows it all. We can learn from each other.

Hey, even in the scriptures we see that God used a donkey to speak to Balaam to tell him not to go on in his journey because destruction was ahead. We read of this account in Numbers 22:23-33. The scriptures tell us that three times Balaam beat the donkey because the donkey had seen the angel of Lord in their pathway and wanted to protect Balaam from what was awaiting him – destruction, unless Balaam changed his ways.

The donkey then was given a voice to speak to Balaam who was refusing to see what was ahead – his death. In Numbers 22:28-30, the Lord gave the donkey a voice to actually speak to Balaam to tell him what was waiting on ahead. Because of this donkey's actions, Balaam's life was spared. Wow!!! That was loyalty in action...even shown to us through a donkey!!!  
Hmmm.....

Unfortunately, many of the church's leaders are just like Balaam. Their actions are leading them to destruction and many times they are refusing to hear from other people who may seem to be as "donkeys" to those leaders, yet they may be seeing something that the leadership is missing or not seeing. They are trying to be loyal to their leaders but many times they are just cast aside.

This brings us to the next step of loyalty. Loyalty is surrounded and secured by friendship. God calls those that are faithful and loyal to Him, His friends. We see in Isaiah 41:8 that Abraham was called a "friend of God." This actually means, "*Abraham, who loved Me.*" Abraham showed his love for God through his faith accompanied by obedience (Genesis 12:1, 4; 15:6). He was more than an acquaintance of God and more than a companion. He was truly a friend of God.

Abraham's friendship with God was based on God's everlasting covenant with Abraham and by Abraham's faith in accepting that covenant. Through Jesus, each one of us are not just God's child, which is wonderful, but also we are now "friends" of God. James 2:23 tell us, *"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."*

Through Jesus, we are now "friends of God." Through the righteousness, the right standing, that we now have through our faith in Jesus we are now friends of God. We have a true relationship with our God. Not only are we His children but we are also His friend – each one of us!!! Praise the Lord!!!

We have all heard that the "best friend" is a friend who will always remain loyal through the good times and the difficult times. Well, that is the relationship we have with our God. God is our Father and we are His children. However, God is also our friend and we are His friends. Friendship is not schizophrenic. Scripture says that "...**a friend loves at all times**" (Proverbs 17:17), bad times included. God loves us at all times. What about us????!!! Do we love our God, even when times seem difficult?

However, as stated previously, the beautiful thing is that those of us who have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord are already more than friends of God. We are adopted into the family of God and are children of God. As God's friends and as God's children, we are to be totally, 100% loyal to our God and all of His ways.

The Bible is clear, God, the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit is the "...*friend who stays closer than a brother.*" (Proverbs 18:24) Our God is so very faithful and loyal to all of us, His children. All of His promises to His children are "...*yea and Amen.*" (2Corinthians 1:20) And yes, we are also His friends. As His children and as His friends, we must always remain loyal and faithful unto Him. *"For He is our God and we the people of His pasture..."* (Psalm 95:7)