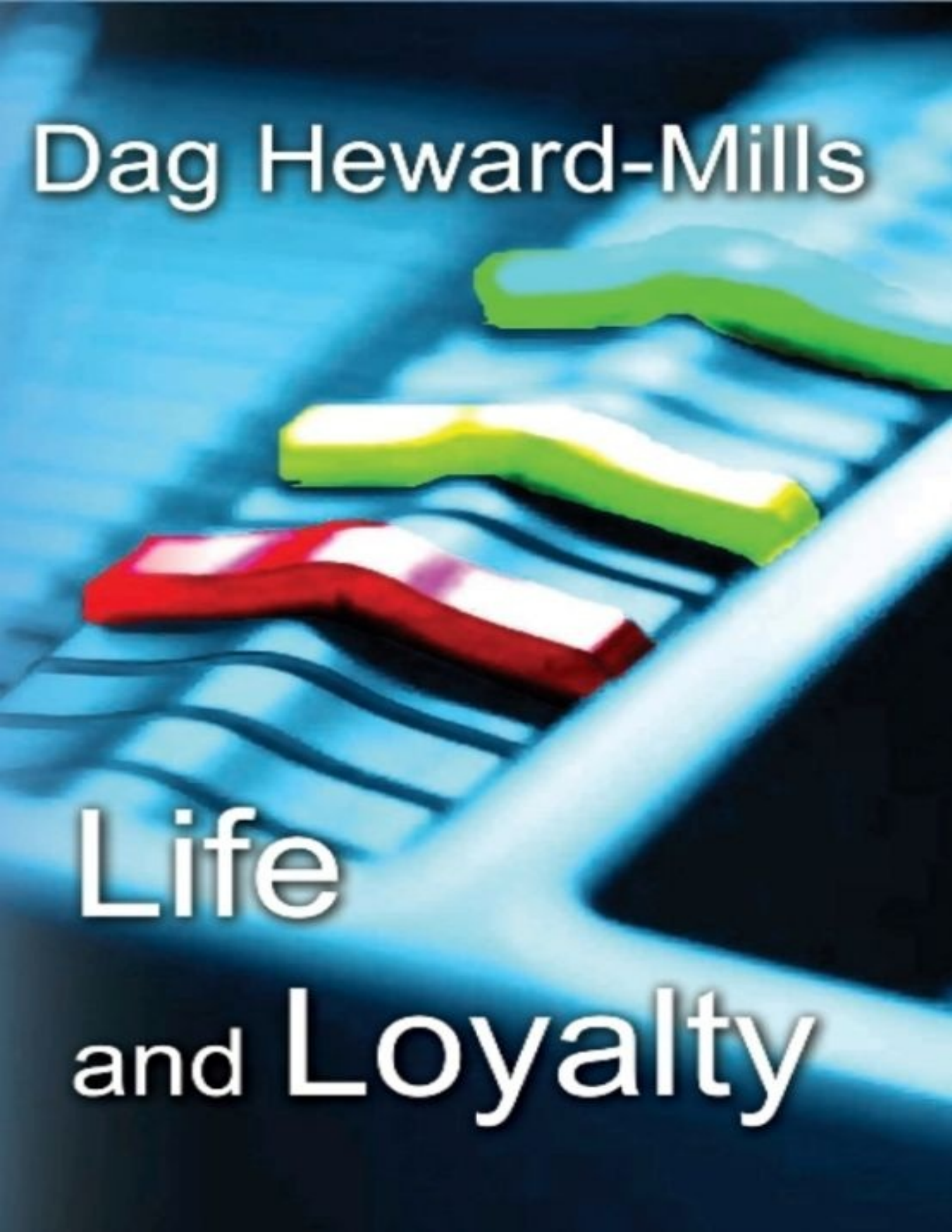

Dag Heward-Mills
Life
and Loyalty

Life And Loyalty

by Dag Heward-Mills

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Very early in the ministry, I came to the conclusion that disloyalty and its associated evils are the most destructive weapons in the devil's armoury.

More churches are destroyed by the work of disloyalty and its ramifications than by anything else I know! I found that out first-hand in the first year of my ministry.

My fledgling ministry experienced a satanic attack through conspiracy, accusations, fault- finding, slander and breakaways. I have never seen as much confusion as I saw in those days.

That is why teaching on the subject of loyalty is so vital. Consider now these statutes or rules of loyalty.

1. No matter what you do, some people will be disloyal.

No matter what you do, some people will become disloyal in the process of time - so pray that it will not be you! This is what a pastor friend of mine said and I agree wholeheartedly with him. Work on yourself so that you do not fall prey to the deceptions that lead to disloyalty.

Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

John 6:70,71

Jesus asked a very important question, "Have I not chosen you?" Jesus chose Judas Himself. He had selected him from among many others.

Before Jesus took His final decision as to who

should be His apostles, He went up to a mountain and prayed all night. Many of us do not take such care when making important decisions.

And it came to pass in those days, that he went out

into a mountain to pray, and CONTINUED ALL

NIGHT IN PRAYER to God.

And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples; and OF THEM HE CHOSE TWELVE, whom also he named apostles;

Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew

his brother, James and John, Philip and

Bartholomew,

Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus,

and Simon called Zelotes,

And Judas the brother of James, AND JUDAS

ISCARIOT, WHICH WAS ALSO THE TRAITOR.

Luke 6:12-16

I want you to notice how much care Jesus took

when He chose the apostles. Did you know that

the apostles were chosen out of a larger group of

disciples? What else could He do to prevent

betrayal and disloyalty? **What could go wrong**

when a leader as wise and as anointed as Jesus

takes a decision? What could go wrong when a leader spends so much time in prayer? Even so, something went very wrong!

Three and a half years later, Jesus was betrayed by one of these apostles. If this happened to Jesus, it can happen to you! You are not greater than your master!

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

John 15:20

No matter your leadership abilities or strategies, some disloyalty is virtually inevitable. One out of the twelve disciples was a traitor. This is why I say that disloyalty cannot be prevented per se. However, it can be minimized greatly.

A good leader should be conscious of this

principle. When you know that someone from

within may one day fight you, you will be more

careful about how you conduct your affairs. It is

a very sobering thought to think that a familiar

friend you eat with could one day turn against

you. Such people may take things you said out of

context to misrepresent you. *They may re-*

describe events to give a wrong impression.

Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

Psalm 41:9

When you are conscious of the fact that potential traitors are in your midst today, you conduct your affairs with even greater circumspection!

When you are aware that there is bound to be

a traitor, you take extra precautions to ensure that

you do not become that traitor!

2. Teaching is immunization against disloyalty.

Teaching cannot totally prevent disloyalty but can minimize it greatly.

Teaching is like primary health care that seeks to tackle health issues from the preventive point of view.

In September 1978, the International Conference on Primary Health Care met in Alma-Ata, and defined primary health care nicely.

Primary health care includes at least:

EDUCATION concerning prevailing health problems and the methods of preventing and controlling them; PROMOTION OF FOOD SUPPLY and proper nutrition; an adequate supply of SAFE WATER and BASIC SANITATION; maternal and child health care, including family planning; IMMUNIZATION against the major infectious diseases; prevention and CONTROL OF LOCALLY ENDEMIC DISEASES; appropriate treatment of common diseases and injuries; and provision of essential drugs (caps mine).

Primary health care was to form an integral part of the country's health system and become the central function and main focus. Health workers have realized that the mainstay of successful medicine is in the preventive dimension. You will notice that primary health care involves providing education, safe water, basic sanitation, immunization and a reliable food supply. These measures are very good at improving the

health of the nation. They are also much cheaper to provide than costly surgical treatments.

I have said all this to say that the Church must see the wisdom in preventing spiritual problems.

We must rise up and provide a good supply of

food and spiritual immunization. Spiritual

immunization involves teaching directly and

unambiguously against disloyalty, betrayal, rebellion and ingratitude. Some pastors do not like facing issues head on.

Immunization is not an injection that generally treats all diseases. It is a direct attack on a specific disease with the intention of preventing it.

Primary health care has not eradicated all diseases because, it cannot. However, it has definitely reduced the incidence of certain diseases. It has improved the general health of many nations. God has shown us the way to prevent the destruction of His church. Let us embrace the wisdom of God and it will take us forward. Let us teach faithfulness and loyalty until the deception of rebellion is eradicated.

3. Teachings on loyalty must be remembered in the hour of temptation.

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, SATAN

HATH DESIRED TO HAVE YOU, that he may sift you as wheat:

But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

And he said unto him, Lord, I AM READY TO GO

WITH THEE, BOTH INTO PRISON, AND TO

DEATH.

And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not

crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Luke 22:31-34

Like with all temptations, it is important to

remember the things we have learnt when it

really matters. I have heard people make

profound declarations of commitment. That is

exactly what Peter did. *But when it really*

mattered, Peter forgot all the things he had said.

You must remember the things you say. You must remember the pronouncements you make both in public and in private.

Of what use is a husband who says sweet

words at his wedding reception but forgets them

two years later? Of what use is a man who says on his wedding night, “I will love you forever” but dumps you after seven years? Forever does not mean seven years! Forever means forever! You must remember the letters you write. It is easy to write things and to make promises. But it seems we all have a tendency to forget what we have said in the past.

Thank God, Peter had a second chance. Peter was the most vocal apostle. Everyone remembered Peter’s declarations. All four Gospels record this incident and that is significant.

You must realize that the writers of the Gospel did not always record the same events. For instance, Matthew, Mark and Luke recorded practically the same healings. They all recorded the healing of the woman with the issue of blood. But John, the writer of the fourth Gospel, did not. John recorded a number of healings. But most of the healings he recorded, such as the noble man’s son in John chapter four, the lame man at the pool of Bethesda in chapter five, the blind man in chapter nine and the raising of Lazarus from the dead in chapter eleven were not recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke.

However, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John did remember the incident of Peter’s betrayal vividly. That is why it is reported consistently in the four Gospels.

People will remember you by the things you said. Be careful to remember your commitment in the hour of temptation. You must be loyal to your promises. You must be loyal to your own words and pronouncements. You must be loyal to your written words.

Many of the people who have been disloyal to me in life and in ministry, said many positive things to me in the past. They were often the most vocal in their expression of commitment. I remember the things they said to me as though it were yesterday. They truly encouraged me at that time. As the years have gone by, I have become a little unimpressed with what people say. Like Jesus, my attitude is more of wait and see. Let's see what you will say when things get rough. I pray for my children in the Lord, that they will be stable and faithful to the end.

Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together. Peter sat down among them.

But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

And he denied him, saying, WOMAN, I KNOW

HIM NOT. [First Denial]

And after a little while another saw him, and said,

Thou art also of them. And Peter said, MAN, I AM

NOT. [Second Denial]

And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.

And Peter said, MAN, I KNOW NOT WHAT

THOU SAYEST. [Third Denial] And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And

Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Luke 22:54-62

Be a man of honour. Stand by your words. If you said you would be faithful to the end, then do so. Be a woman of virtue. Do not be erratic, unpredictable and wavering. It is in the hour of temptation that you must remember your sweet words of commitment.

4. Your loyalty is first to Jesus Christ.

For there stood by me this night the angel of God,

WHOSE I AM, AND WHOM I SERVE.

Acts 27:23

The Apostle Paul in the midst of his crisis,

announced to everyone that he belonged to God and that he served the Lord. This fact must be at the forefront of every minister's mind. You are the Lord's, you have been bought with a price and you are to serve only God. If you are a minister of God, your service must be to God and not to politics or any other such thing.

A politician once approached me and asked for my support for his party.

I told him, "I have learnt a few lessons in my short life. I cannot support you or any other party per se. I am a pastor and not a politician. No one should try to turn me into a politician for his own gain. I cannot give my support to you just because you ask for it or because you claim to be a Christian."

I encouraged him, "If you tow the line of truth, freedom and justice, you will naturally gain the support of Christians. I cannot give myself and my church wholesale to any political group." I do not belong to any political group; I belong to God! I belong to God and I serve God!

…**whose I am, and whom I serve,**

Acts 27:23

5. A loyal person does not destroy what he builds.

For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

Galatians 2:18

There are many destroyers in the church.

Many years ago, a large programme was organized on the university campus with the aim of winning all the unbelievers to Christ. A great man of God was invited as the main speaker for this programme. The crowds gathered in the Great Hall of the university. There was an air of expectancy on campus. To our surprise, when this man of God preached, he lashed out at Charismatic Christians. He made a mockery of prayer meetings that were being held in the botanical gardens of the university.

He said, “Christians are roaring like lions.” He commented that no one could meditate peacefully in the gardens because the Charismatics were *roaring like lions*. This generated peals of laughter from the assembled students. He continued to emphasize that loud prayer in the gardens was superfluous and backward.

The people who had prayed for the souls to be saved and for the programme were being ridiculed. Maybe he forgot that Jesus prayed with loud cries and tears.

During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered

up PRAYERS AND PETITIONS WITH LOUD

CRIES AND TEARS to the one who could save him

from death, and he was heard…

Hebrews 5:7(NIV)

Very few people were saved in those meetings! How would unbelievers be attracted to Christ when the pastor was taunting and sneering at Christians? We cannot destroy what we are trying to build.

There was no significant addition to the Body of Christ. The destructive words cancelled all the efforts to build.

When pastors who claim to be called to the

ministry deride and denigrate other ministers, I

ask whether they are building or destroying the

Body of Christ. **Choose whether you are a builder or destroyer and stay within your calling.**

The most wicked and destructive statements I have ever heard about the

Body of Christ have come from pastors.

Ministers spread reprehensible stories about each other. They ridicule one another privately and from their pulpits. They blacken the reputation of other ministers; then on Sunday morning they mount their pulpits and try to build the Body they have destroyed during the week. Do not break down somebody's house in order to build yours. You will only reap what you sow!

Do not break down someone else's church in

order to build yours. How do you destroy a church? With your mouth, of course! Let us choose whether we are building or destroying.

Chapter 2

Three Principles of Loyalty

1. Loyalty exposes wrongdoers to the leadership.

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife.

1 Corinthians 5:1

Wrongdoers abound in every sphere of life. Wrongdoers abound at business places. When the manager is away, there are all sorts of people who do their own thing. They steal, cheat, under- invoice and over-invoice. The list is endless. Human beings have a way of stealing and cheating in almost every sphere of life. People are sent out to buy things and they return with inflated and unreal prices.

If such dishonest people are not under direct supervision, you can imagine the numerous evils that they will carry out.

A Loyal Person Keeps an Eye on Everything!

One loyal person will keep an eye on all these people. Once people know that there is someone who is loyal to the boss, they will often change their behaviour. They know that person will not withhold information. Such a person is worth a lot to the manager.

Loyal People Can Incur Hatred!

A truly loyal person does not mind what people think about him. He will expose every crooked activity to his superior. He is genuinely loyal to one person - the head. Loyalty is a sign of good character. However, a loyal person will sometimes incur the displeasure and hatred of the people he exposes. Remember the example of Joseph.

These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being

seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his

brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah,

and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: AND

JOSEPH BROUGHT UNTO HIS FATHER

THEIR EVIL REPORT.

Genesis 37:2

Joseph, the son of Jacob, was loyal to his father. He did not care what his brothers thought about him. He constantly reported the evil deeds of his brothers to their father. That is loyalty. Loyalty had its price - the hatred of his brothers.

Loyalty also had its rewards. Jacob developed a special affinity and love for Joseph in particular.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his

children…

Genesis 37:3

Unfortunately, there are many managing directors, leaders, presidents and pastors who do not know the value of a loyal person. They do not reward that loyal person for his loyalty. They treat loyal people as ordinary people. But Jacob valued his loyal son. I believe in placing value on loyalty.

…**and he made him a coat of many colours.**

Genesis 37:3

Jacob made a coat of many colours for Joseph.

What do you do for people who are loyal to you? We often get the impression that Jacob loved Joseph because he was the son of his old age.

That is true! But by studying this story you will

see how the loyalty of Joseph and the disloyalty of his brothers led to Jacob's special love for Joseph.

Dear leader, you will only discover your losses after the loyal people have left. As I watch other pastors and general overseers struggle with disloyal

branch pastors, I am so grateful to God for the loyal people He has given to me. You will make far more profit when you value a loyal person. Experience is good. Education and qualifications are great, but place a high premium on fidelity. Value someone who brings you true reports of what goes on behind your back.

I have been a leader for some time. I know that people put up their best behaviour when they see me. Because of my position, I see smiling faces and receive the warmest of greetings all the time. Sometimes these cheerful and supposedly nice people have been saying bad things about me. This happens to every leader.

That is why I value my loyal people. They are to me like Joseph was to Jacob.

Betrayal is a very common occurrence in this world. It is one of the most popular themes in the writing of books and in the making of films. Dear leader, dear pastor: Do not expect people to know how to behave. Many people do not know the implications of their actions. I have realized that many subordinates do not know the implications of withholding information. It is important to teach on the subject of loyalty. It is important to train people to report evil as the family of Chloe did in 1 Corinthians 1:11. Teach your followers that they will be rewarded for loyalty as Joseph was rewarded with a coat of many colours.

2. Loyalty is not compatible with murmuring.

Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

Philippians 2:14

Murmuring is when a person speaks about issues in undertones. People murmur because they feel that they cannot openly voice their opinions.

Someone said, “I am afraid to ask a question because if I do, I will be branded as disloyal.”

That is not correct! **A loyal person is**

someone who asks a lot of questions. A loyal

person is someone who finds out what he needs to know. It is the subtle scoffing attitude with which questions are sometimes asked that makes a person appear disloyal. But in reality, a genuine seeker of information is

not a disloyal person.

I encourage people to ask questions. In fact, I am more at ease with people who ask questions and make contributions. I feel very uneasy with people who have nothing to say or ask. It is not possible that you have no questions on your mind. God gave you a questioning and reasoning mind. Murmuring is an evil way of speaking.

A good leader must encourage questions and openness. Murmurers do not amount to much. They are discontented people with hearts of bitterness. The murmuring is just a manifestation of deep-seated feelings of hatred. I do not trust murmurers and neither does God.

And all the children of Israel MURMURED against

Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? And how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?

Numbers 14:2-4,11

The children of Israel murmured against Moses on several occasions. Murmuring is often a product of fear. Loyalty is not compatible with fear. The Bible says: “fear has torment” and “perfect love casts out fear”. It is likely that the children of Israel were afraid of Moses because of the spectacular signs and wonders that were associated with him.

There is no need to fear your leader. Be open and honest with him. Because the children of Israel did not approach Moses openly, they resorted to murmuring and that brought a curse upon them. Murmuring is like an evil spirit. The Bible teaches us not to murmur as the children of Israel murmured. Every disloyal person will be destroyed.

Disloyalty manifests itself through murmuring.

Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

1 Corinthians 10:10

Murmuring is a spirit. If you are a leader, watch closely for people who are always mumbling and whispering to each other. They speak to each other under their breath. When you ask them what they are talking about they say, “Oh, nothing much.”

Dear leaders, when people murmur, they are usually talking about you. Murmuring is like a cancer that doesn’t go away. It destroys the person and those around him. Gradually, that spirit pollutes everyone around.

You must get rid of all the murmurers in your group. I can tell you very plainly that I do not trust people who complain, murmur and speak under their breath. Notice God’s reaction to complaining and murmuring people.

And when the people complained, it DISPLEASED

the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his ANGER

was kindled and the FIRE of the Lord burnt among

them, and CONSUMED THEM…

Numbers 11:1

3. Loyalty requires a study of history.

In order to be loyal to a cause you need to be fully persuaded about the vision. Loyalty demands full persuasion.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy because certain people were criticising Paul to Timothy.

In order to encourage Timothy, Paul asked him to

remember nine different things about his (Paul’s)

life and ministry. Paul made this personal

reference because it had become necessary to

reassure Timothy.

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of

life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at

Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

2 Timothy 3:10,11

Before you can fully believe in a vision, you

must study the doctrine, the lifestyle, the purpose

and the faith of the people concerned. Paul

reminded Timothy of his longsuffering, charity,

patience, persecutions and afflictions. It is important to know about the problems someone has had in the past. Why did the person have those difficulties? Was he at fault? Did he do something wrong? Was he persecuted out of jealousy? Are the stories about him true or false? Some people have had persecutions because of sins and mistakes they have made. Others have had problems because they were doing the right thing.

Before you join a new church or ministry, it is important to delve into the historical background of that ministry.

Many people follow false religions without studying the history of that group. If they were to study the history of their leaders, they would never support or believe in them.

If, however, you were to study the life of Jesus

Christ, you would discover that He was a noble

and righteous man. He was truly without

blemish. However, the same cannot be said

about some other people. Jesus was murdered on the cross not because He had siphoned away a nation's wealth, but because He was paying for the sins of the world.

Even though our Lord Jesus suffered a humiliating death on the cross, it was not because He had done anything wrong. Jesus Christ never raided and looted towns. Jesus Christ did not marry ten different women. Jesus Christ did not marry children. Yet, He suffered many things and was murdered by the people of his day. When Peter preached that famous sermon about the name of Jesus, he told the Pharisees, "I know you. You killed Jesus." He knew the history of the town. He knew why and how

Jesus died.

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto

them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of

Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of

Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

Acts 4:8-10

Instead of rushing to believe in something without fully understanding it, delve into its historical background.

Elisha Knew the History!

When Elisha began his ministry, he was called upon to minister to the king. Was Elisha supposed to flow with this backslidden king or not? Was he supposed to cooperate with this secular leader? There seemed to be no apparent reason why not! Elisha had had no previous interaction with this king. He was a new prophet and the king was also newly appointed.

But Elisha said something that showed he was

fully aware of all that had gone on in the past. He

told King Jehoram, “If it was not because I

respected King Jehoshaphat I would not even lift up my head in your direction.” He went on to say, “If my eyes were even to fall in your direction, I would not see you.” This is a very strong statement to make to a king.

And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have

I to do with thee? GET THEE TO THE

PROPHETS OF THY FATHER, AND TO THE

PROPHETS OF THY MOTHER.

And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the

Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the

hand of Moab. And Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.

2 Kings 3:13,14

Elisha was being very uncooperative because of the historical background of the king. This king was the person whose father had hunted down his "father", Elijah. He had hunted him down like an animal.

Ahab had served other gods and worshipped idols. Because Elisha was a student of church history, he knew that he could not flow with such a person. He told the king to seek help from his father's prophets!

Loyalty demands full persuasion in all areas. When I studied the background and the history of Christianity and Jesus Christ, I became more convinced about the faith that I had found. Indeed, a general study of history will help you greatly to develop loyalty in the right direction.

****

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