

## **Loyalty Tested, part 2**

### **2 Samuel 15:24-37**

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 10-27-2013

#### **Introduction**

I had a mongrel dog out in Ethiopia that was not much to look at, but we loved him anyway. When he was a newborn pup, we begged our parents to buy him from the Ethiopian who was going to kill him, and we promised that we would take care of him. Of course, it was mom who did a lot of the bottle-feeding at night. But we did love that dog. And that dog was unbelievably loyal to us. I remember one time my two brothers and I were surrounded by a large pack of dogs that were threatening us. My brother Stanley threw a stick at the dogs, hoping to scare them off, and that was all our dog needed to lite into those dogs. It was one dog against more than a dozen, and after a long fight, they ran. But I still stand amazed that he would protect us against such odds. Dogs can have such a blind loyalty to their owners - even to grouchy owners, that it is no wonder that they are called man's best friend.

But we have already seen that God does not call us to have the blind loyalty of a dog. He calls us to something far more difficult. It doesn't take much thought to have blind loyalty to some human or to some cause. But juggling all of the calls to loyalty in our lives in a godly way requires a lot of thoughtful application of the Bible and it requires supernatural grace to do the right thing. God calls us to evaluate every loyalty by the cross of Jesus Christ and by the blueprints of Scripture.

So far we have looked at God's call to loyalty in all of our covenant relationships and how it is defined and limited by Scripture. Then last week we looked at some of the tests that distinguish man-made versus God-given loyalty. We saw that God-given loyalty is not diminished by unpopularity. In fact, it can enable you to stand true to God's Word even when the whole crowd is against you. God-given loyalty is not diminished by discomfort, or by knowing that you could get away with lack of faithfulness, by cultural prejudices, by time, by the loose expectations of others, by lack of benefits, by the impact that your loyalty might have on your future, or your family, or losing everything for Christ. It was pretty convicting stuff that we looked at last week. Those were probably the most convicting principles in all of these verses. But today we are going to pick up where we left off at verse 24.

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## **XI. The loyalty of church leaders is tested (v. 24)**

**2Sam. 15:24** There was Zadok also, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar went up until all the people had finished crossing over from the city.

David had in the past taken a strong stand in support of the church, and these church leaders were now taking a strong stand for David. In neither case was it back-scratching. They were doing the principled thing of standing against rebellion and unrighteousness. Don't think of this as an attempt to protect the ark. It is extremely unlikely that Absalom would attack the ark. Instead, this was a very deliberate testimony against Absalom's legitimacy.

They recognized that what Absalom was doing was unbiblical, and so they were engaging in a bit of interposition. The text says that "all the Levites" were leaving the city. David Payne points out that there is not a single priest or Levite who sided with Absalom. That meant that the tabernacle was completely abandoned and there would be no one there to perform sacrifices or help with the temple worship. If all the Levites were leaving, they were declaring Absalom's rule to be illegitimate, and when they took the Ark of the Covenant with them, they were in effect saying that Absalom was in rebellion against God's throne. In effect they were excommunicating everyone who sided with Absalom. It was an incredibly bold move. They could end up dead or banished from the country. So even though David questions their wisdom in doing this, he does not question their boldness or their loyalty to God.

And so this verse stands as a rebuke to the cowardly lack of church action against the Absalom's in our current government in Washington, DC, or state governments, or even some city governments. I mean, think about it: when was the last time you heard about an elected official being excommunicated for supporting abortion, or government theft, or for perjuring themselves? When was the last time you saw a church even bringing a rebuke to a politician who was a member of that church? It happens, but it happens so rarely, and for so few infractions of God's law, that I have to assume that there aren't very many modern Levites with the spirit of these men.

In a 2006 official survey, about 10% of the United States Senate and Congress was unaffiliated with any church. That 10% was comprised of Jews, Mormons, or other non-Christians. But 90% claimed to be active members of a Christian church. They may have been lying, but that was the

claim. 28.8% of them were part of the Roman Catholic Church, 1% in the Eastern Orthodox Church. That leaves about 60% of the Senate and Congress claiming actual membership in about 20 Protestant denominations, including Baptist (14%), Presbyterian (10%), Lutheran (4%), Assemblies of God, Christian Reformed, Evangelical Free, Nazarene and others. And adherents.com lists exactly which church each Senator and Congressman belongs to.

Now, when I looked at that list, I was astonished that some of these men and women were not under church discipline. These are people who have voted in favor of abortion, homosexuality, and numerous forms of government theft. When you see the ungodly, unconstitutional, immoral, and nation-destroying votes that most of these elected officials have made, you have to ask why these politicians are not under church discipline. And you begin to realize that their churches are not taking a stand against such evil. They go with the flow. It would have been much easier for Abiathar and Zadok to go with the flow and keep neutral on politics. But you can't do that and still be faithful to the Scripture. One pastor told me that to preach as I was encouraging him to do could jeopardize his church's tax-exempt status. You can imagine the chewing out that I gave him that he was more loyal to the IRS wishes than he was to God's mandate to preach the whole counsel of God.

These Levites could have maintained their comfy lifestyle. But loyalty to God and Scripture made them think that they had to take a stand against Absalom. With that many Levites leaving Jerusalem, there were many people who would know. They were not hiding their light under a bushel basket. They had taken a public stand.

## **XII. The loyalty of David is tested - will he misuse the loyalty of others? (v. 25a)**

With such a courageous move, it may seem somewhat disconcerting to you that David tells them to return. But I am convinced, and most commentators are convinced that David was being just as loyal to God as the Levites were. In fact, he was asking them to be even bolder. He was asking them to oppose Absalom while still present in Jerusalem. And the fact that they were willing to do so was an incredible testimony to their loyalty.

But let me quickly explain why I worded point XII the way I did. (And it's numbered 12, because we looked at the first ten tests of loyalty last week.) This point says, "The loyalty of David is tested - will he misuse the loyalty of others?" David accepted their support, but he did not accept their

absence from the temple or their carrying of the ark of God into exile. Verse 25 says,

**2Sam. 15:25** Then the king said to Zadok, “Carry the ark of God [notice that this ark does not belong to David, it belongs to God - “Carry the ark of God”] back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me back and show me *both* it and His dwelling place.

Why did David send the ark and the Levites back? It was not because he didn't value their loyalty. He did, and he will later use them as spies. But there were five reasons why David thought that this was not acceptable.

1. First, David makes it clear that the ark did not belong to David, and therefore it was wrong to use the ark as a leverage point to support his kingship. Politicians blaspheme God when they use Christianity as a tool for self-advancement. And even though it would have been tempting, David refused.
2. Second, God had already said that His dwelling place and the place where His name would reside would be in Jerusalem (Deut. 12:5; 1 Kings 8:29; 2 Kings 23:27). All the way back in chapter 12 we saw that God had revealed that Jerusalem was to be the permanent place for God's throne of mercy to reside. And so he speaks in this verse of Jerusalem as “His dwelling place.” For David that meant that to take the ark elsewhere without divine revelation would be a bit presumptuous. It would be to make David's throne more important than God's throne. You go into some churches and you see an American flag and a Christian flag. And often the American flag will stand taller than the Christian one. I don't think a church should have an American flag because it mixes jurisdictions, but if you were to have one, the Christian flag should be higher, symbolizing the fact that Jesus is King over all.
3. Third, David recognized that this was a fulfillment of God's prophesied discipline against him in the Bathsheba event, and he wanted to show submission to God rather than resistance to God. He's not going to use the church to avoid discipline.
4. Fourth, David did not want all Israel excommunicated for his convenience. Absalom, yes, but the whole of Israel, No. You see, David knew that many in Israel had been deceived. Verse 11 says that 200 men had gone to enthrone Absalom not knowing that anything was amiss. How could that happen?

Well, we saw last week that Psalms 39-41 show that David had an illness that looked like it could be terminal around this time, and rumors about it had been spread by Ahithophel. So there were probably a lot of people who thought that David was dying and was getting Absalom ready for the throne. So there were probably a lot of people deceived. But back to our point, without ark and Levites, the worship of God's people would be limited to the non-sacramental, and he didn't want the nation punished for his convenience. He refused to take advantage of church loyalty to him for his own personal ends

5. And the fifth reason is not in the text, but the author implies it with parallels that you can see with Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli. Back in 1 Samuel 4 they had taken the ark of the covenant for political purposes and it had gotten captured and had gone into exile into Philistine territory. The implication is that David did not want to risk that happening and did not think it appropriate for him to take the ark into exile with him. With Hophni and Phinehas, it was clear that they were treating the ark as a magic talisman, and this text says that David was walking by faith and not by such manipulative means.

And so this really is a test of David's loyalty. Leaders can sometimes do things that only serve their benefit rather than sacrificing for the sake of the kingdom as a whole. David is looking at the larger picture and believes that loyalty to God calls for doing what is in the best interests of many more people than simply himself. And this too is a rebuke to church leaders across our nation who enrich themselves at the expense of the people they fleece.

### **XIII. Loyalty tested by humility and submission to God's providence (v. 25b-26)**

And this brings up the 13<sup>th</sup> test of loyalty - trusting God's providence and doing things His way even if it means that David will be disadvantaged. Beginning at the second sentence in verse 25:

**2Sam. 15:25** ... If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me back and show me *both* it and His dwelling place.

**2Sam. 15:26** But if He says thus: "I have no delight in you," here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him."

He submits to God. Now this must not be confused with passivity. David was going to fight for the throne. David would plan and would strategize. So submission does not mean passivity. But it *does* mean that He

sees God as sovereign and he sees himself as the disciplined child. It *does* mean that he will not bend the rules to get his way. If he had allowed the Levites to come with him, such pressure would have been placed upon Absalom by all the people who were excommunicated, that David might have been able to negotiate a settlement. But if he had used and abused the loyalty of the Levites in that way, it is unlikely that Absalom or Ahithophel would have been dealt with, and they could have been a thorn in the flesh and a danger to his life for the remainder of his kingship, and Solomon probably would not have gotten on the throne. God would use this war to purge the kingdom of danger and work together for the future good of Solomon. So even though it looked like a bad move on David's part, it turns out in the final analysis that doing things God's way worked.

I think of the famous missionary to the Samoan Islands, John Williams. He longed to take the Gospel to these islands, but his wife adamantly refused to go with him. She was submissive to him in most areas, but this was where she said she was drawing the line. Now it is true that she feared the cannibals, but her attitudes toward her husband were ungodly. John Williams sought to wash his wife with the water of the Word, but it was all to no avail. He felt like his inability to lead his wife on this issue disqualified him anyway, so he sought to be the best husband that he could be, and he left the situation in God's hands. Three years passed (and that three years became absolutely critical in God's timing) and he wondered why God would burden his heart for these islands, and yet disqualify him with a disobedient wife. But he didn't harp or complain. He committed it to God without saying any more to his wife about it. Well, at the end of the three years, God brought her under a protracted and severe illness, and though John had not said anything to her about the Samoan islands (so far as we know) in quite some time, she came under great conviction that this was God's discipline upon her. She repented and gave herself unreservedly to follow her husband into missions if that was where God was leading him. He promptly dropped everything and traveled there.

In the meantime, during this three-year delay, the chief of the Samoan islands had traveled abroad, gotten converted, and now wanted to go back to Samoa. The evidence seems to indicate that if John had gone to Samoa three years earlier, he would have been killed. Now, back to the story, the newly converted chief of Samoa was on the island of Tongatabu waiting for a ship. John Williams on a whim decided to stop on the Island of Tongatabu. Immediately this chief presented himself to John Williams as the chief of Samoa and asked if he could travel to the Samoan islands. He was a little bit

skeptical, doubting that he was really the chief. But his research confirmed it. Anyway, when this chief found out that John was planning to be a missionary there, he said that he would do all in his power to give him a favorable introduction to those islands. So that three-year delay was critical for John to meet up with this chief after he had gotten converted.

On the way there, the chief informed Williams that they could expect formidable opposition from the witch doctor, Tamafainga. He guaranteed that Tamafainga would do all in his power to oppose the Gospel and they would be in real danger of death if God did not do something about that wicked high priest. So they committed it to prayer. The ship had been making good progress, but shortly before arriving at the island a terrific storm drove them way off course and delayed their arrival by weeks. When they finally arrived at their destination, Tamafainga was dead. If it was not for the storm, Tamafainga may have killed them, but certainly would have opposed their work. If they had arrived any later, a successor would have been chosen for Tamafainga, and his vested interests would have been to resist the missionaries as well. So John Williams arrived at the most opportune time possible and thousands came to Christ. Like David, John Williams used God's authority and not manipulative authority with his wife, and he trusted God for the results. Even though his wife was resisting, he did not respond as Ahab would have. He was loyal to doing things in God's ways and in God's timing, and because of his submission, was prospered.

#### **XIV. Loyalty tested by the call to not flee the system (vv. 24-29)**

The fourteenth test of loyalty was David's call to the Levites to not flee the system when they could do more good for Christ within the system than leaving it. But since there were likely to be many witnesses to the fact that these Levites had left the city with the Ark of the Covenant, this was an incredibly dangerous task to take on. They had declared Absalom to be an enemy and unworthy of the Lord's Supper. Going back, they might have to face the music.

Verses 27-29:

**2Sam. 15:27** The king also said to Zadok the priest, "*Are you not* a seer? [The word "seer" was another name for a prophet. So David was in effect asking Zadok to ask God for confirmation and to ask God for guidance on this question. "Are you not a seer?"] Return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

**2Sam. 15:28** See, I will wait in the plains of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me."

**2Sam. 15:29** Therefore Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem. And they remained there.

Fleeing is sometimes easier than staying. And this chapter illustrates how there is a place for both strategies. In 1 Samuel we saw that Jonathan supported David from within the system and there were hundreds who supported David from outside the system. 1 Kings 18:3 is another example. It says that Obadiah was a man who feared Yahweh greatly and was a godly man. But he served God in the Ahab administration. I'm sure there were some who judged him as being unloyal to God when he served in Ahab's court. Yet the Scripture says that he was faithful, and he protected 100 prophets from Jezebel's sword. He used his position for interposition.

And I bring that up because the Lord does lead some people to work within the corrupt American financial system, tax system, and political system, and God leads some people to work completely outside of those corrupt systems. It is my contention that neither side should judge the other. David as a prophet suggested this, and Zadok as a prophet confirmed it by going back. It is possible to be loyal even within the system. And as we will be seeing in the next chapter, Zadok and Abiathar were critical components to David's success, though their sons almost got captured and killed in the process. So it was dangerous.

Did you know that in Nazi Germany there was a whole network of Nazi magistrates, judges, and military officers who weren't really Nazis. They worked with the underground resistance. They gave the resistance supplies, intelligence, arms, and were on occasion even personally involved in trying to overthrow Hitler. So even though many *thought* they were the enemy and part of the Nazi tyranny, they were actually loyal to the resistance. And this just highlights the fact that apart from the wisdom and leading of the Holy Spirit, we don't always know exactly where we should stand and still be loyal to Him.

## **XV. Loyalty tested by the nature of our tears (v. 30)**

Verse 30 shows how loyalty tests the nature of our tears. Anyone can shed tears of pity, but when pity is accompanied by loyalty, it becomes compassion. Verse 30:

**2Sam. 15:30** So David went up by the Ascent of the *Mount of Olives*, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who *were* with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up.



Keep in mind that this includes the people living in the countryside around Jerusalem, mentioned in verse 23. It would be one thing if they wept and stayed right where they were. There was no danger to them in doing so. Even David would understand that. He is not asking people to leave their homes. Such weeping would show concern and pity. And anyone can shed such tears of pity. Even unbelievers can show a tender heart on occasion and feel sorry for you. But when pity is accompanied by the kind of supernatural loyalty we looked at last week, it is transformed into compassion that ministers to the heart. There is a phrase in one of Janet Curtis O'Leary's poems that I think captures the difference between the two. It says,

Pity weeps and runs away;  
Compassion comes to help and stay.

And it is really the presence of loyalty that tests our tears as to whether they just show pity, or whether they show deep compassion. Compassion involves us in each other's lives and is willing to share in each other's pains. And in the same way, these people wept with David, left their homes, identified with him in his sufferings, and went with him to share in his banishment. It was a compassion that was fully involved just as the compassion of Christ caused Him to leave heaven's glories and to become one with us. One of the most powerful verses in the Bible is also the shortest one. It is John 11:35, which says simply, "Jesus wept." And context shows that it was not simply a weeping of pity. It was a weeping of compassion that drove Jesus to identify with Lazarus and to take action on behalf of Lazarus. This is why Scripture elsewhere says that Jesus was moved with compassion to minister to the multitudes.

So it is good when we show pity and concern, but supernatural loyalty takes it a notch higher and transforms pity by God's grace. Oswald Chambers, once wrote, "Laughter and weeping are the two most intense forms of human emotion, and these profound wells of human emotion are to be consecrated to God."

Are your emotions consecrated to God? If they are, you will begin noticing all of God's graces, including loyalty or faithfulness, beginning to characterize your emotions. Don't think of emotions as neutral.

## **XVI. Friendship tested by loyalty (v. 31)**

The sixteenth point is friendship tested by loyalty. Verse 31:

**2Sam. 15:31** Then *someone* told David, saying, "Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!"

There were two men that the Scripture describes as being David's close friends. The first one was Hushai. He is called David's friend four times. And he passes the test of loyalty with flying colors. He was a friend who stuck closer than a brother to David, and certainly closer than David's son.

The other man that is called David's friend is Ahithophel. In Psalm 41, David says, "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." David was betrayed by a friend whom no one would have suspected, and in this he served as a type or foreshadowing of Christ who was betrayed by Judas, a friend, whom no one would have suspected. When Jesus said that one of the disciples would betray Him, no one pointed the finger at Judas. They all wondered if it was going to be them. And the point is that even good friendships can really be friendships that aren't founded on grace or sustained by God's grace. Every product of God's grace can be counterfeited. But when a friendship is made in heaven, it will stand the test of time, just like that between David and Jonathan, and David and Hushai. All of our covenant relationships should be examined in light of the definitions and limits of loyalty. We should ask that God's law and God's grace define our friendships.

## **XVII. Loyalty tested by a willingness to worship (v. 32a)**

The 17<sup>th</sup> point is that loyalty can be tested by a willingness to worship God even when God has hurt you. When you read Psalms 39-41, you realize that David was *devastated* by this betrayal. He was deeply hurt. He had been kicked in the stomach. The wind had been taken out of his sails. Yet this devastating hurt did not make David grow bitter or in any way have his loyalty to God diminished. Instead, verse 32 says,

Now it happened when David had come to the top *of the mountain*, where he worshipped God...

And that's the significant phrase - "...where he worshipped God." He did not allow the tyranny of the urgent to preclude worship. He did not allow his hurt feelings, betrayal, the threat of death, inconvenience, or anything else to preclude worship. Even in the Psalms where David cries out in bewildered sorrow, not understanding why God would allow the pain, he still trusted God and he still worshipped God. And in this, he stands in a long tradition of faithful loyal men like Job. It's maybe a poor comparison, but just as a dog remains faithful and loving to its master even after the master has kicked it or scolded it, Job remained steadfast and faithful to God even after he felt kicked down the stairs. In Job chapter 1, after God allowed

Satan to kill Job's servants and his family, to rob him of his cattle and all of his wealth, the text says,

**Job 1:20** Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground [So there is the whimpering of the dog; there is the sorrow and anguish that David too was experiencing, but the next phrase says,] and worshiped. [There's the sorrowing dog still wanting to put his head on the master's lap.]

**Job 1:21** And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

**Job 1:22** In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

That's loyalty. When supernatural loyalty undergirds our worship, we will no longer worship only for what *we* can get out of it, or worship only when we *feel* like worshipping. That loyalty will transform our worship and enable us to press into the heart of the very God whose providence has been beating up on us. Why? Because when our heart is steadfast in God's grace, we trust Him and love Him and we are not going to let anything come between Him and us. In fact, that loyalty will convince us that God is still good, and that all of this is for our good and for His glory. If instead, providential circumstances make you angry at God, and ready to bite His hand, and unwilling to worship, thank, and praise Him, it's a test that much of what you are doing is man-made rather than supernaturally-given. Remember – last week we saw that true Biblical loyalty can only be engendered by the Holy Spirit.

## **XVIII. Loyalty tested by a risky challenge (vv. 33b-37; cf. 17:15-22)**

We'll finish up the chapter with one more test. Loyalty tested by a risky challenge given to Hushai. Beginning with the second phrase of verse 32:

**2Sam. 15:32** ...there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head.

**2Sam. 15:33** David said to him, "If you go on with me, then you will become a burden to me. [And the reason he said that was that Hushai was by this time such an aged man that he could not run or fight or handle the hardships. David goes on to say,]

**2Sam. 15:34** But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, "I will be your servant, O king; *as I was your father's servant previously, so I will now also be your servant,*" then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me.

**2Sam. 15:35** And *do you not have Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there?* Therefore it will be *that* whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall tell to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

**2Sam. 15:36** Indeed *they have* there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send me everything you hear."

**2Sam. 15:37** So Hushai, David's friend, went into the city. And Absalom came into Jerusalem.

Here was a man willing to face the hardships of exile in his old age. And when David asked him, he was willing to face the even greater danger of being a spy. His loyalty to his friend and to his calling made him willing to face risk. And he proved to be a key factor in returning the throne to David. But when he was going into the situation, he didn't know that. He was weeping because the situation looked really bad for David. But he didn't care. He would stick with David through thick and through thin.

Saint Columba was a sixth-century missionary who traveled from Ireland to Scotland to win the fierce Picts to Christ. They were an incredibly fierce tribe. So many had been killed by the Picts that this was a scary calling. And the first thing that he did upon landing was to burn his ship. He was afraid to trust himself with a seaworthy ship because it might tempt him to leave. But it was also a statement that he would remain loyal to the calling God had given to him even if it meant his death. Total commitment to his calling was used to bring Christ to Scotland.

We are going to end with that verse, but as I pointed out last week, the central theme of loyalty tested continues on into the first nineteen verses of the next chapter. In fact, that is where the concept of loyalty becomes extremely confusing. Mephibosheth is falsely accused of being disloyal and Ziba is falsely claiming to be loyal when in reality he was engaged in selfish ambition and it was Mephibosheth who was truly loyal. In the next verses David puts Shimei's curses into a totally different light than Abishai and Joab do. Both of whom are so offended on David's behalf that they want to cut off Shimei's head. Some people might think that was loyalty, but Scripture seems to indicate that it was sinful pride. And David recognized it as sinful pride. And then you have Ahithophel's disloyalty being seen as loyalty to Absalom, and Hushai being accused of being disloyal to his friend, David, when in reality he was truly being loyal. And I bring that up to point out that you will sometimes be confused as to what God wants from you. This subject of loyalty is not an easy one to navigate. Like most graces, unless we are walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, we will step into the ditch of idolatrous loyalty on the one side or step into the ditch of disloyalty and selfishness on the other side. It makes us cry out to God for wisdom and grace.

## Conclusion

In a moment we will sing yet another Psalm that David wrote during this period, Psalm 62. And this Psalm indicates that if our focus in all of our covenant relationships is pleasing God, it will help us to be much more clear in properly defining human loyalties. When our spouse is in the wrong, we will not fiercely defend him or her in the name of loyalty. That's what some spouses do. They might criticize their own spouse for the same things that you are criticizing them for, but if *you* do it, you are in deep trouble. To me that smacks of an idolatrous loyalty, not loyalty to Scripture.

What would God have us do? If you are the husband and your wife is in sin, you are not going to get your hackles up because her sin is exposed. Instead, your fierce loyalty to God will make you lovingly wash her in the water of the Word and seek to sanctify her. If you are the wife and your husband is in sin, your fierce loyalty to God will make you lovingly pray for your husband and implement the principles of 1 Peter 3 – a passage that deals with what to do when your husband does not obey the Word. When God calls us to missions, or to moving, or to some other difficult task, relatives might criticize us of disloyalty. But Jesus says, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” (Mark 10:37). Every loyalty in life must be defined by and limited by the cross of Christ and the Scriptures of Christ. And when we do that, it will transform and actually improve our human covenantal loyalties so much. And I bring this up because people had questions last time on how we balance loyalties when they come into conflict? And my answer is to ask God's Spirit for wisdom as you take your loyalties to the Scripture.

In the 1800's, when James Chalmers answered God's call to be a missionary to an area infested by cannibals, he received many criticisms. How can a man endanger his family in such a foolish way? What kind of loyalty to family is that? How can he risk his life? How can he really love the church that he is now leaving, and the relatives that he is leaving behind? But he understood the call of God so strongly in his life that he knew the difference between idolatrous loyalty and godly loyalty. And he risked it all out of love for Christ. He eventually did get martyred and eaten by cannibals, but long before that happened, he wrote:

Recall the twenty-one years, give me back all its experiences, give me its shipwrecks, give me its standings in the face of death, give me back my surroundment of savages with spears and clubs, give me back again the spears

flying about me with the club knocking me to the ground—give it all back to me, and I will still be Your missionary!<sup>1</sup>

That, brothers and sisters, is loyalty to Christ. It is seeing every relationship through cross of Christ. You too can be that clear-sighted if Christ is your vision – if your passion is to know Him and the power of His resurrection in all of your relationships. May it be so, Lord Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Jones, G. C. (1986). *1000 illustrations for preaching and teaching* (p. 237). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

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2 Samuel 15:24-37  
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Introduction

XI. The loyalty of church leaders is tested (v. 24)

XII. The loyalty of David is tested - will he will misuse the loyalty of others? (v. 25a)

XIII. Loyalty tested by humility and submission to God's providence (v. 25b-26)

XIV. Loyalty tested by the call to not flee the system (vv. 24-29)

XV. Loyalty tested by the nature of our tears (v. 30)

XVI. Friendship tested by loyalty (v. 31)

XVII. Loyalty tested by a willingness to worship (v. 32a)

XVIII. Loyalty tested by a risky challenge (vv. 33b-37; cf. 17:15-22)

Conclusion

