

## Chapter 1

# Doubtful Men

**A** doubtful person is someone whose loyalty comes into question from time to time. At times, the person may seem very loyal and at other times, disloyal.

Many people actually have this trait of being both loyal and disloyal. At times, they exhibit much loyalty and faithfulness and at other times, they are disloyal. It is important that you watch out for such people and note them carefully. They may be on your side or they may turn against you depending on the issue at hand.

I have such people around me and so does every leader. It is difficult to diagnose this mixture of loyalty and disloyalty. On more than one occasion, I have had people who named their children after me and hurt me at the same time. They did me the great honor of naming their sons after me.

Years ago, I read from Kenneth Hagin about how someone had named her child after him. I thought to myself, "what an honor" but I never imagined that someone would do me such an honor one day. To my amazement several people have named their children after me. I see it as a great and permanent honour done to me.

But how could someone bestow on me such honour and hurt my ministry at the same time? One pastor named his son after me and within a few months, he rebelled and took over the branch church he was pastoring. He renamed the church, led the congregation away and virtually stole our church. All this was done shortly after doing me a great honour. I have experienced this kind of mixed loyalty more than once.

You may live with such people for years and never realize how they undermine you constantly because they are also loyal to you.

I remember another member of my team who has supported the ministry for many years. I do not think I could find a more loyal person whom I expect to be with me in ministry till the very end. His support is like the support of Joab, long-standing and unflinching.

And yet in this same character, I have had a person who stirs up much dissension at meetings. On numerous occasions, his attitude stirred up discord amongst pastors, changed the course of happy fellowship times into sessions of debate, and heated discussions, which left us all with a sour taste when the meeting was over.

Over and over, he stirred up dispute in the name of being objective, frank and not being a “yes” man. He would often say that he was voicing the opinion of many who were simply not bold enough to bring out some of the issues. He did this with a good motive but the fruit of it was the disruption of pastoral meetings until I disliked having meetings with my own pastors. Because of the permanent and unflinching loyalty of this same pastor, I was always confused and could not place my finger on what I was dealing with.

It was years after these experiences that I realized that I was dealing with a mixture of both loyalty and disloyalty in the same person. I know that the seeds that were sown at these meetings were not good things because of the fruit they bore.

What was the fruit of these “objective” discussions? The fruit of these debates was to turn the heart of the father away from the sons. Without knowing it, I lost interest in my own pastors and turned away from them. I disliked having meetings with my own pastors and unconsciously avoided them.

The Holy Spirit does not flow in an atmosphere of disputes. Disputes and debates stir up differences of opinion that divide the team. Once the unity and oneness is broken, the environment for the anointing is gone. Constant, rancorous debate may be good for parliament but it is not good for building an anointed team.

We are to preserve the unity of the Spirit in an atmosphere of peace. “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

## **Joab: The Mixture of Loyalty and Disloyalty**

Are there people in the Bible who are both loyal and disloyal? Yes. Joab is a good example of this mixture. His loyalty to David was long-standing. He supported David from the very beginning when David was not yet the king. Yet, Joab was a man who was both loyal and disloyal.

Joab is first mentioned when David was still a refugee in the wilderness being chased by Saul. Let us now look at the loyalty of Joab and how it coexisted with disloyalty.

### **Seven Demonstrations of Joab's Loyalty**

#### **1. Someone who supports you when you are not even in the ministry**

Joab supported David when he was still a refugee. There are friends that God gives you from childhood. Some of these people are faithful as you progress in ministry. Such people are lifelong supporters. “Then answered David and said to

Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee” (1Samuel 26:6).

## **2. Someone who supports you at the beginning of your ministry, when everything is small and insignificant**

Joab supported David when he was a king of only one tribe. Anyone who supports you when you are nothing is real. Never let him go. He is one of the best things that ever happened to you.

People who love you when you are already successful must go further to prove that they really love you and not the privileges of the rich and famous. “And Joab the son of Zeruah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise” (2 Samuel 2:13-14).

## **3. Someone who fights many battles and quarrels many quarrels for you**

What a blessing it is to have someone who fights for you and takes some nasty blows on your behalf. Joab fought many wars on behalf of David. “And, Behold, the servants of David and Joab came from pursuing a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them...” (2 Samuel 3:22).

## **4. Someone who eliminates rebels and other disloyal elements from the team**

Joab killed several people whose loyalties were questionable. He just could not stand people who were not totally committed to his king. He had an eye that saw these disloyal people whom people seemed to accommodate.

First of all he killed Abner who had supported Ishbosheth, the son of Saul for many years. “And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother” (2 Samuel 3:27).

Secondly, he killed Absalom, the son of David who overthrew his own father. “Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak” (2 Samuel 18:14).

Thirdly, he killed Amasa who was appointed by Absalom as the commander of the armies that fought against King David. “But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died” (2 Samuel 20:10).

## **5. Someone who constantly recognizes your position and refuses to take your honor**

Joab called for David to come and receive the honor of victories he had won in war. He did not take that honor for himself. Most assistants would like to take some honor for themselves. They want everybody to know that it is really a team effort that is yielding results.

A God-given loyal assistant is happy as long as his leader gets the credit. “And, Behold, the servants of David and Joab came from pursuing a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them...” (2 Samuel 3:22)

In spite of all these acts of loyalty, there are assistants who also have disloyal tendencies lurking within them. They will support you and they will fight you. It is an interesting combination that most leaders are never able to deal with because they simply don't understand that they are dealing with someone who is both loyal and disloyal.

**6. Someone who stays with you to the very end; it is not easy to find people who will be with you all your life.**

That is the kind of person Joab was; he was there until the end. “Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and ... Joab” (1 Kings 2:1-5).

**7. Someone who will obey virtually every command**

Joab's intense loyalty to David is shown by the way he killed Uriah, one of his own men, upon David's instructions. All he needed was a note from David and he would act on it. Joab obeyed the instructions in David's letter. He needed no explanation in the note. David did not have to see Joab personally to explain how he had mistakenly impregnated Bathsheba. If David said to kill one of the commanders, then it would be done.

There are few people a leader can find, who have such unconditional and excessive loyalty. “And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab ... And he wrote in the letter, saying, SET YE URIAH IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE HOTTEST BATTLE, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. And ... Joab ... assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were” (2 Samuel 11:14-16).

### **Three Demonstrations of Joab's Disloyalty**

**1. Someone who disobeys clear instructions when it suits him**

Joab killed people he did not like even though it was against David's wishes. Abner had killed Joab's brother, Asahel and Joab therefore had a personal score to settle with Abner. Joab killed Abner in spite of King David's clear instruction on this matter. Joab also killed Absalom even though David had clearly asked that Absalom should not be killed.

These actions clearly demonstrate the disobedience and disloyalty that was lurking within Joab. David never forgot the disloyalty of Joab, and on his deathbed, he instructed Solomon to execute Joab for these acts.

Perhaps David did not execute Joab himself because Joab had also been very loyal to him and fought many battles for him. “Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, ...Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace” (1Kings 2:5-6).

## **2. Someone who fights people you have appointed**

David appointed Amasa to be the commander of the army in place of Joab. “And king David sent to Zadok ...say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab” (2 Samuel 19:11-13). But Joab tricked Amasa and killed him when he was not expecting it. “But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died” (2 Samuel 20:10).

One of the things you must look out for is how people relate with those you have appointed. When you have a large church, this is perhaps the most revealing sign of disloyalty. Because people always have to deal with you through your representatives, you get to learn about their real feelings towards you by observing how they relate with those you have appointed. Somebody who does not accept your wife does not accept you.

I always note people who are in constant dispute with my administrators, General Overseers, personal assistants and secretaries. To me, it is one of the clearest signs of disregard, disrespect and dislike for me personally.

It has made me understand how God feels when we criticize and reject the men he has called and anointed.

To criticize someone God has called and appointed is to say that God lacks intelligence and has foolishly appointed the wrong people. When people habitually fight and oppose those I have appointed, it sends a clear message to me!

### **3. Someone who does not support your wishes**

David chose Solomon to be the king but Joab supported Adonijah's attempt to be the king in place of Solomon. "Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him" (1 Kings 1: 5,7).

If you give somebody a name and people refuse to address the person by his new name, it is a demonstration of the people's rejection of your wishes, goodwill and authority.

It is surely a sign that reveals the heart of people. Also, if you give somebody a name and the person does not insist on being called by the new name, it reveals the extent to which your wishes and desires are accepted and supported by the person himself.

Dear leader, people will not tell you what is in their hearts because they cannot. Sometimes they do not even know what is in their own hearts. Watch out for people who do not support your wishes, desires and authority. Opposition exposes the hearts of people!

