

Chapter 11

The Three Tests of Loyalty

But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I SHALL COME FORTH AS GOLD.

Job 23:10

There are many yellow metals in the world. Which one of them is real gold? I once asked a jeweller in Malaysia; “How would I know whether my wedding ring is made out of real gold or not?” I will never forget what he said, “There are many tests, but the main test is to pass it through fire.” He told me, “All other metals will change colour when subjected to fire.”

He continued, “Gold is the only metal which will come out shining brighter. It will not change colour in any way.”

You can never tell the false from the real until you subject it to a test.

Many things will test the loyalty and faithfulness of a Christian. When I decided to pursue the ministry instead of medicine, my commitment was tested many times. My commitment to the church has been tested on several occasions. There are three main things that will test everyone's loyalty: *distance, time* and *fire*. If you pass these tests, then your loyalty is real.

1. The Test of Distance

But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, AND NOT ONLY WHEN I AM PRESENT WITH YOU.

Galatians 4:18

Paul had to exhort a branch of his church in Galatia to remain faithful even though he was not physically present with them. Many people are not loyal when they are away from the leader. Many companies do not work efficiently unless the manager is physically present. Because of this, many businesses cannot expand.

Can the Boss Be Everywhere?

If you are working under someone, your loyalty will be tested by distance. As they say, "out of sight, out of mind". It is important for you to be faithful even when your leader is away from you. People who have passed this test are the ones who are truly faithful. The ministry of Lighthouse Chapel International now spans five continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and Australia. How on earth could I be present everywhere? **The only way for a large network to**

continue expanding is for people to be faithful whether the leader is present or not.

In some churches, the pastor just has to turn his head and a sarcastic comment will be made. You must not only say nice things when a person is present with you. You must say nice things about him even when he is away. It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing and especially when your leader is not present with you. I can tell whether people are loyal to me or not by what they say about me when I am not present.

It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, AND NOT ONLY WHEN I AM PRESENT WITH YOU.

Galatians 4:18

My Loyal Friend

I remember someone who claimed to be my friend. When I was with him, he would say nice things like, “I am committed to you. I have a relationship with you.” He also said things like, “I know you are loyal to me. You and I have a good relationship.” However, when I was not with this person he would say terrible things about me. Some of the things were so shocking that it was hard for me to believe!

One day someone said to me, “If you ever heard what this man said about you behind your back, you would not go near him any more!” What this person was telling me was not strange. You see, I had heard of alarming statements made by this man about me. I had received so many reports of the cruel discussions he had had about me. This “loyal” friend was not loyal after all! When he was with me, he said nice things. As soon as we parted company, he stabbed me in the

back and ‘weeded out’ my legs! A little distance and the ugly head of disloyalty reared itself. He failed the ‘distance test’ of loyalty repeatedly.

Loyalty is not what you say or do when a person is with you. It is what you do and say when you are apart.

It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, AND NOT ONLY WHEN I AM PRESENT WITH YOU.

Galatians 4:18

2. The Test of Time

Very few people can imagine the ability of time to test our resolve to stay loyal to our words.

I marvel that ye are SO SOON REMOVED from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Galatians 1:6

The Apostle Paul was shocked that a group of Christians could so quickly change their minds and commitment.

Early and Late Disloyalty

In some cases people become disloyal very early in the course of events. This is what I call *early disloyalty*. People suffering from *early disloyalty* are not able to withstand the test of time. In other cases, people become disloyal after much more time has elapsed – this is *late disloyalty*. Individuals who experience ‘late disloyalty’ have a greater ability to withstand the tests of time, but eventually fall away.

And he said, therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. FROM THAT TIME MANY OF HIS DISCIPLES WENT BACK, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. 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 6:65-71

You will notice from this passage that after a short while in the ministry, several of the disciples deserted camp. They left the church and refused to be part of Jesus' ministry anymore. *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him (John 6:66).* This is a good example of 'early disloyalty'. These disciples failed the test of time very quickly indeed.

However, the twelve apostles were not so quick to fall away. Even Judas Iscariot was not moved. But Jesus knew that with the passage of *more time*, Judas would betray Him. That is why He said, "Have I not chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil? He knew it was just a matter of time before there would be some more manifestations of disloyalty.

Can you stand the test of time? Will you be there when everyone is gone? How much longer will you last in the ministry? For how much longer will you preach the things God told you to preach? How much more time has to elapse

before you rebel against your leader? Are you going to be an early leaver, a late leaver or will you stay until the end?

Decide to be a survivor! Develop staying power! Be faithful to the very end! Be loyal to God until your very last breath! Be loyal to your pastor and to your church until the end. You will definitely receive your reward from God. I recommend that you read my book on 'Backsliding'. It will help you to develop your staying power.

3. The Test of Fire

Fire represents all kinds of pressures that will be brought to bear against you. These pressures could be in the form of a financial test. When you work in an organisation, a transfer or an instruction you do not like could be another test. Fire could be spiritual, social, marital or financial! I want to challenge every leader not to be afraid of the fires that God will allow you to go through. It is those who come out of the fire unscathed who are most valuable to God.

Marital difficulties, financial difficulties, hurts and offences should not make you disloyal to your God. Fire purges unwanted elements from our lives. God refines us through these experiences.

**And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver:
and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them
as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord
an offering in righteousness.**

Malachi 3:3

God often puts the heat on his servants in order to bring the best out of them. When you have passed through the tests, you will shine and you will become more attractive. Do you want more people to be attracted to your ministry? Then pass the tests of fire that come your way!

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

James 1:2,3

On many occasions, I have been subjected to various tests. I have been subjected to tests from disloyal friends and pastors. I have suffered mistreatment from authorities in high places. I have been through many journeys for the Lord. I have had several near death experiences in cars and planes. I have experienced deep hurts from various unexpected sources.

I am not the only one who has been tested in the ministry. God allows all Christians to be offended. He will then observe whether you will obey his Word or not. Will you forgive the one who has offended you? When you walk in forgiveness, you attract God's mercy. Blessed are the merciful because they shall receive God's mercy. **If you fail the test of hurts and offences, you exclude yourself from the mercy of God.** When bitterness is in your spirit, you will no longer receive from God and He no longer answers your prayers.

Many years ago, a minister said something which I took seriously. He said, "*It is important to always maintain a sweet spirit!*" We must learn to live without bitterness.

When you go through the fire of financial difficulties, please do not succumb to the pressure. Do not become a murmurer. Do not become a complainer and do not become a thief!

When you come under pressure in your marriage, please do not give up. Do not separate or divorce. Fight to achieve happiness. The world is full of people with failed marriages. Everyone is looking for someone who has been able to stay faithful in spite of the tests. The tests of marriage come to everyone. To survive, you need determination and a whole lot of faith. Be a survivor! I see you making it!

What Have You Survived?

Someone asked me: “What have you been through? What have you survived?” “What have you suffered?” You see, the things a person has survived speak volumes about him. The credentials of survived tests are greater than the credentials of any educational institution.

When Paul wanted to show who he really was, he told the people what he had been through! He told them what he had survived. He showed them what he had suffered. The tests you pass tell a story about who you really are. Notice how Paul used a long list of experiences he had survived to show that he was a legitimate minister.

ARE THEY MINISTERS OF CHRIST? (I speak as a fool) I AM MORE; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in PRISONS more frequent, in DEATHS oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty STRIPES save one. Thrice was I BEATEN with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered SHIPWRECK, a night and a day I have been in the

deep; In JOURNEYINGS often, in perils of waters, in perils of ROBBERS, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In WEARINESS and PAINFULNESS, in WATCHINGS often, in hunger and thirst, in FASTINGS often, in cold and NAKEDNESS. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not?

2 Corinthians 11:23-29