



PART 2

PAUL IN CORINTH: LEADERSHIP UNDER FIRE

Chapter Five

THE FAITHFULNESS OF A TRUE LEADER

It was in these circumstances, immediately after he heard the encouraging report from Titus, that Paul wrote [2 Corinthians](#). As we have noted already, the letter is the most intensely personal, passionate, and pastoral of all Paul's epistles. It is clear from the text that Paul knew there was still much work to be done in order to clear away the confusion the false teachers had sown in Corinth. He needed to defend his own apostleship, and he needed to deal with the leadership vacuum that had generated so many difficulties for the Corinthian fellowship.

Paul was loyal to the Corinthian church, and he wanted them to be loyal to him.

Thus in the tone and substance of this great epistle, a tenth vital principle of leadership emerges: *A leader cultivates loyalty.*

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE #10

A LEADER CULTIVATES LOYALTY

This was no selfish longing for personal veneration ([2 Corinthians 12:11](#)).

[2 Corinthians 12:11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹ "I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody."

He wanted them to be loyal to the truth he had taught them ([vv. 15-19](#)).

[2 Corinthians 12:15-19 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵ "I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?"

¹⁶ "But be that as it may, I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit."



¹⁷ Certainly I have not taken advantage of you through any of those whom I have sent to you, have I?

¹⁸ I urged Titus *to go*, and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit *and walk* in the same steps?

¹⁹ All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. *Actually*, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved."

That is why, despite Paul's own intense dislike for boasting and self-defense, he vigorously sought to vindicate his apostleship against the lies of the false teachers. And therefore, as he modeled his own devotion to the Corinthians, he openly appealed for their loyalty to him as well. This is one of the central themes of [2 Corinthians](#).

Loyalty is a great virtue. We often forget that simple truth in the cynical age in which we live. Our society is so rife with corrupt leaders and so hostile to the concept of authoritative truth that loyalty is often perceived as a weakness rather than a merit. Rebellion and defiance have been canonized as virtues instead. **"Who can find a faithful man?"** ([Proverbs 20:6](#)).

Proverbs 20:6 (NASB)

⁶ "Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, But who can find a trustworthy man?"

But Scripture exalts loyalty. Loyalty is owed, first of all, to the Lord and to His truth, but also to those who stand for the truth. [2 Chronicles 16:9](#) says,

2 Chronicles 16:9 (NASB)

⁹ "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars."

Loyalty is a fragile thing. David prayed, "Give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes" (1 Chronicles 29:19).

1 Chronicles 29:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ "And give to my son Solomon a perfect heart to keep Your commandments, Your testimonies and Your statutes, and to do *them* all, and to build the temple, for which I have made provision."

Solomon himself urged all Israel,

1 Kings 8:61 (NASB)

⁶¹ "Let your heart therefore be wholly devoted to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and to keep His commandments, as at this day."

But Solomon's own moral downfall came because "his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David" ([1 Kings 11:4](#); [1 Kings 15:3](#)).



1 Kings 11:4 (NASB)

⁴“For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father *had been.*”

1 Kings 15:3 (NASB)

³“He walked in all the sins of his father which he had committed before him; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, like the heart of his father David.”

Disloyalty is among the most repugnant of all evils. Judas sinned because he was a traitor. He had no loyalty to Christ, although he had been a privileged friend and close companion for years. No sin in all of Scripture is more despicable than Judas’s traitorous act of treachery. Jesus Himself classed Judas’s wickedness as more wretched than that of Pilate (**John 19:11**).

John 19:11 (NASB)

¹¹“Jesus answered, “You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has *the greater sin.*”

What do we mean by *loyalty*? **Authentic loyalty is not blind devotion to a mere man.** It is, first of all, an allegiance to truth and duty. But it involves devotion to the obligations of love and friendship as well. It is among the godliest and godlike of virtues, because God Himself is eternally faithful (**2 Timothy 2:13**; **1 Thessalonians 5:24**; **2 Thessalonians 3:3**).

2 Timothy 2:13 (NASB)

¹³“If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.”

1 Thessalonians 5:24 (NASB)

²⁴“Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.”

2 Thessalonians 3:3 (NASB)

³“But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the *evil one.*”