



PART 2

PAUL IN CORINTH: LEADERSHIP UNDER FIRE

Chapter Five

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

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.”

Loyalty is essential to leadership. The wise leader cultivates loyalty by *being* loyal—loyal to the Lord, loyal to the truth, and loyal to the people he leads. Nothing is more destructive of leadership than the leader who compromises his own loyalty.

I have a very hard time hearing criticism of people who are under my leadership, because I am committed in my heart to being loyal to them. My instinct is to defend them. I always seek to give them the benefit of the doubt. My love for them includes an earnest desire to assume the best of them. After all, that is how love is expressed:

[1 Corinthians 13:4-7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴“Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant,



⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*,
⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

You see that dynamic at work in Paul’s dealings with the Corinthians. “**I am jealous for you with godly jealousy,**” he wrote ([2 Corinthians 11:2](#)).

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

²“**For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.**”

And when he wrote to them with a severe rebuke, he said,

[2 Corinthians 7:12 \(NASB\)](#)

¹²“**So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God.**”

Leadership is all about motivating people to follow. Therefore, everything in leadership hinges on the leader’s relationship to his people. It is possible to motivate people simply by sheer force, but that is not real leadership; it’s dictatorship. And it never really achieves the goals of leadership. That can be accomplished only by a loving loyalty.

That’s true in marriage (where loyalty and faithfulness are obviously so crucial); it’s true for pastors; and it’s true for leaders at every level. At the core of the values I try to get them to see, so that they can lead people effectively, is the virtue of loyalty to those above, beside, and below them in the structure.

I tell graduates of the Seminary that they can be successful in any profession they choose if they do a few things consistently: Be on time, keep quiet and work hard, do what the boss tells you, have a positive attitude, and most important, be fiercely loyal to the people you work for and with.

Leadership hinges on trust, and trust is cultivated by loyalty. Where trust is born and respect is maintained, sacrificial, devoted service is rendered. Another way to say this is that our hearts have to be in our people, and our people have to be in our hearts.

Lord Nelson defeated Napoleon’s navy at the Battle of Trafalgar, thwarting Napoleon’s planned invasion of England. Nelson began that battle with the famous signal, “England expects that every man will do his duty.” He could demand such devotion because he gave it. In fact, that victory cost Nelson his own life. He cultivated faithfulness and mutual loyalty in his men. A few years earlier, after a glorious victory at the Battle of the Nile, he had written to Lord Howe, “I had the happy fortune to command a band of brothers.” **That is the spirit of true leadership.**



Paul was that kind of leader. His love for and loyalty to the Corinthians colors everything he wrote to them. Lots of pastors would have been tempted to give up on such a troublesome church. Not Paul. He was the epitome of a faithful leader.

CONSOLATION ABOUNDING IN CHRIST

Paul opened his second epistle to the Corinthians with an amazing expression of compassion and concern for them. He was writing at a time in his own ministry when he was suffering on many fronts. There was, of course, his intense grief over the problems in Corinth.

Those issues weighed on him so much that he himself would testify, **“I had no rest in my spirit” (2 Corinthians 2:13).**

2 Corinthians 2:13 (NASB)

¹³“I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia.”

On top of that, he constantly suffered almost unbearable hardship and persecution (**2 Corinthians 11:23–33**).

2 Corinthians 11:23-33 (NASB)

²³“Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

²⁴Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes.

²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

²⁶I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;

²⁷I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

²⁸Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.

²⁹Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

³⁰If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness.

³¹The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

³²In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me,

³³and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.”