**Excessive Loyalty**

*edited from Stan Cox*

Loyalty is a good thing. A very good thing. Consider the beautiful expression of Ruth’s loyalty to her mother-in-law Naomi, *“But Ruth said: ‘Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me’”* (Ruth 1:16-17).

Loyalty to God must be absolute. Divided loyalties are unacceptable. There is no way to be excessively loyal to Him. As Jesus said, *“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”* (Matthew 10:37). Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, *“Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”*

While fealty is required toward God, it is possible for us to be loyal to a fault when others are the object of our faithfulness. Consider that God is perfectly righteous. As such it is not possible for our loyalty to such goodness to be misguided. In other circumstances, however, such is not the case. Consider the following examples of “excessive loyalty.”

**Blood is Thicker than Water**

As indicated in Matthew 10:37, God must come before family. There are some who will not confess Christ because to do so would be construed as disloyal to family. This may be a perception. “If I obey the gospel I am condemning Aunt Mary.” Or it may be actual, as when family threatens to disown one who desires to come to God.

There are, of course other ways such inappropriate loyalty might be seen. For example, defending the actions of another (even if they are otherwise indefensible) just because they are family, or of the same race or culture. Conversely, condemning the actions of others, just because they are with another family, clan, culture or race. Such loyalty is unthinking and inappropriate. *“You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice”* (Exodus 23:2).

**I’m a Belieber?**

The above is a reference to the fans of the popular singer Justin Bieber. Bieber is typical of many celebrities – including athletes, actors, singers, and even political leaders – who live immoral lives. Despite their ungodliness, you see Christians fawning over their talent and protesting their loyalty everywhere from the cover of their 3 ring binder to *Facebook*! And, not only that, but voraciously consuming their product (songs, movies, etc.), even if the product is itself a corrupting influence. Such shows a sad lack of spiritual maturity. *“Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?”* (James 4:4).

**A True Patriot!**

Patriotism is a virtue. We should appreciate, for example, the soldiers who sometimes give their very lives to protect our nation. We have reason to be proud of our nation’s history, and the constitution itself. However, it is wrong to believe that America is always right because it is America. Or to elevate the constitution of the United States to the level of canon. Or, to be so partisan as to equate the individuals and positions of your party to be right because it is your party, and the individuals and positions of their party to be wrong or evil because they are opponents of your party. Such thinking is unreasonable, and dangerous. *“Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people”* (Proverbs 14:34).

**Be True to Your School!**

It is fine to root for your school, and to appreciate the education you have received. But, it is sad to see those of rival high schools or colleges to actually be hostile to, or actively dislike (even hate) a rival.

There is a special application to be made here to a college operated by brethren. It is unique in that such a college is established and run by Christians. Many of our young people attend such a college, and are benefitted by what it offers. Unfortunately, some express a loyalty to the college that is unquestioning in just the way we have described. To be guilty of differentiating in any way between preachers or other Christians on the basis of whether they attended or are affiliated with the school is wrong. To react to criticism against this humanly devised institution in an undiscerning manner is wrong. Such colleges have done much good, but they are not deserving of unlimited and unquestioning loyalty.

**(BFFL) Best Friends for Life**

Some who become Christians are unwilling to leave their relationships with worldly people, despite the dangers and temptations that might arise. Paul said, *“Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits”* (1 Corinthians 15:33). It is a sad thing to see one who is struggling to serve God acceptably sabotaging his own efforts because of his misguided loyalty to his worldly friends. A true friend, one who truly loves, will be concerned about your soul. If he is not, he is not a true friend.

Be careful about pledging your loyalty! Only God deserves our total, unequivocal fidelity.