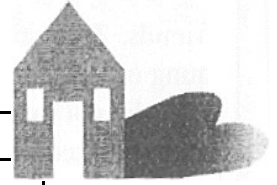


CHARACTER

Loyalty

May 2008



LOYALTY: "being committed and worthy of trust."

"Unless you find some sort of loyalty, you cannot find unity and peace in your active living."

Josiah Royce

Loyalty: Legacy of Love

Loyalty, or the lack of it, has always had far reaching consequences: it prolongs long-term relationships or poisons people with hard feelings.

Honoring vows and keeping commitments prevent heartbreak while breaking them often endangers or forfeits a forever family. Marital stability protects families and allows children to have peace and a healthy development.

Marriage covenants should be considered sacred; violations produce major problems as well as contribute to the pain of unexpected victims. Whereas infidelity causes the breakdown of marriage with awful effects and unintended consequences, such as the hurting of innocent people (or trading one set of problems for another) other forms of disloyalty also promote negative disruption in countless areas.

Injuring with idle gossip can provoke disastrous psychological warfare, or worse. Ruining credibility or getting others to question another's character or integrity may be the start of eventual revenge. A long memory of past hurts may result from disloyal statements made behind someone's back, or because confidences should have been kept but were not.

Family unity is easily destroyed with unkind remarks or disclosures of too personal information. Confidence and trust is shattered when privacy indiscretions occur. In-depth discussions where those offended feel the need to defend their mistreatment can quickly turn ugly. It is very hard to take back words spoken that have damaged reputations. Accusations may fly and tempers may flare. Even perceived betrayal can justify the breaking of an engagement, add to the loss of reputation, or escalate into fighting.

Badmouthing usually doesn't turn out to be a pre-emptive strike, but rather bad judgment that backfires. Name calling (even if done in secret) usually becomes words that are regretted. For example, being mean may mean never being trusted again. Misconduct by members of a church may lead to the loss of position, or end in excommunication. Public complaints of the rules of a company can be the reason for dismissal. Just as employee and customer loyalty is crucial for a business. Personal loyalty is one of the greatest gifts. Disrespect for others or lack of generosity toward loved ones leaves everyone vulnerable.

Friendship implies standing up for those in your social circle who need to be defended. Knowing a buddy has your back is priceless and so is being part of a helpful network that can be counted on for guidance and feedback. To have a friend one must be a friend. Sorrow comes from forgetting allegiances and being selfish.

The rewards of loyalty far outweigh the temporary pleasure gained from gossip but often there is a price that must be paid. Sometimes that price is simply silence.

Trials of life are made easier with trusted associates who are willing to offer their understanding or experience. Keeping loved ones close and continuing to deliver on promises is not only honorable; it brings blessings.

Loyalty is preserved through patience, mutual service, and love. This legacy is maintained by keeping confidences and closeness, not criticism. Reaching out with kindness and overlooking faults reap rewards. Loyalty binds hearts together in love with an emotional connection that endures.

In the December 1, 1998 BYU Devotional, Janet Scharman told of "a group of people who understood who they were and what was truly important to them. The year was about A.D. 1140 at the Weibertreu Castle in Germany. This was not an easy time to be living. Thick castle walls, deep moats, and heavy gates were built for a reason. The battles that took place at that time were where men fought hand to hand and eye to eye with their attackers and the occupation of the victors was most often devastating. King Konrad III and his powerful army attacked this castle of Weibertreu in a powerful siege. He knew his trade well, and those within the walls were unable to defend themselves.

As the castle inhabitants were on the verge of surrender, Konrad, in a moment of kindness, said the women could leave the crumbling fortress, taking with them all they could carry on their backs. The gates opened, and the women staggered out, struggling under the heavy loads they carried. Konrad and his men were caught off guard, shocked and surprised by what they saw, for on the back of each woman was one of the men. They knew where their treasures were, and they chose to take what was very most important, even at the risk of stirring the anger of the soldiers. Konrad, touched by this tender display of love and loyalty, remained true to his word and, although his troops leveled the buildings, not a life was lost that day.

Those must have been among the most harsh and brutal times to live, and yet the people of Weibertreu were able to reach beyond that to some degree and hang on to what was most dear to them. They understood the importance of their relationships and were able to summon the strength and courage from within to preserve that which was needed for their survival. Although there is little in the way of physical remains of the castle in modern times, the story of the Castle of the Loyal Wives lives on and is still an inspiring reminder to young and old alike more than 850 years later."

Stephanie Teal

Lindon Young Adult

"Loyalty means nothing unless it has at its heart the absolute principle of self-sacrifice."

–Woodrow T. Wilson

"The best things in life are never rationed.

Friendship, loyalty, and love.

They do not require coupons."

– George T. Hewitt

"You can buy a person's time; you can buy their physical presence at a given place . . . but you cannot buy loyalty. You cannot buy the devotion of hearts, minds, or souls. You must earn these."

–Clarence Francis

Book List

“Rabbit Inn”

by Patience Brewster

“Toot and Puddle”

by Holly Hobbie

“The Wolf’s Chicken Stew”

by Keiko Kasca

“A Special Trade”

by Karen Gundersheimer

“Julius the Baby of the World”

by Kevin Henkes



Family Activities

–Write each family members name on a piece of paper and put in a hat. For one week have them practice being loyal to the person they picked.

–Nathan Hale

Ever since Nathan Hale was executed by the British in 1776, his name has been recognized for extreme loyalty to his country.

Washington needed to know the dispositions and intentions of the British forces and asked Hale and other officers of his regiment to volunteer for an intelligence mission behind enemy lines. Nathan Hale alone stepped forward. Before the mission he said “I am fully sensible of the consequences of discovery and capture in such a situation. . . Yet. . I wish to be useful, and every kind of service, necessary to the public good, becomes honorable by being necessary.” Disguised as a schoolmaster, he crossed into British territory and obtained the needed information. He hid the information in his shoe and was returning home when the British captured him. The next morning, without sympathy or support, save that from above, he was executed following this famous statement “I only regret, that I have but one life to lose for my country.”

Kid’s Corner

Being loyal means to be faithful, devoted or committed. You can be a loyal and true friend. You can be a good son or daughter, devoted to your family. We can be loyal fans of our school or sports team. We should be committed to the good standards of our community. When you are employed, you should be faithful and devoted to your company’s success. We should have a sense of patriotism and loyalty to our country. We are faithful and devoted, each to our own religious beliefs. We should be respectful and honor the good in our race, culture and way of life. We should be loyal to the dignity of the soul of all of mankind. Edwin H. Chapin says, “No more important duty can be urged upon those who are entering the great theater of life than simple loyalty to their best convictions.”

Erik Olssen
Homeschooler

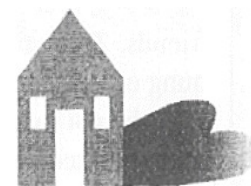
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Character Connection is a not-for-profit organization encouraging the enhancement of character development in our community. We are accepting financial support. If you can help please send contributions to:

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