

The Power Of Loyalty Part 2



(Mat 6:19-24)

In Matthew 6:19-24 Jesus reveals the power our discretionary and *belief* loyalties possess not only for determining who we truly serve (who we are loyal to as King), but also for producing the salvation-essential attributes of affection (for God) and conviction (in regard to the Word of God). Our confidence that loyalty is indeed His subject is confirmed by His conclusion (24 “serve...be devoted to” = be loyal to).

1. Discretionary loyalties and help getting to heaven.

Jesus teaches us the freedom we may believe we possess with regard to discretionary loyalties is not as free as we think (19-20 “treasures¹⁷) = Discretionary loyalties. Those things we commit to that are *not necessary* to our physical health and life or the physical health and life of those under our care - e.g., hobbies; contra., working a job). We are to (“lay up”) spend the majority of our free time/money on those things that help get us to heaven (“treasures in heaven”) and *not* on those things that won’t (“treasures on earth” - e.g., cars, sports, fitness, recreation, food, video games, shopping, entertainment, fishing, kids’ activities, etc.) (1Co 10:31; Luk 16:12 = Our loyalty in the little things are a direct reflection of our loyalty to the big thing, our King) BTW: God owes you nothing (He has already given us more than we deserve), we owe Him everything – our entire lives (2Ti 2:1; Eph 2:1-13 w/4:1; 2Co 5:14-15). Being faithful/loyal w/our discretionary time and money is the only option w/an EROI (“moth and rust do not destroy; thieves do not break in and steal”).

2. Discretionary loyalty and feelings of affection.

Many Christians admit to possessing no feelings of affection for God. Jesus teaches that our affections are often the product of loyalty (21 “heart” = Our affections; “Where you [loyalties are], there your [affections] w/b also”). IOW: whatever you devote yourself to, you will eventually have affections for. Important not to miss: the relationship between loyalty and affection being taught by Jesus is the opposite of how many people view it: loyalty to someone/something requires affection first. If they don’t possess immediate affection, then they can’t be expected to be loyal nor should they expect such affection to come after they have been loyal/committed. Many people will go to hell b/c of this foolish thinking.

3. Belief loyalty and spiritual health.

3.1. Jesus continues His teaching on loyalty. This time however with respect to who/what we *choose* to believe.

3.2. (22-23) “The eye” = Who/what we are loyal/faithful to believe as our source of truth; “is the lamp of the body” = Will determine our spiritual health – i.e., our chances of fighting the good fight/getting to heaven (Luk 8:13-16 “light” = Belief; come to the light = Your beliefs w/b made known; “take care then how you hear” = Be careful to believe only what is from - or agrees with, God and His Word).

3.3. Belief (no matter who/what it is in relation to) is never automatic. It always requires an exercise of the will – i.e., a choice/decision on our part. The only distinction is that some things are easier than others to believe. Not however because there is more data/intellectual support for those things, but because there exists more pressure or temptation to believe them. Studies have shown that most of what most people choose to believe is not determined by facts but feelings (i.e., they believe it over something else b/c it is what makes them feel better than the other belief, irrespective of facts that may favor the other position. Belief in God/God’s Word is therefore (once more) a choice. And it is a choice (once made) we must be loyal/faithful to continue exercising our will in the direction of. Why? B/C (once more) belief loyalty is essential to fighting the good fight and getting to heaven (to spiritual health).

3.4. “So if your eye is healthy” = If you are loyal/faithful to listen to/believe only God and those things that agree with His Word then your chances of fighting the good fight/getting to heaven are good (Heb 11:3, 6 = Believing in God/what God says requires loyalty/faithfulness; 2Ti 1:13-14).

3.5. “if your eye is bad” = If you are *not* loyal/faithful to believe God and only those things that agree with God and His Word (e.g., At times you are guilty of listening to/entertaining the rebellious voices of this world, false Christianity or the feelings fueled thoughts in your head [“what if they are right?"]) Pro 28:26 “mind” = feelings fueled thoughts.), then your chances of getting to heaven are not good.

3.6. POINT NOT TO MISS: Your spiritual health (chances of fighting the good fight/getting to heaven) w/b directly affected by how loyal/faithful you are to believe only God or those things that agree with His Word - which means we need to always be asking the question, “Is what I am believing/entertaining as true from God or in agreement with God’s Word? And if I don’t know the answer to that, then I do not trust/listen to it (2Co 10:3-5; e.g., 1] Psychology: deviant behavior is the result of mental illness/physiological malfunction in the brain not the volitional rebellion of a sinful soul/person capable of doing otherwise, 2] Evolution: human beings are not the offspring of divinity [Act 17:29], but animals. 3] Atheism = Existence is an accident; life has no meaning, and many people will get away w/their evil deeds).

¹ Mat 6:19-24 is filled with metonymy: the act of referring to something by the names of those things associated with it (Grk. *metonymia* = change of name; e.g., the crown = British monarchy; The White House = American govt; Silicon Valley = tech industry; tongue = speech (Jam 3); sleep = death (1Co 15) “the pen is mightier than the sword” = The written word is mightier than military force).

4. Belief loyalty and strong conviction.

4.1. Similar to affection for God, many Christians often claim to lack the kind of deep conviction they know they should possess with regard to God and His Word. Once more, Jesus teaches this subject to be related to a person's loyalty.

4.2. (22) "So, if your eye is healthy (you are loyal to believe/listen to only what comes from God), your whole body will be *full of light*" = Your belief in God and His Word ("light") will be strong ("full"). IOW: The result will be the possession of deep conviction in God and His Word (2Pe 1:19 = Keep being loyal to only believe ["pay attention" to] God's Word [to the "prophetic word more fully confirmed...as a lamp shining in a dark place"; v20 the "prophecy of Scripture"] until it results in deep conviction ["until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts"]).

4.3. The value of deep conviction = Courage to stand against the opposition and stamina to persevere through persecution (2Co 4:8-14 = Paul's deep conviction regarding what was awaiting him in heaven gave him the courage and stamina to speak and persevere under heavy persecution). Cowardly, wimpy Christians = Christians lacking conviction.

4.4. (23) "If your eye is bad, *your whole body will be full of darkness*" = Darkness is not an entity or substance. It indicates the lack thereof. Seeing that Jesus uses the phrase "full of light" to refer to deep conviction means what Jesus is referring to by great darkness is lack of (or no) conviction. This then is the result of listening to/entertaining/believing what does not agree w/God and His Word: you become a person who lacks or possesses no conviction regarding God, or the truths taught in His word (i.e., it feels like a fairy tale or fantasy).

4.5. Why possessing lack of (or no) conviction with regard to God or His Word is dangerous: Because it will eventually lead to apostasy ("if then the light that is in you is darkness, *how great is the darkness!*") = A reference to apostasy. Lack of/no conviction will therefore not be the only result of allowing ourselves to listen to/entertain/believe what is not in agreement with God or His Word. If we do not repent and stop, we will eventually go apostate (Mat 13:22; Luk 17:33-37; 1Pe 2:8; Pro 8:32-36 "me" = The wisdom of God's Word; Pro 21:16, 28; 1Co 10:1-12; Heb 10:25-26 = Lack of hearing the truth/assembling together leads to apostasy/a willful sinning/unrepentant state of permanent unbelief).

4.6. BTW: not engaging your mind when reading your Bible or during the preaching of God's Word will also keep you from possessing conviction and eventually lead to apostasy. Why? Because belief in God requires engagement of your mind (i.e., attempting to understand what is being said and its importance to life in general or me personally). Why people tend to believe the world = Because it requires no engagement of the mind (it satisfies superficially, hiding its deeper flaws; Pro 5:1-14; e.g., Charles Darwin stated that his theory of evolution came about as a result of no longer reading and engaging God's Word. IOW: no engagement of the mind = no understanding = no deep conviction/strong belief = strong doubt and apostasy [embracing what is false]).

4.7. SUGGESTION: Every time a Christian reads their Bible or hears a sermon, they should commit to understanding at least one truth they can share with others (parents: great way to follow up w/your kids' reading and Sundays after the sermon: make them share their bread).

4.8. POINT NOT TO MISS: What makes the difference between possessing strong conviction (courage and perseverance) with regard to the God/God's Word versus doubt and apostasy is whether or not you are loyal to believe/engage your mind/understand what comes from/agrees with God and His Word.

5. You cannot be loyal to persons/things that will not help you get to heaven or listening to what is not in agreement with God and at the same time be loyal to God, gain affection for God or deep conviction for the truths taught in His Word.

5.1. Jesus concludes His teaching on loyalty by warning us not to be deceived into thinking we have one foot in the church and one in the world.

5.2. (24) "No one can serve two masters...you cannot serve God and money (1] what is often needed to possess the "treasures on earth", 2] what often determines who we listen to/believe -i.e., those people that will get us money to buy earthly treasures – e.g.,)" = Our little loyalties: where you spend your discretionary time/money and what you are faithful to believe, are the things deciding our ultimate (or big) loyalty: who/what we are truly "devoted to" and "love" as our master in this life (God or self/this world).

5.3. POINT NOT TO MISS: 1) The little things determine the big thing. 2) God's measuring stick is action not aspiration (you are what you do - not what you *want to do*/think).

CLOSING CONTEMPLATION: (Deu 29:19): Are you being careful to make sure you are loyal to the little things (where you spend your money/time and what/who you are listening to)? Or are you like the Israelite of Deu 29 who was foolishly confident all was well (you were blessed) "though (you continue to) walk in the stubbornness of (your) heart?". If today were Judgment Day, what would your current discretionary and belief loyalties reveal as the one you were truly loyal to, God or mammon? Who did you serve in your free time last night?