

A TRUSTWORTHY MAN.

June 15, 2008.

Introduction.

Prov.20:6 says, “Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a trustworthy man?” This verse has two parts to it. Firstly, there is a declaration, “many a man proclaims his own loyalty.” Secondly, there is a question that sets up a contrast with the word “**but**”, “but who can find a trustworthy man?” The contrast here is not between loyalty and trustworthiness. “**Loyalty**” and “**trustworthy**” are used synonymously here. The contrast here is between the many who proclaim and the few who perform, between the profession of the many and the reality that is found in the few. The Bible makes it clear that it is the doing that is most important. In *Jas.1:25* we are told that it is the effectual doer who is blessed. In *Matt.7:21* Jesus set before us the eternal importance of doing the Father’s will. Let us begin our study by examining the two key words in this verse.

Loyalty.

The word “loyalty” is that rich Hebrew word **hesed** which also means : kindness; mercy; goodness; lovingkindness; faithfulness; unchanging love; unfailing love. **Hesed** is used in the O.T. to describe the character of God. It is translated “lovingkindness” **183** times in your NASB. The NLT used “unfailing love” instead of “lovingkindness”. With few exceptions, the many appearances of **hesed** is normally used to describe God.

A key passage for understanding God's lovingkindness is *Psalm 136*. Here the psalmist began by declaring that the Lord's "lovingkindness (**hesed**) is everlasting." The psalmist made it clear in the psalm that **hesed** is the foundation for God's character and God's actions. *Deut.7:9* describes God as "the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness (**hesed**) ... with those who love Him and keep His commandments."

When David came to God to confess his sins and seek God's forgiveness, he began with these words, "Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness" (**hesed**). (*Psa.51:1*). We may also translate, "according to your unfailing love" or "according to your unchanging love." When Nehemiah prayed for the restoration of Israel, he rooted his prayer in "the great and awesome God who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness (**hesed**) to those who love Him and keep His commandments." (*Neh.1:5*).

In *Micah 7:18* we are told that the Lord "delights in unchanging love", in **hesed**. In *Hos.6:4* the Lord told Israel, "your loyalty (**hesed**) is like a morning cloud, and like dew which goes away early." This describes for us the fleeting nature of their loyalty to the Lord. In *vs.6* the Lord said to Israel, "I delight in loyalty (**hesed**) rather than sacrifice." Here is a repeat of the truth found in *Micah 7:18*. We can also put *Hos.6:6* side by side with *1Sam.15:22* :

Hos.6:6 "I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice."

1Sam.15:22 "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice."

The man who is loyal to the Lord is the man who obeys God.

God is God of lovingkindness, unchanging love and loyalty. He delights in these qualities

and He delights to see these qualities in His people. Is God delighting to see these qualities in you?

Prov.19:22 says, “What is desirable in a man is his loyalty (**hesed**). And it is better to be a poor man than a liar.” The word “desirable” is strong and speaks of “**inward cravings**”. What a man inwardly craves is loyalty. But what others also inwardly crave in a man is that quality of loyalty. In this verse the loyal man is set in contrast to a liar. The fact is, a disloyal man is a liar. The writer is saying it is better to be poor and marked as a loyal man than to be marked as a liar, a disloyal man, an untrustworthy man.

Jonathan marked in David the quality of loyalty and so he said to David in *1Sam.20:15*, “you shall not cut off your lovingkindness (**hesed**) from my house.” The context of Jonathan’s request makes it a very powerful one. *Prov.21:21* says “He who pursues righteousness and loyalty (**hesed**), finds life, righteousness and honor.” Note the important coupling of righteousness with loyalty. The verb “pursues” speaks of an intense pursuit. Are you pursuing **hesed**? Are you pursuing the qualities of loyalty and unchanging love?

Trustworthy.

This brings us to the word “trustworthy”. The Hebrew word used here means “**trustworthy, dependable, faithful.**” Let me set before you, firstly, the contrasting picture. *Prov.25:19* says, “Like a bad tooth and an unsteady foot is confidence in a faithless man in time of trouble.” Take note of the word “faithless”. It describes a betrayer, one who deals treacherously. This is the Hebrew word the Lord used in *Mal.2:14* to describe the men who dealt treacherously with their wives. This is the

Hebrew word the Lord used in *Mal.2:10* to describe a man's treacherous dealings with his friends. This is the Hebrew word Job used to describe his friends who, instead of comforting him, were wrongfully accusing him. (*Job.6:15*).

Prov.14:5 tells us that a trustworthy man is a truthful man. We noted already that truthfulness is one of the qualities that undergird loyalty. *Isa.26:2* tells us that the trustworthy man is a righteous man. We have also seen the coupling between loyalty and righteousness. *Prov.13:17* sets a contrast between "a wicked messenger" and "a faithful (**trustworthy**) envoy." In *Deut.32:30* the Lord described the Israelites as "sons in whom there is no faithfulness (**trustworthiness**)."

The Hebrew Word Study Dictionary describes "**trustworthiness**" as a rare and beneficial quality in a man. The wise asked in *Prov.20:6*, "who can find a trustworthy man?" The idea is not that a trustworthy man cannot be found. What the verse is saying to us is that the finding of a trustworthy man is not an easy task. And when you find one, he is a rare find. In the passage before us the wise man is saying to his son : if you are looking for a friend, look for a trustworthy man. The son must diligently seek for that rare friend who has the rocklike quality of being conscientious in unfailing loyalty and kindness but, at the same time, he must also be the same kind of friend.

It ought not to be difficult to find trustworthy and loyal friends among Christians. After all, Christians are those who are required to imitate God and the God they serve is the God of **hesed**. He is the God of lovingkindness, loyalty and unchanging love. After his terrible sins, David could go to the Lord His God because He is the God of **hesed**. And he can root his prayer in God's quality of **hesed** because He is the God of unfailing love who is faithful to His promise to forgive sins. Sadly, we are often disappointed because we discover that the Christians we trusted turned out to be disloyal and untrustworthy.

This kind of disappointment ought not to surprise you. Our Lord experienced the worse

kind of disloyalty and untrustworthiness in Judas. He was the ultimate treacherous betrayer. To a lesser extent the Lord experienced the same disloyalty and untrustworthiness in Peter. It was Peter who boasted to our Lord in ***Matt.26:33***, “Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.” In ***vs.35*** Peter added, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.” But a few hours later Peter would be cursing and swearing that he did not know Jesus.

However, in the midst of such disappointments, there was John who remained loyal and trustworthy to the end. John followed Jesus from His arrest, through His trial and to the cross. (cf. ***Jn.18:15ff***). John stood unflinchingly at the cross as Jesus was crucified. The Lord Jesus would reward John’s loyalty and trustworthiness by committing His mother to John’s care. (***Jn.19:26-27***). John was a rare man in a most difficult time.

The point is, you should not allow your disappointments to stop your diligent search for a loyal and trustworthy Christian friend. He may be a rare man and a rare find. But his rarity makes him precious, most valuable. He is someone you need in this life. So do not stop your diligent search for a loyal and trustworthy Christian friend.

You should also be careful not to quickly write off someone who proved to be disloyal and untrustworthy. We tend to write off people too easily. There are reasons for that. The ***first*** is that we say we have been hurt. Well, welcome to the real world. You are not the first to be hurt in this way and you will not be the last. And you can rest assured that if God should spare your life you will be hurt again in the same manner.

The ***second*** reason is that, having experienced this peculiar kind of hurt, we tend to be unforgiving. You say, “*Pastor, that’s not true. I have forgiven so and so. It’s just that I can’t trust him anyone more.*” Could you imagine what would have happened if the Lord had taken your approach in His dealings with Peter? The ***third*** reason is that we fail to see our own faults and / or we fail to see them for what they really are. We either have no faults or our faults are mistakes. But another person’s faults are unpardonable

sins.

The Lord did not write off Peter. In the same manner the Lord does not write off you when you sin; when you betray Him; when you are ashamed of Him and deny Him. The Lord did not declare Peter to be unworthy of His trust. Instead, after the resurrection the Lord sought out Peter and restored Peter and rebuilt His relationship with Peter. (*Jn.21*). I want to emphasize that it was the Lord who sought Peter and it was not the other way around. The restored Peter would prove to be a most loyal and trustworthy servant of the Lord.

John Mark turned out to be untrustworthy in Paul's first missionary journey. (cf. *Acts 13:13*). Paul would refuse to take Mark on the second missionary journey and this would result in the break-up of the Paul and Barnabas missionary team. (*Acts 15:36-41*). However, in time, Mark would prove his trustworthiness and Paul would commend him to the Colossian church (*Col.4:10*). And when Paul was facing execution he said to Timothy, "Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service." (*2Tim.4:11*).

Now here is the important question you must answer : in seeking to find a loyal and trustworthy Christian friend and brother (or sister), are you, at the same time, cultivating and manifesting the qualities of loyalty and trustworthiness? What are some of the qualities we must look for to help us identify a loyal and trustworthy man?

A Trustworthy Man – A Man Of God.

Firstly, a **trustworthy man is a man of God.** The assumption here is that the trustworthy man is a Christian man. Your goal as a Christian man must be to grow in

Christ and become a Christian man who is equipped for every good work. If as a Christian man you are not striving day after day to become more and more of a man of God then, at best, something is radically wrong with your understanding of Biblical Christianity.

The expression “a man of God” was peculiarly used in the O.T. to describe the prophets. Thus, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Elisha and a number of unnamed prophets were described by the expression, “a man of God.” (*Deut.33:1; 1Sam.9:6, 10; 1Kings 17:18; 2Kings 5:20; Neh.12:24*). The expression marked in these men qualities that separated them from other men. The expression also tells us that they were men who, when they took action or spoke, they did so under and with the full authority of God.

In the N.T. this honored title, “man of God”, appears twice. It appears in *1Tim.6:11* and in *2Tim.3:17*. Please turn to *1Tim.6:11*. (**read**). In this passage the expression is applied directly to Timothy as the pastor of the church. But very importantly, it must be noted in *1Tim.4:12* that Timothy was exhorted to become an example before the people that was worthy of following. In other words, like Timothy, every Christian must become a man of God. In *1Tim.6:11* Timothy is being contrasted with the false teachers who are conceited, who teach false doctrines and who love and pursue after money. Timothy, as a man of God, must be the very opposite to these false teachers and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, etc. We saw earlier in *Prov.21:21* that as a Christian man you must pursue hard after righteousness and loyalty (**hesed**).

Turn now to *2Tim.3:16-17*. (**read**). The application here is more general. All Scripture is given to all believers so that all as men and women of God could become “adequate [and] equipped for every good work.” Now I want you to note. **Firstly**, it is conversion to Christ that makes you a man of God. It is not some special spiritual gift or quality that makes you a man of God. And it is not the call to the ministry that makes you a man of God. **Secondly**, the word of God is given to you to train you in righteousness.

This truth is confirmed in *Tit.1:1*. (**read**). “The knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness” could also be translated, “the knowledge of the truth which leads to godliness.” What makes you a righteous man? What makes you a godly man? Your knowledge of the word of God and the proper application of the word of God to your life.

Thirdly, Paul said that the word of God is given “so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” The word “adequate” means to make you capable and sufficient to meet all the demands you will face in this life as you live for God. The word “equipped” doubles the foundation. The word means “*to be completely outfitted; to be fully furnished*”. As a man of God you are completely outfitted, fully furnished, made capable and sufficient for “every good work.” “**Every good work**” will necessarily include the qualities of loyalty (*hesed*) and trustworthiness.

Men, young man, older man, little man, big man, God has fully supplied you with all that you need to become a man of God who is loyal and trustworthy to God, to your spouse and to your brethren in Christ. If you are not a loyal and trustworthy person you have no one to blame but yourself.

The Trustworthy Man & God’s Mandates.

The trustworthy man is one who has embraced God’s revealed mandates concerning Biblical manhood and seeking to cultivate them, mature in them and keep growing in them. Now Brethren, I just want to survey the Biblical material here.

In creation God created the man first. (*Gen.2:7; 1Tim.2:13*). By virtue of this fact man

was made the leader and given the priority. I want to make it clear, if you are a man you are a leader. God made you a leader. You may not be a ten talent leader but God has equipped you with enough leadership qualities to lead your home. A trustworthy and loyal man will embrace this fact and seek to become, within the boundaries of the abilities God has given to him, at the very least, an effective leader in his home. What is true in creation continues to be true in redemption. Paul said the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church. (*Eph.5:22-31*).

Secondly, the man was established as the head of the home and made the primary provider and protector for his home. (*Gen.2:15*). It is for this reason the wise man said to his son in **Prov.24:27**, “Prepare your work outside and make it ready for yourself in the field; afterwards, then, build your house.” What does this mean? It means the young man must prepare himself to provide and establish himself as a capable provider before making the move to establish a household.

This truth is reaffirmed in *1Tim.5:8*. Paul wrote, “if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” Take note of the verb “provide”. It actually means “**to think beforehand**”. Providing takes prior thinking and planning. The verb is present tense. Men, this tells us that there must be no end to your thinking beforehand and planning in order to provide. Provision must be made for every new day, for every new month, and for every new year.

This is exactly what the husband did for his wife in *Prov.31* that enabled her to develop into the godly excellent woman she became. Since Ruth is presented to us as an example of the excellent woman (*Ruth 3:11*), we also see this is true of Boaz. Boaz established himself as a capable provider before making the move to establish his household. As protector the man must do all in his power to protect his home from anyone or anything that will intrude and disrupt and / or bring harm to his home. Your culpable failure to protect your family has consequences related to the sixth commandment.

Thirdly, God also established the man as the spiritual head of his home by entrusting to him His revelation. (*Gen.2:16-18*). The man has the primary responsibility to know God's revelation and to teach God's revelation to his home. In *Deut.6:1-9* the men of Israel were commanded to have God's word in their hearts, to listen to God's word, to be careful to obey God's word, to love God and to diligently teach God's words to their sons. Turn to *Psa.78:5-7*. (**read**). The principle did not change in the N.T. Men still have the primary responsibility to listen to, to know and to teach God's word to their families. (*Eph.6:4; 1Cor.14:34-35*).

Fourthly, the trustworthy man is a man of courage. The easy way out when faced with crises, when faced with seemingly insoluble problems, when faced with dangers, is to become disloyal and untrustworthy. Then it's easier to lie than to tell the truth. Then it is easier to deceive than to hold fast. Then it is easier to cut and run than to stand firm. The trustworthy man is a loyal man of courage. He does not lie. He does not deceive. He does not cut and run.

The verb "**to be courageous**" is the Greek verb **andrizo**. It is derived from the Greek word **aner** which means "**man**". The antonym is the Greek word **nepiazo** which means "to act like a child." This verb is found in *1Cor.14:20* in which Paul said that with respect to evil we must be children.

In *1Cor.16:13* Paul exhorted the Corinthian believers as follows, "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong." The verb **andrizo** is translated "act like men". It also means "*to be strong and courageous; to conduct oneself in a manly or courageous manner.*" I want you to note that, despite these meanings, the verb "**to be courageous**" is usually coupled with the verb "**to be strong**". In the context Paul was calling upon the Corinthians to take a courageous, manly and strong stand against the false teachers and their false doctrines and immoral conduct in the church.

In the O.T. Joshua was told five times to “be strong and courageous.” (*Deut.31:7, 23; Josh.1:6, 7, 9*). Moses was now dead and Joshua was the newly installed leader of the nation of Israel. His job was to lead Israel into Canaan, conquer the land and divide it among the twelve tribes. This was a very daunting task. The opposite of being strong and courageous was to tremble and be dismayed. Why must Joshua conduct himself like a true or real man? Why must Joshua show himself to be a strong and courageous man and leader? Firstly, this was the command the Lord gave to him. (*Josh.1:9*). Secondly, the Lord promised him, “I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.” (*Josh.1:5*). Thirdly, Joshua’s mind must be rooted in the revealed word of God he had in his possession. (*Josh.1:8*).

It takes real strength and courage to be the kind of man God wants you to be in these days of wholesale rebellion against the word of God. But I want you to know that the Lord’s promises have not changed. The Lord promised in *Matt.28:20*, “behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” In *Heb.13:5* the Lord’s promise to Joshua is repeated to the Christian, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.” But this time the promise is more emphatically stated. The literal translation is : **“I will not not desert you, I will not not not forsake you.”** The literal translation has five negatives. The old hymn, **“How firm a foundation”** reflects this truth. The hymn-writer wrote :

*The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no, never, no, never forsake.”*

The verb “desert” also means **“to leave without support”**. The verb **“forsake”** also means **“to leave in distress”**. The trustworthy and loyal man is a courageous man. But he knows also that he has his omnipotent Lord and Savior standing with him and

supporting him. He knows also that whether in the fire, through the fire or out of the fire His Lord will be with him, supporting him, encouraging him and strengthening him. He is never alone and will never be alone.

Wanted – Loyal Trustworthy Christian Men.

This brings us to our final point that I want to deal with. I have entitled this : **Wanted – Loyal Trustworthy Christian Men.** We live in a world in which the church has been under attack from every possible quarter. The church is under attack from false religions and cults, atheism, evolutionism, communism, liberalism, and feminism. The church is under attack by politicians, the judiciary, psychologists, psychiatrists, homosexuals, lesbians, the media and a variety of special interest groups that hate Biblical Christianity. The list can go on and on. I can come here week by week and read to you one report after another of attacks taking place around the world against the church.

Over the years one of the primary points that have come under severe attack in the church is its teaching regarding the role of men in the society, in the home and in the church. An important extension of this attack is on the Biblical definitions and descriptions of the family. Sadly, the Biblical teachings on manhood and family life have been under attack by so-called the evangelical feminists and the pastors and theologians who support evangelical feminism. It does not matter that their attacks are rooted in a deliberate mishandling of God's word.

I want to assure you that things will not get better. These attacks will not only continue, they will increase. What will eventually happen is what we are seeing happening already. In the so-called free world more and more laws would be put in place that would legally re-define genders, marriage, and the family. Legislation would demand, as is already happening, that these new definitions be taught in schools as normal and that Biblical

definitions be portrayed as abnormal and as creating hate and disorder in the society.

Decades of onslaught from the feminist and homosexual / lesbian agenda has resulted in the disaster of destroyed masculinity in our world. The ranks of effeminate or effeminate-minded boys and men are growing every day. They are weak in mind and weak in body. They are poor thinkers, indecisive, and weak-willed. The strongest part of their body is their thumbs which are used in playing their computer games for hours. They wouldn't know how to kill a chicken and clean it if they had to so that they could eat. And they are afraid of self-assured women who are achievers. The truth is, Brethren, describing what I am seeing in our world makes me sick. I do not think going on any further with this description would be edifying.

What we need today are men, older men, younger men, fathers, and sons who are willing to go to their Bibles and work out what it means to be a Biblically defined man and embrace what the Bible teaches with heart and soul. What we need, as the very word **“man”** means, are men of courage. Men who will act like men and who will stop acting like children. We need men who will manifest they have backbones, who will step forward and become leaders in the society, leaders in the home, leaders in the church. We need Christian men of courage who are not afraid of pain, disappointments, failures because they know how to rise from the dust and press on.

I am tired of seeing weak-minded men who, at every turn, are always threatening to take their marbles and run home to mommy. My response to such men has always been : then take your marbles and go home to mommy. We need men who will be loyal and trustworthy Christians, loyal to the Triune God of heaven and earth, loyal to wife, loyal to family, loyal to the church, loyal to the gospel and loyal to one another as Christian men.

We need loyal trustworthy courageous Christian men who will stand like the Rock of Gibraltar when their Christian beliefs are being attacked, when the exclusive claims of the

gospel are being attacked, when their definitions of Biblical manhood are being attacked, when their definitions of the Biblical family are being attacked, and when their definitions of Biblical femininity are being misrepresented and attacked. We need loyal trustworthy courageous Christian men who will exemplify to the world what it means to be Christian husbands and fathers.

We need loyal trustworthy courageous Christian men who are willing to confront and rebuke their Brethren who are walking in sin or getting too close to the lines of compromise; who are willing to take young Christian men in hand and give them some guidance and counsel when they need it so that they could become men of Biblical manhood. I find, Brethren, there is far too much cowardice in the church. Anytime I hear someone say, *"Who me, I can't do that"*, I think to myself, there is a spineless coward.

Now in closing, I want to say to you boys and teenagers and young men, a single man can exemplify many of the principles of Biblical manhood. If God has called you to do this, I will not debate God's will for you. God be praised for the grace He has given to you. But I want you to understand that singleness is the exception to the fullness of God's revealed will. Singleness is an exception that has come into the world because of the fall. You cannot find a doctrine of singleness before the fall.

The embrace of the Biblically revealed principles of manhood means you will embrace marriage as the norm and set out, before God, to get married. It is in the preparation for and in marriage that the principles of Biblically revealed manhood are fully tested and exemplified. It is in the cauldron of *"you can't live with them and you can't live without them"* that the principles of Biblically revealed manhood are fully tested and exemplified.

In others words, you want to prove, *"I is man!"*, get married and seek to obey God and live out the Biblical principles of manhood as a husband and father. Until then, in the

words of Chaucer, you are a **“Chaunticleer”** crowing and strutting but with no hen following.

Brethren, the Biblical defined man is fast becoming an endangered species. You men in this church have the responsibility to pass on to your sons both in theory and practice what the Bible teaches about Biblical manhood. This will not be an easy task because you will be constantly opposed by the world’s mindset that has sold out to the feminist homosexual / lesbian agenda. I close with the Lord’s word to Joshua : “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” (*Josh.1:9*).

