

*“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified..., for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you.” – Deut. 31:6*

Sorry cat people, but God loves dogs! We had Buster, our schnoodle, for 12 years, and every day he was a reminder of God’s character trait we’re looking at today: Loyalty. While cats seem to eternally look like they are plotting your demise, leave a room for 10 minutes and when you return a dog will slather you with love as if you’d been gone for a year. Dogs are famously loyal. I was brought to tears last week when my 5 year old Isaac shared an insight into how he is processing the recent death of my mother, his grandmother: “Dad, I think Grandma is in heaven with Jesus playing with Buster!”

Right now we are looking at 9 different aspects of God’s character that are reflected in His creation, us. Each of us tends toward one of these aspects, but we all embody all 9 to one degree or another. We’ve looked at curiosity and helpfulness so far, and today we look at loyalty.

Time and again in scripture, God states that He will never leave us and He will never forsake us. That kind of loyalty is rare in this world where relationships are broken almost daily across the globe, but even more so when you take God’s timeframe into account with the word, “never”. When I say I will never do something, I mean for the rest of my life, about 40 years these days. When God says He will never do something, He means for the rest of His life, which is literally forever. “I will never leave you,” means more coming from God than from us. Yet this is His promise.

Some find it confusing, but I find it wonderfully real that sometimes even God needs to be reminded of His own loyalty. Abraham pleaded for Sodom, reminding God of His loyalty in Genesis 18. Moses pleaded for his people, reminding God of His loyalty in Exodus 32. And God never acts against His own loyalty, He just gets fed up sometimes. That’s a character trait I can resemble!

This aspect of the Image of God is natural for more Americans than any other trait. We are a nation of loyalists. Just think about how we began, not with disloyalty toward the British crown, but with loyalty to one another. And at our best, we see this running throughout our history. In fact, the presence of something is often seen most clearly when it is missing, as it seems to be today. Between the racial divide and our giving up on social distancing regardless of the consequence to our weaker population, we seem to be missing this aspect of God’s character today. But maybe not.

When our loyalty is taken to the extreme, it leads us to fear. Loyalty means we are not just concerned for our own welfare but for that of others as well, and this can lead us to live in constant fear of what might come next. Our loyalty can pretty easily transform into its shadow side of anxiety, and as we look at today’s America, I think it’s pretty easy to see our loyalty to one another transformed into a fearful anxiety about our public safety and health.

So, if we are all prone to loyalty to one extent or another, and more of us are prone to it more than any other aspect, America seems like a land ripe for God’s Kingdom truth. We who are loyal value loyalty, and there is none more loyal than God. Maybe we should tell someone that.

As you look at your own life, how is your loyalty level? Is this a large part of your outlook on life? Or is the fearful anxiety more descriptive of you? How can you better reflect the positive side of God’s loyalty in your life, trusting Him to take care of our anxieties?