



Betrayal: Prescription for Prevention

Betrayal- to deliver into the hands of an enemy, a violation of trust, to be false or disloyal to

As I look at the scripture, it seems that betrayal will be one of the most prevalent "crimes" of the day in which we live. Jesus said, in Matthew 24:10, that people will get offended, betray one another and even hate one another. The sad thing is that He is addressing it not only in the world but also in the church. The fact is that betrayal is something that can and probably will touch every life at some point. We see it in the family, political arena, business environment and in the church.

In Matthew 26:21, Jesus said, "surely one of you will betray me" and that seems to echo in our own lives. I don't prophesy it to happen, but the scripture is pretty plain that all of us at one time or another will experience a betrayal. We need to know how to survive a betrayal because it can be the most devastating, destructive, and damaging thing an individual can face. There are some good books out there that are excellent on this topic. Dr. Mark Barclay has a book entitled "How to Survive a Betrayal", and I would encourage you to get it and read it.

The reason that a betrayal is so devastating is because it usually involves a person close to us and many times comes at us unexpectedly. Psalm 55:12-14 says that "one who was my companion, who I went to church with, betrayed me" and that is why it is so damaging to us.

Divorce is nothing more than a betrayal, and it is a very difficult thing to deal with. We read in Luke 21:16 and Mark 13:12 that betrayal will happen in families which certainly includes the family of God or the Church.

I believe one of the reasons that people betray one another is that they refuse to take responsibility for their own actions so in turn need someone else to blame. They then place the blame for their problem on someone else, usually someone close to them. They then begin to lash out at that individual. There is an old adage that says "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure", and I believe that is something we need to consider today. I want to show you how to avoid becoming a "betrayal". I think the ones that have done the betraying did not consider themselves as such but got deceived and entered into a behavior pattern that ended up in betrayal. They had gotten so deceived that they did not and maybe never will see themselves as a betrayer. This deception can get so bad that they even think that they are doing God a service by their betrayal, see John 16:2. I want to show you some things that will help you to avoid this happening to you.

Guard Your Heart

Let's begin by looking at Hebrews 3:10 which states that our heart can and will lead us astray. This underscores the necessity to guard or keep our heart, which is what Proverbs 4:23 tells us. Matthew 15:18-19 and Mark 7:20-23 tell us that wrong activity and words start in the heart. Jesus said that we are not to let our heart be troubled, and that, my friend, is very good counsel. If you let your heart be troubled, your heart will trouble you and those that you are in contact with. Psalm 95:10 (Heb.4:3-5) says that we go astray in our hearts. These all underscore the need to guard our hearts.

Now with this in mind let's look at John 12:4-6 and Mark 14:10. We see here that greed, covetousness, and jealousy gave place to the devil or opened the door to the devil to bring evil. John 13:2 shows us that Judas' negligence in guarding his heart ended with the result of betrayal. This is repeated many times in churches, marriages, businesses and many other relationships.

It happened in Paul's ministry with a man named Demas, 2 Timothy 4:10. Another good example is found in Acts 5:1. Covetousness is defined as extreme desire to have or possess. Many times people covet what others have, whether it be a position, money, mate or possessions. Pride, self-righteousness, and not yielding to the Word and the conviction of the Holy Spirit will cause these things to take place. They produce a critical spirit and a judgmental attitude and will cause people to betray, rebel and miss out on the promises of God brought to them by faith.

Jesus was able to accomplish what He did because the devil had *nothing* in Him, John 14:30. Paul did not give place to the devil and did not let “things” have authority over him. We need to make sure that we keep our heart free from these things.

Stay Humble

We need to consider a scripture that I believe is very critical to this issue. Proverbs 13:10 says that only by pride comes contention. It is imperative that we are humble and remain humble. That means we remain teachable. Paul said in Philippians 2 that being humble is the attitude of Christ and it should be in us.

People today are much too casual about what they allow in their hearts. We must take this much more seriously than we do.

The Desire for Preeminence

I believe another thing to consider is the issue of coveting. We are told to covet or desire the gifts of the Spirit, but we cannot and should not covet the ministry gift. In 3 John 9, the Apostle John talks of a man that desired to have the preeminence - he coveted authority, position and recognition. That attitude will only cause problems for you and those you associate with. The ministry gift is given by Jesus and can not be attained any other way. Do not covet it!

Let me say a few things to ministers, leaders and bosses. Follow the principles of the Word when you appoint people to positions. The Bible is very specific about this and following God’s guidelines will save us a lot of trouble and will help us avoid

“betrayals”. Do not appoint “rookies”, novices or even someone that is talented. Wait for the right person and the right time. Sometimes betrayal takes place because of the immaturity of the person and that can be avoided when we follow the Word. Don’t just appoint people because they attend or are friends; instead, always give time to let them show their hearts. Samuel would have appointed others that looked better, but God looked on the heart and said to anoint David.

Remain Thankful

Always remain thankful. This is repeated throughout scripture and should always be heeded. When we cease being thankful, we are moving toward betrayal.

Where does betrayal start?

I believe that betrayal starts in private - in our homes, our thoughts with a conversation or a wrong thought pattern. (Ecclesiastes 10:20). Oftentimes, we don’t deal with disappointment or hurts and end up betraying. Do not let an offense or hurt become bitterness that will trouble you and others. It will end up defiling many. Hebrews 12:15.

This certainly is not a complete list but it is a good start. I have a more complete teaching on this topic, but it is too much for one article. It all boils down to this: we are all responsible to keep ourselves and our hearts free from the destructive forces that produce betrayal. Our hearts are all very productive and will produce whatever we allow to be planted in them. Take heed to yourself; do not be deceived and allow yourself to become a betrayer.