

Tested Devotion

April 11, 2010

I. Grow In Loyalty Ex. 16:2-4

One of the all-time greats in baseball was Babe Ruth. His bat had the power of a cannon, and his record of 714 home runs remained unbroken until Hank Aaron came along. The Babe was the idol of sports fans, but in time age took its toll, and his popularity began to wane. Finally the Yankees traded him to the Braves.

In one of his last games in Cincinnati, Babe Ruth began to falter. He struck out and made several misplays that allowed the Reds to score five runs in one inning. As the Babe walked toward the dugout, chin down and dejected, there rose from the stands an enormous storm of boos and catcalls. Some fans actually shook their fists.

Then a wonderful thing happened. A little boy jumped over the railing, and with tears streaming down his cheeks he ran out to the great athlete. Unashamedly, he flung his arms around the Babe's legs and held on tightly. Babe Ruth scooped him up, hugged him, and set him down again. Patting him gently on the head, he took his hand and the two of them walked off the field together. - D.J.D.

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A young man in the army confided to his padre that he never went about with another girl if he was within fifty miles of home, his loyalty went fifty miles.

How far does your loyalty to Jesus Christ go'

II. Grow In Confidence Ex. 16:11-15, 18

John McKay, of the NFL, tells a story illustrating the supreme confidence of University of Alabama football coach Bear Bryant:

"We were out shooting ducks, and finally, after about three hours, here comes one lonely duck. The Bear fires. And that duck is still flying today. But Bear watched the duck flap away, looked at me and said, 'John, you are witnessing a genuine miracle. There flies a dead duck!'"

McKay, A Coach's Story

A noted brain surgeon, Dr. Bronson Ray, was taking a stroll when he saw a boy on a scooter smash headfirst into a tree. Realizing that the boy was seriously injured, the doctor told a bystander to call an ambulance. As he proceeded to administer first aid, a boy not much older than the injured one nudged through the crowd that had gathered and said to Dr. Ray, "I'd better take over now, sir. I'm a Boy Scout and I know first aid,"

Source unknown

About halfway through (a PBS program on the Library of Congress), Dr. Daniel Boorstin, the Librarian of Congress, brought out a little blue box from a small closet that once held the library's rarities. The

label on the box read: CONTENTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S POCKETS ON THE NIGHT OF APRIL 14, 1865.

Since that was the fateful night Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, every viewer's attention was seized. Boorstin then proceeded to remove the items in the small container and display them on camera. There were five things in the box:

- A handkerchief, embroidered "A. Lincoln"
- A country boy's pen knife
- A spectacles case repaired with string
- A purse containing a \$5 bill—Confederate money(!)
- Some old and worn newspaper clippings

"The clippings," said Boorstin, "were concerned with the great deeds of Abraham Lincoln. And one of them actually reports a speech by John Bright which says that Abraham Lincoln is "one of the greatest men of all times." Today that's common knowledge.

The world now knows that British statesman John Bright was right in his assessment of Lincoln, but in 1865 millions shared quite a contrary opinion. The President's critics were fierce and many. His was a lonely agony that reflected the suffering and turmoil of his country ripped to shreds by hatred and a cruel, costly war. There is something touchingly pathetic in the mental picture of this great leader seeking solace and self-assurance from a few old newspaper clippings as he reads them under the flickering flame of a candle all alone in the Oval Office.

Remember this: Loneliness stalks where the buck stops.

Swindoll, *The Quest For Character*, Multnomah, pp. 62-3

III. Grow In Testimony Ex. 16:32-34

Is Your Honesty Above Question?

As a schoolboy, I worked with my father during the summer months. Each morning we stopped to pick up the early edition of the newspaper at a small grocery store.

One morning when we got to work, my father found that by mistake he had taken two newspapers instead of one. He first thought of paying the man the extra price the next morning, but then after a moment's consideration he said, "I had better go back with this paper. I don't want the man at the store to think I'm dishonest." He got in his car, drove back to the store, and returned the paper.

About a week later, someone stole money from the grocery store. When police pinpointed the time it occurred, the grocer remembered only two people being in the store at the time—and one was my father. The grocer immediately dismissed my father as a suspect, saying, "That man is really honest. He came all the way back here just to return a newspaper he took by mistake." The police then focused their investigation on the other man, who soon made a full confession. My father's honesty made a big impression on that non-Christian storeowner, and on me.

Does your Christian walk square with your Christian talk? Is your honesty above question'

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