

CHAPTER 6

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE VARIOUS TYPES OF PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE MUST BE FAITHFUL

Do not be like your fathers and your brethren, who were faithless to the LORD God of their fathers, so that he made them a desolation, as you see.

2 Chronicles 30:7 (RSV)

¹⁰"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? ¹³No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

Luke 16:10-13 (ESV)

*Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.*

Proverbs 27:6 (NASB)

The prospect of the Judgment Seat of Christ needs to become a vivid reality to you. It must be real enough to affect your daily life

It's not easy to be faithful, especially over a long period of time. There are so many ways that we can fail God and let other people down. Nevertheless, if we can learn to see the future Judgment Seat of Christ as a reality, then that will help us to be much more faithful, and to remain so to the end.

Accordingly, we may face temptations and we may want to take shortcuts, or let God down, but the thought of one day having to stand before Jesus Christ, face to face, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, will help to bring us back to our senses.

Remembering each day that what we are about to do that day will either bring rebuke or reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ will help to keep us on the right path. Therefore we really need to remind ourselves every day of the Judgment Seat of Christ and what will happen at it:

*The faithless will be fully repaid for their ways,
and the good man rewarded for his.*

Proverbs 14:14 (NIV)

¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; ¹¹for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." ¹²So each of us shall give account of himself to God.

Romans 14:10-12 (RSV)

Everything you ever do, however small, is going to be assessed and either rewarded, or not rewarded, at the Judgment Seat of Christ. I have asked God to help me to see that judgment as a very clear reality. I want to become more and more conscious of it every day as I go about my ordinary tasks. One day we will all have to give an individual account to the Lord Jesus Christ for how we used or misused, and invested or wasted, every day of our lives.

When you ponder on what it will be like to meet Jesus face to face at that awesome encounter, do not think of Him as He was when He was with His disciples during His earthly ministry. Instead, think of Him as He is now, as shown in the book of Revelation. When the apostle John saw Jesus as He is now, he fell down at His feet in awe, because seeing Him as He really is came as a huge shock. That was despite the fact that, during His earthly ministry, John had been Jesus' best friend:

¹²Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round his breast; ¹⁴his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters; ¹⁶in his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. ¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand upon me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

Revelation 1:12-18 (RSV)

Jesus is therefore to be feared. The need to face Him on that Judgment Day should concentrate your mind now. That is another benefit that comes from having the fear of the LORD.

Nobody will get away with anything at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Jesus sees everything we ever do.

Nothing we ever do will be overlooked. Jesus is continuously assessing the level of our faithfulness to decide what position and rewards (if any) to award to us in His Kingdom. See my Book Four for much more detail on the Judgment Seat of Christ and about what the Bible says about rewards and rebuke. Do not make the mistake of thinking that there is anything too small for Him to notice or care about:

*The eyes of the LORD are in every place,
watching the evil and the good.*

Proverbs 15:3 (NASB)

Everything that we ever think, say or do is being recorded in Jesus' infinite memory. He is concerned about every part of your life, especially the private things which nobody else ever sees.

Jesus knows all our real motives – therefore we may as well be totally honest with ourselves

There is no point trying to deceive Jesus or to hide things from Him. He knows exactly what you do and why you do it. He knows whether you are wholehearted or reluctant. Look at the glowing assessment God made of Caleb:

²⁴ But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.

Numbers 14:24 (NIV)

Jesus knows exactly how much we care about Him and how loyal we are to Him. Therefore do everything wholeheartedly, as if you were doing it for Jesus, because that is precisely what you are doing. We need to see every task, no matter what it is, as being done for Him:

²³ Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Colossians 3:23-24 (NASB)

You should resolve, as David did, to live a 'blameless' life. That is to live with integrity and to keep yourself away from corrupt activities and corrupt people:

*² I will be careful to lead a blameless life—
when will you come to me?*

*I will conduct the affairs of my house
with a blameless heart.*

*³ I will not look with approval
on anything that is vile.*

*I hate what faithless people do;
I will have no part in it.*

*⁴ The perverse of heart shall be far from me;
I will have nothing to do with what is evil.*

Psalm 101:2-4 (NIV)

Our word must be our bond

For many years I was involved in commercial litigation. I would act as a lawyer for one side or another in commercial disputes. Our client would either be suing or being sued. It would generally be because somebody had failed to keep to the contracts they had agreed. They would have either broken a promise or let some other company down in some way.

Having done so, instead of admitting it, the party in the wrong would generally deny it and seek to get away with it. Those who did that were unfaithful men who did not consider their word to be their bond. Sadly, there are very many people who act in that way.

For that reason, when contracts are entered onto between businesses, one of the jobs of the lawyers drawing up the contract is to give thought to what will happen if one of the parties breaks any of the terms. Even before the contract is entered into, we have to think about, and plan for, somebody breaking the agreement. We even work out in advance what the damages should be.

We also make provisions in the contract for our own client being in breach, not just the other party. That's sad, but necessary, because so few businessmen have any strong sense of honour. Many do not feel any shame at all at the idea of not keeping their word.

For the Christian, there has to be a higher standard. We must consider ourselves bound by our words, regardless of whether it was ever put in writing. We must view our own word as being unbreakable. A hundred years ago, or even fifty, that was how most business was conducted, but no longer. Too few people have enough personal integrity for business to be able to operate on that basis today. It cannot now be based on trust, because so few people can be trusted.

We need to be faithful in all our relationships

That kind of faithfulness and honour, where our word is regarded as our bond, needs to apply not just in business but in every transaction we make and in all our relationships. Look at how Samuel operated as a judge over Israel. He was able to challenge the whole nation to name even a single occasion when he had ever acted unfaithfully. Not one person was able to do so:

³ "Here I am; bear witness against me before the LORD and His anointed Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? I will restore it to you." ⁴They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand." ⁵He said to them, "The

LORD is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day that you have found nothing in my hand." And they said, "He is witness.

1 Samuel 12:3-5 (NASB)

Would you feel confident enough to stand in front of all the people who have ever known you and challenge them all to point out even one occasion when you have ever acted unfaithfully? Few of us could stand up to that test. We must seek to be blameless, like Samuel, in all our dealings with other people, even in the smallest details.

By contrast, one only has to look at the difficulties faced by the Democratic and Republic parties in the USA when trying to find a presidential candidate, out of a population of over 300 million. One would imagine it would be easy to find thousands of exemplary candidates for that office.

Instead, we see men coming forward, but as soon as the media begin to dig around and investigate their past life, all sorts of things come out, such as drug abuse, adultery, unfaithfulness or sexual harassment. We must be different and go to great lengths to maintain our integrity consistently and over the long term.

Faithfulness to God Himself

Being faithful to God is our greatest duty. He is the main person to whom we must be loyal. God wants us to make a clear and definite choice to follow Him alone and to serve Him with unwavering sincerity. We also need to be faithful in obeying God's Word:

¹⁴ "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵ And if you be unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Joshua 24:14-15 (RSV)

Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day."

1 Kings 8:61 (RSV)

Moreover, the prophet Samuel told the people of Israel that they needed to put away all other gods and serve only God. They needed to direct their hearts to Him only and turn away from all other competing attractions. The same applies to us:

³ Then Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ash'taroth from among you, and direct your heart to the Lord, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." ⁴ So Israel put away the Ba'als and the Ash'taroth, and they served the Lord only.

1 Samuel 7:3-4 (RSV)

King Saul was not faithful to God. He disobeyed God's commands and failed to seek God's guidance. None of that sounds spectacular or remarkable. Saul did what most of us do. Yet, it was serious enough in God's eyes to cause Him to take the kingdom away from Saul and to give it to David:

¹³ So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the LORD in that he did not keep the command of the LORD, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. ¹⁴ He did not seek guidance from the LORD. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

Faithfulness to our husband or wife

Over the past few decades there has been, throughout most of the Western world, a collapse in the sanctity of marriage. Divorce is at epidemic levels. One of the main causes of divorce, after selfishness, is unfaithfulness, where one party, or both, are committing adultery. For Christians that must never happen.

We must stay with our husband or wife through good times and bad, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death parts us. There must be an absolute determination to do all of that, no matter what happens. We must also resolve never to look at any person in an improper or lustful way. Be like Job. Make a firm decision not even to look at a member of the opposite sex:

*¹"I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?
Job 31:1 (NASB)*

We need to make a decision, as Job did, that we will have eyes for nobody else and that we will not commit adultery, even in our thoughts. We need to honour all the vows we made on our wedding day, no matter what temptations later come our way, as they surely will. The prophet Malachi expresses the strength of God's feelings about divorce very clearly. He says that God hates divorce:

¹³"This is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favour from your hand. ¹⁴"Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. ¹⁵"But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. ¹⁶"For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

Malachi 2:13-16 (NASB)

Faithfulness to our children and to our parents

Likewise, when we become a parent, we are entrusted with another sacred responsibility, for which God will hold us accountable. This is especially so for fathers. Yet, what we see around us in the West doesn't look much like this. There is a widespread abdication of responsibility by increasingly delinquent and feckless men. Many of them fail to take their duties seriously.

There are lots of men who put their job, or even their hobbies, ahead of their children. Being faithful to a child involves making a solemn commitment to devote ourselves to them. That means spending a lot of time with the child and putting the child's needs first, ahead of what we want.

In particular, it means taking responsibly for the child's spiritual condition. Too many fathers leave these issues to be dealt with solely or mainly by their wives. However, God will still hold fathers primarily accountable for their children's spiritual condition, whether they realise it or not. God has commanded all fathers to teach their children about Him and about the Bible:

*⁵ He established a testimony in Jacob,
and appointed a law in Israel,
which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children;
⁶ that the next generation might know them,*

*the children yet unborn,
and arise and tell them to their children,
7 so that they should set their hope in God,
and not forget the works of God,
but keep his commandments;
8 and that they should not be like their fathers,
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
a generation whose heart was not steadfast,
whose spirit was not faithful to God.*

Psalm 78:5-8 (RSV)

The emphasis that God places on the role of the father in bringing his children up to know and obey God flies in the face of our society's attitude and assumptions about fatherhood. Even in better families, it is usually left to the mother to teach the children about God, but that isn't how God wants it. Therefore we need to get into line with Him, especially those of us who are fathers.

See chapter seven of Book One in this series for a more detailed discussion of our duties to our parents. The biblical method of social security is for adult children to look after their own parents in old age. We are to honour them and care for their practical and financial needs. Therefore start to see yourself and your siblings as having that responsibility. View yourself as being at least one of the people who will care for your parents in their old age.

God will still hold you accountable for how they are treated, no matter how much you might seek to offload that duty onto the State. The only exception would be if you are genuinely incapable of helping them, due to your own health problems or poverty etc. However, we should not be quick to assume that we come into any of those categories.

Faithfulness to our friends and acquaintances

One of the main things we can do to show ourselves faithful to friends is to avoid gossip. Learn to control your tongue. If you are told a secret, then tell nobody. That will eventually transform the way people see you. People who can be fully relied on to keep a confidence are very rare. Aim to become such a person, so that others can trust you completely and confide in you, knowing that you will never reveal a word of what they say.

*13 A gossip betrays a confidence,
but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.
Proverbs 11:13 (NIV)*

The norm however, is to betray other people's confidences and to pass information on to others. We usually do it because we wish to be significant and to be considered to have inside knowledge. Resolve now to build a reputation, for the long term, as one who can be trusted with confidential information. Furthermore, seek to be the kind of friend who tells the truth, gives honest advice, and never engages in flattery:

*6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
profuse are the kisses of an enemy.
Proverbs 27:6 (RSV)*

Far too many people are false friends. They say things that they do not really mean. They appear supportive to a person's face but are disloyal to them, and critical of them, behind their backs. Resolve to do the opposite. Tell the truth to your friends' faces, but defend them behind their backs. If so, you will be one of a very small minority. People will eventually notice that and they will seek you out, especially in times of adversity:

*¹⁷A friend loves at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.
Proverbs 17:17 (NASB)*

*There are friends who pretend to be friends,
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
Proverbs 18:24 (RSV)*

Faithfulness to our employer

Having practiced in employment law for many years, I find it remarkable how many employees resent, despise, or even hate their employer. It seems to be the norm. This is frequently true even amongst Christians. Perhaps this malaise is more widespread in Britain, than elsewhere? However, the reality is that your employer has done you a great favour, simply in giving you a job at all. Presumably, that job is good enough to accept and remain in, otherwise you wouldn't still be there?

Why not start to view your job and your employer differently? Make a decision that from now on you will be appreciative and work diligently, even when nobody is looking. In fact, work hard especially when nobody is looking. The rarest thing for any employer to find in a member of staff is faithfulness. That has always been my experience. Even King Solomon thought so:

*Many a man proclaims his own loyalty;
but a faithful man who can find?
Proverbs 20:6 (RSV)*

*Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest
is a faithful messenger to those who send him,
he refreshes the spirit of his masters.
Proverbs 25:13 (RSV)*

*Trust in a faithless man in time of trouble
is like a bad tooth or a foot that slips.
Proverbs 25:19 (RSV)*

Apostle Paul gives clear instructions on how a servant should relate to their master. They must be faithful, trustworthy and loyal. The same applies to us today in our dealings with employers:

⁹Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

Titus 2:9-10 (NASB)

Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for any honest work,

Titus 3:1 (RSV)

⁵Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good any one does, he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

Ephesians 6:5-8 (RSV)

Resolve to become the most faithful member of staff at your workplace. It won't be very hard because few, if any, other staff will be competing with you for that title. If you do, your bosses will certainly notice. You'll be promoted sooner or later, either there or somewhere else.

If for some reason your current bosses refuse to reward you, God will probably move you to another boss who will. More importantly, Jesus will be so pleased that He will reward you for it Himself, even if your own boss doesn't. Whatever job you do, and whoever you work for, you are a “steward”.

That is a person who has been entrusted with responsibilities to look after certain people, property, money or tasks. A steward has a “duty of care”. He will be held accountable by his employer for the way in which he discharged his responsibilities. The same applies even if you do not currently have a job. You will have been entrusted by God with specific tasks or duties and He too will hold you accountable and gauge the extent of your trustworthiness, just like any other employer would do:

***Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.
1 Corinthians 4:2 (ESV)***

Please also remember that your duty to be faithful to your employer is not conditional upon him also being faithful to you. It is great if you do happen to have a good and faithful boss, but whether he is or not has no bearing on your duty to be faithful to him. So, you are not merely to be faithful in response, or as your part of a two-way arrangement. Just be faithful to your boss all the time, regardless of how he treats you.

The reason you must be faithful is simply because God wants you to behave in that way, not necessarily because your boss deserves it. The same is true of every other relationship. You are required to be faithful no matter what other people do. They will answer to God for what they do and you will answer to God for what you do.

Therefore don't confuse matters by imagining that there has to be a mutual faithfulness as a pre-condition to you being under any obligation to be faithful yourself. That is not the case. I emphasize that point, because a lot of people wrongly imagine that wrongful behaviour on our own part is justified if the other person has previously treated us wrongly. It isn't.

So, if your boss was to fail to pay you fairly, or on time, or if he was rude or disrespectful, that would not justify you in doing the same back to him. You must not be rude in return, or short-change him with your time or effort. Neither can you steal from him, just because he has stolen from you. Apostle Peter addresses this point in his first letter:

¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to the kind and gentle but also to the overbearing. ¹⁹ For one is approved if, mindful of God, he endures pain while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it, if when you do wrong and are beaten for it you take it patiently? But if when you do right and suffer for it you take it patiently, you have God's approval. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly.

1 Peter 2:18-23 (RSV)

You could, of course, openly question your boss, or even confront him, about his behaviour towards you. But nothing that he does would ever justify you in behaving discourteously, improperly, dishonestly or disloyally towards him. In short, you must be faithful, even if you are the only person who ever operates that way in your workplace.

Faithfulness concerning any responsibilities that are entrusted to us

When King Jehoshaphat, the godly king of Judah, appointed judges this is what he told them:

⁶He said to the judges, “Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD who is with you when you render judgment. ⁷Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe.”

2 Chronicles 19:6-7 (NASB)

He wanted them to be aware at all times that God is watching and will hold each one of them accountable for all that they do. The same is true for all of us. Whatever work we do, we are accountable for it, and we are doing it for the Lord. Even if we allow ourselves to forget that, it still remains true. Whether we are managers, or shop floor workers, or have any other kind of job, we need to learn to take every duty very seriously, however small it may seem.

We need to become the kind of person who, when they agree to do something, or are told to, put their whole heart into it. We must remain vigilant and focused until it is done, and done well. Nehemiah, when he was responsible for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, appointed men whom he knew to be more faithful than other men:

¹Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, ²I gave my brother Hana'ni and Hanani'ah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many.

Nehemiah 7:1-2 (RSV)

This reminds me of my own Dad. He took any responsibility exceptionally seriously and would go very far out of his way to ensure he never let anybody down. If he was asked to do a thing, or if he volunteered to do it, you could guarantee it would be done, not just on time, but early. I never saw him forget anything, or be late, or do a shoddy job. He could always be relied on 100%. When he left the army he was graded as having given 'exemplary service', which is not said of many.

Faithfulness to our colleagues at work and also to customers, clients, patients etc

It's not just with your bosses that you need to be faithful. It's with your colleagues as well, at every level. You owe a duty of care to everybody else at work to be reliable, honest and hard-working. Never take the credit for what others have done. If you are mistakenly praised by a manager for another man's work or input, then say so immediately and redirect the praise.

Always keep your promises and do your tasks faithfully. Do not let your team down. Start to see ordinary, everyday things like that as a part of the process of becoming a mature disciple. If you do, you'll be unusual. Most Christians do not think that their job has got anything to do with being a disciple. However, in God's eyes, it is an essential part of the Christian life, which He takes very seriously.

A Christian employee should be one of the last people to ring in to work to say he is sick. Even if the practice of abusing sick leave is widespread where you work, you must never join in. It lets your colleagues down as well as your company, quite apart from being dishonest. Therefore, even if the whole office does it, including the managers, you must still be the only one who doesn't.

Another group to whom we owe a duty of care are the customers, clients, patients etc that we serve in our job. If you are a mechanic working on someone's car, be completely honest, down to the last detail. Do your best standard of work at all times, regardless of whether the customer or client is

watching or will ever find out. Also treat every customer well, regardless of whether they are rich and powerful or poor and weak.

The reason to do your best work is not just so that you can avoid getting into trouble. It is because the customer is paying and is, therefore, contractually entitled to your best service. Focus far more on your duty to the customer than on any rights you might have, or think you have. The customer always comes first, not you. If you can understand that, and apply it, then the rest of it will come easily.

Faithfulness to our staff/employees/junior colleagues

If God has put you into a managerial position, or if you have your own business, that doesn't mean you have no boss. God is always your boss and you must report to Him daily. One of the first priorities He will have for you is to treat your staff fairly. Actually they are really His staff, not yours and God is very interested in how you deal with them:

Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

James 5:4 (NIV)

God is watching over the people who work for you, or under you, and He hears their cries. So, always pay wages on time. Don't hold them back just to ease your own cash flow. A Christian employer must still pay the wages, even when there is nothing left for himself. I have been in that place, in the past, as most businessmen have, especially when starting out.

Likewise, in dealing with staff, you have a responsibility to treat them fairly and to provide them with the opportunity to grow and develop. Moreover, one of the key duties of every boss is to protect the weak from the strong. In any workplace, unless the boss is vigilant, bullies and tyrants will inevitably emerge amongst the staff, and at every level. Even if you get rid of them, others will always arise.

There will always be some who seek to exploit, dominate and use their colleagues, especially the more timid ones. A good boss always steps in to side with the victim and to resist the bully or manipulator, however difficult or time consuming that may be. That is the duty of every boss, though very few bother even to consider it, let alone do anything about it. A Christian boss must be keenly aware of this and take it all very seriously.

Many bosses choose to turn a blind eye to bullying, domination and manipulation at work. That is because standing up to workplace bullies requires courage and is costly, in all sorts of ways. At the very least, it is emotionally draining and it takes up a lot of time. A good boss will inevitably get abused, undermined and lied about, and especially so if he ever stands up to workplace bullies.

Moreover, few people will recognise the price he is paying, or thank him for what he is doing. Bad staff and workplace bullies will band together to attack and undermine such a boss. You must fully expect that, and be ready for it. Even so, have courage and do your duty.

Use your authority faithfully. Stand up to such people and get all of them out of the business, even if you end up taking a lot of abuse and trouble for it. Be faithful to your good staff and defend them from oppressors and always choose the right course of action, not the easiest one.

Faithfulness to remember and repay those who have helped us

This is an aspect of faithfulness which applies in every relationship. There are bound to be people who, have helped you, given you things or prayed for you. Yet it is a feature of our selfish flesh nature that we tend to take such support for granted. We don't appreciate it enough. Many times we

do not even remember it. There are people who have done things for us but we forget them completely. Here is an example of that from the life of Joseph:

⁹So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me, ¹⁰ and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand." ¹²Then Joseph said to him, "This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days. ¹³ In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his cupbearer. ¹⁴ Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. ¹⁵ For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit."

Genesis 40:9-15 (ESV)

Joseph had helped and encouraged a fellow prisoner while they were in jail together, but when that man got out of prison he forgot Joseph completely and did nothing to help him in return:

²⁰On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. ²¹ He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. ²² But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. ²³ Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Genesis 40:20-23 (ESV)

Most of us have played the parts of both Joseph and the cup-bearer in our own lives. We have been unfaithful to others by failing to repay them, or even to thank them. We have also experienced how ingratitude feels when it is shown to us by others. The first step in remedying this fault is to recognise that it exists and to begin to give it thought. We need to reflect on what we owe to others and start to make an inventory. Then begin to thank people and take opportunities to repay them in whatever way you can when they need your help. Positively seek for opportunities to repay others.

Faithfulness to our enemies

One of the hardest things to learn as a Christian is how to handle your enemies, and defend yourself from them, yet without becoming like them. When dealing with fools or wicked people, they will use lies and dirty tricks and they will conspire with others to undermine you by any means possible. They recognise no moral or ethical boundaries to their behaviour. In short, they will do whatever they believe they can get away with, regardless of whether it is right or wrong.

Such considerations mean nothing to them. When an immature, fleshly, worldly Christian comes up against such opposition at work, or even at church, there is a tendency to operate in the flesh and to "give as good as you get". They will tend to respond in like manner and hit back at the person wrongly, even to the extent of using the same worldly tactics and methods.

They will justify this, if they consider it at all, by saying "Well, they started it" or "They did it to me, so why can't I do it back to them?" However, that line of reasoning isn't valid. We cannot fight fire with fire. That is we can't use the same carnal, devious methods that our enemies use. That makes the battle more difficult. We have to realise that other people can be wicked, and therefore anticipate all sorts of deviousness from them, whilst not doing the same in return.

We can certainly be very firm, decisive and assertive. We can also confront people, sack them, give evidence against them and so on. We just can't sink to their level, by sinning in our handling of them.

A mature Christian therefore treats his enemies better than most people treat their friends, even while he stands up to them.