

No. 13 Be Loyal, as Jesus Was (Symposium)
 -When Facing Death

[PLEASE NOTE: This talk includes a video. Each part in this symposium will address (1) how our loyalty is challenged, (2) how Jesus maintained his loyalty, and (3) how we can maintain ours]

HOW IS OUR LOYALTY TO JEHOVAH CHALLENGED WHEN WE ARE FACING DEATH?
(2 min.)

Many today fear death (g 12/07 3 ¶3-5)

They fear that they will be quickly forgotten

They fear what comes after death

They fear that their loved ones will suffer

Some fear that even speaking of death will invite it

The truth enables us to approach death with reliance on Jehovah

Many people would preserve their own life at all costs

Jehovah's people view life as a gift from God and will not be disloyal to him in an attempt to preserve life (Ps 36:9)

Death cannot separate us from God's love for us [Read Romans 8:38, 39]

However, the choices we make when facing death could distance us from Jehovah when we need him most

HOW DID JESUS MAINTAIN HIS LOYALTY WHEN FACING DEATH? (3 min.)

Jesus' decisions when he was facing death drew him closer to his Father

Although drugged wine would have dulled his pain, it might also have weakened his resolve (Mr 15:23; jy 298)

Despite experiencing pain himself, he put the needs of others ahead of his own

He cared for his mother both physically and spiritually by entrusting her to John (Joh 19:26; jy 300)

[Read Hebrews 12:2] Jesus focused on the joy ahead: contributing to the sanctification of Jehovah's holy name, being reunited with his Father, and proving the Devil a liar (lv 203 ¶19)

Most important, Jesus supplicated his Father for strength, even with "strong outcries and tears" (Heb 5:7)

Jehovah supplied his Son with the courage and the inner peace he needed to remain loyal

HOW CAN WE MAINTAIN OUR LOYALTY WHEN FACING DEATH? (4 min.)

Make sure that your medical documents are in order and that your doctors understand your position on blood

Select a health-care agent who you trust will be loyal to your wishes

Outline funeral arrangements clearly (w09 2/15 30-31)

Frank communication with nonbelieving family members can spare believing family members much heartache

Do not, in desperation, try "treatments" that are connected with spiritism

Distinguish between acceptable medicine and spiritistic practices (w06 3/1 25 ¶12)

Like Jesus, focus on the joy set before you!

You can contribute to the sanctification of Jehovah's name

You can provide proof that Satan is a liar

Upon your resurrection, you will experience the fulfillment of all of God's promises

Above all, supplicate Jehovah, and he will supply the courage you need to remain loyal (Php 4:13)

Remember that loyal ones "belong to Jehovah," even in death (Ro 14:8)

In the following dramatization, note how a person can show loyalty when facing death

VIDEO (3 min.)

BE DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN YOUR LOYALTY WHEN FACING DEATH (1 min.)
The wounds inflicted on Jesus, including the shame, the pain, even death, were not permanent (Ac 2:27)

In this system, in a sense, all are "terminally ill" with sin
Our only hope of a complete cure is through the ransoming blood of Jesus

All loyal ones will soon cry out: "Death, where is your victory?
Death, where is your sting?" (1Co 15:55)

A LIFETIME OF LOYALTY IS NO ACCIDENT (1 min.)

Loyalty is faithfulness motivated by love, and it grows stronger with time (c1 281-282 ¶4-5)

Loyal acts beget additional loyal acts and a life pattern of loyalty
Jesus set the pattern for us by:

Remaining subject to imperfect parents

Never wavering and never retaliating when persecuted

Never giving in to temptation

Staying humble when praised

Relying on Jehovah when tired

Sticking to Jehovah when his closest friends abandoned him

Jesus' pattern of loyalty was not broken even when he faced a humiliating trial and a cruel death

Drawing close to our heavenly Father, as Jesus did, will give us the stability and strength to overcome the most daunting obstacles

May our love for Jehovah grow as we "cherish loyalty" each day
(Mic 6:8)

TO BE COVERED IN 14 MINUTES