



"Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him" (Exodus 32:26).

Identifying With God

Central Truth: Loyalty to God should be your greatest allegiance.

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Certain occasions call for a public expression of your allegiance to God. When those times come, you must identify with God even if it sets you against family or friends. Jesus said, *"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me"* (Matthew 10:37). That underscores the central truth of this study: "Loyalty to God should be your greatest allegiance."

You must identify with God at work, in your home, on vacations, and at all other times. Such identification may be costly, but it is essential if you would be a true Christian. When the call is issued, *"Who is on the Lord's side?"* there must be no hesitation on your part. Give a positive, immediate response of loyalty to Christ.

Go with me to the foot of Mount Sinai. See a people in rebellion against God. Hear the call to take a stand against sin. Identify with those on the Lord's side who stood against family and friend because they stood for God. Look and learn.

Identification With God Is Challenged by Sinners (Exodus 32:1-6, 25)

The problem arose because many people lived by their senses rather than by faith. They needed a "god" they could see and touch. They had seen demonstrations of the Lord God when Mount Sinai smoked and trembled, when God spoke with the voice of a trumpet blast. But for six weeks Moses

had been gone up the mountain. During that time they had seen nothing, felt nothing, and heard nothing. They demanded that Aaron make a god whom they could carry, rather than trusting the Lord God who could carry them. How tragic it is that many people are living by senses rather than by faith today. That is not the way you live, is it?

The problem was the demand for the immediate satisfaction of their desires. They were not willing to wait in faith until the Lord communed with Moses and sent him back to them. They wanted a god that very day. As a result they lost their spiritual privileges just as Esau lost his birthright because he did not want to wait for food to be prepared (Genesis 25:29-34). God says, *"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD"* (Psalm 27:14). Wait for God to act in His due time. He is never late.

The problem was the Israelites' willingness to sacrifice to get their preferences. They had been paid for their years of servitude in Egypt when they asked and received jewels and gold and silver from the Egyptians (Exodus 11:2). But at Mount Sinai they donated that wealth to make a god they could see! Isn't it amazing what sin costs the person who is committed to pursuing it?

The problem is that sinners go from bad to worse once loyalty to God has been compromised. When Moses arrived in the camp from Mount Sinai, he saw the people stripped naked, running wild and out of control (Exodus 32:25). They had become a laughingstock to their enemies.

Let someone take a stand for God in that situation. It would be like taking a stand for God in a society that pays with tax dollars for the murder of the pre-born and extends preferential treatment as a minority group to sex perverts upon whom God has set the death penalty. Your identification with God's standards will be opposed by sinners. But you must take that stand.

Identification With God Is Required by Your Leaders (Exodus 32:26)

If you have a pastor who demands purity in you, thank God for him. If you have a Bible teacher who will not excuse or condone sin, thank God for him. If you have a church whose members exercise loving discipline upon one another, thank God for it. Remember that without holiness no person will see God (Hebrews 12:14).

Your spiritual leaders are responsible before God for you. One day they will give account to the Chief Shepherd, under whom they have served as your spiritual shepherds (I Peter 5:1-4). In that day they will report how well you followed their spiritual leadership. It will not be well for you if they

have to report your rebellion (Hebrews.13:17). When they say, "*Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me*" (Exodus 32:26), be sure you respond without hesitation.

Your spiritual leaders grieve over your failures and pray for your protection (Exodus 32:11-14). You would be surprised if you knew at what hours your pastor prays for you. While the idolaters were having an orgy before their golden calf, Moses was interceding to God for them. Sometimes the burden is so great that it is like birth pangs (Galatians 4:19). Thank God for spiritual leaders who love you, weep over you, and pray for you. Follow them as they follow Christ.

Identification With God Is Demanding (Exodus 32:7-29)

It is not easy to stand for God in a society which is turning away from God. It requires four things of you, just as it required four things of Moses and his associates.

First, it will demand a life of prayer (Exodus 32:7-14, 30-32). Do not give up on anyone who is in rebellion against God. Keep that person's name before the Lord as you appeal for his restoration. You can do more through prayer than you can through worry or criticism. Jesus intercedes for us (Romans 8:34), and we should pray for one another. Include sinners and saints in your prayers of intercession, if you would identify with God.

Second, it will demand acts of discipline (Exodus 32:15-24). Moses removed the object of sin by burning the molten calf in fire, grinding it into pieces and scattering it on the water. Then he disciplined the idolaters by requiring them to drink of the water which had been polluted by the ashes of their idol. "Harsh measures!" do you say? Yes, but recovery from rebellion involves discipline.

Third, it will demand acts of sacrifice (Exodus 32:25-28). How could the nation be rid of the vile effects of idolatry and be sure it did not crop up again? The idolaters must be executed. Men of the tribe of Levi gathered before Moses. Upon his command they went through the camp and killed every idolater. If that seems too brutal for you, it is only because you do not understand the dread seriousness of sin. It will cost you (though in a different way) to stand for God today.

Fourth, it will demand impartiality toward people (Exodus 32:29). In some instances a Levite killed his son, or his brother, or his companion, or his neighbor. What a demanding task! But sin must be rooted out. When it has taken an extreme hold, it must be removed by extreme measures. What would be involved if the people of God took a strong stand against sin in our

national life today? It must be done!

Identification With God is Rewarding (Exodus 32:29)

The Levites filled their hands to rid their nation of the curse of idolatry. They did it because they had this promise: *"Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD . . . ; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day"* (Exodus 32:29). What blessings came then, and what blessings will come now, when God's people fully identify with Him?

First, identification with God purifies the nation by removing evil influences. Idolatry was stamped out and Israel had no further problem with it through that whole generation. Such a purifying of society is desperately needed in our nation. Will you take a stand for God, holding elected officials accountable, and help rescue your nation from its moral morass?

Second, identification with God clarifies allegiance by identifying God's people. When Moses called, *"Who is on the Lord's side?"* many responded by going to him outside the camp. So God's people must separate themselves from the corruption of society and be known as the people of God. Only then can they be the *"salt"* and *"light"* that Jesus intends them to be (Matthew 5:13, 14).

Third, identification with God sanctifies the society so God's blessings can be poured out. Remember the wise man's statement: *"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people"* (Proverbs 14:34). God's promise to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing is valid today. If your nation expects to be blessed of God, she must live under His principles. Otherwise, His judgment will fall upon her. Seek revival for your land.

Identification With God Is Sacrificial (Exodus 32:30-35)

The general course of this world is away from God. The god of this world (Satan) is the enemy of God. The people of God will find that it is not easy to live godly in such a society. It will require sacrifice.

You must learn to sacrifice time in prayer (Exodus 32:30-33). Your prayers must identify you with the nation, and you must be willing to yield personal privileges for her salvation.

You must learn to sacrifice the blessings of God. Moses was willing to give his life for his people (Exodus 32:32). Paul was willing to give up his hope in Jesus for the salvation of his kindred in the flesh (Romans 9:1-3). What are you willing to sacrifice for the spiritual welfare of your nation?

You must learn to endure the judgments of God. Moses was willing for God's judgment on the erring nation to fall upon him also (Exodus 32:35). He so identified with his nation that he did not want to live if she was destroyed. That spirit will gain the ear of God and turn away His judgment from our nation today.

Identification With God Is Needed Today

The course of American society (particularly since 1963) has moved rapidly away from her Judeo-Christian heritage. The Bible has been rejected as the standard for life. Sexual perversion is rampant. Pre-born babies who were killed in their mothers' wombs now number in the millions. Human life is no longer sacred, as indicated by killings that occur daily. Material wealth is the goal of life for multitudes. All of that, and more, is the sin of a high hand against God. God's people must rise, identify with Him, and take a stand for righteousness. Otherwise, the judgment of God will surely fall on a nation He has blessed so greatly.

Secular society needs to see the people of God standing without compromise. Will you be one of those who are identified as belonging to the Lord? Remember the central theme of this study: "Loyalty to God should be your greatest allegiance."