



On the Same Page

“What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For **your loyalty** is like a morning cloud And like the dew which goes away early.” (Hosea 6:4 NAS95)

Forever-Family Fellowship

We will teach and practice truth-and-love relationships with brothers-sisters in Christ that must survive/thrive in the present because we believe that these relationships will last forever

All-Week-Long Worship

As the local body of believers gathers each Sunday for worship, we will inspire a worship experience for all age groups that will travel with you all week long. What we do on Sunday will assist you in your singing, in your praying, in your devotion, and in your witness.

Conversely, it is as you worship all-week-long that you will be prepared to enter into gathered worship on Sunday.

Day-to-Day Discipleship

As followers of Christ, we are disciples every single day. Respect for and commitment to Scripture is essential. We will show you how to interact with and respond to God's Word, both as individuals, and in groups.

Moment-by-Moment Mission

God, the Architect of the world and of our lives arranges appointments and interruptions. Each of us is called to represent His Son for the glory of His Name. We will cultivate a mind-set for moment-by-moment mission, whether close to home, or far away.

Loyalty Programs

The online version of Merriam-Webster dictionary gives recent examples in media of the word or concept that one is searching. For “**loyalty**,” here is the most recent: “Potbelly: Members of the free Potbelly Perks *loyalty* program can buy one Original or Big sandwich through Friday, March 21, and get a free one on the next visit.” That seems to be **what passes for loyalty** these days: **Potbelly perks**.

All of the recent examples given were from merchants seeking to establish a **loyalty program** whereby they could keep the customer coming back. It seems now that every chain has one. What must you do to enroll? Carry the card (your wallet will get fat) or download the app (you now have so many apps you can't find what you want on your phone). In addition they want your phone number so they can send you a regular barrage of texts, and of course your email address. Spam. What do you get in return? Often, you don't know for sure. I don't know if I've ever gotten anything for the dollars spent at O'Reilly's Auto Parts.

Now does it follow that you signed up for a loyalty program and if you shop somewhere else, you are being disloyal? Hardly. The meaning of the term “loyal” has been seriously downgraded. The merchant really has no obligation to you, nor you to them. It is just a trick on their part to get you to make their store a habit.

That's a long lead-in to what the Bible says about loyalty. And as for that, there's not much. It is not a common word in the Bible. The only verse in NASB, my preferred translation, is in Nehemiah: **13:14** *Remember me for this, O my God, and do not blot out my **loyal** deeds which I have performed for the house of my God and its services.* The word “loyal” is from the important Hebrew word *chesed*, used over 200 times in the OT, and only translated as “loyal” once. I don't think it should have even been translated “loyal” here! The word “loyalty” shows up only 6 times, and again

is from the same Hebrew word, which in all the other cases, has better words by which it is translated.

So there we have it - I'm kind of down on this whole "loyalty" thing. It is a modern word that is used to trivialize a deep and dear concept about fidelity to the covenant which God, and not Potbelly, has made with His children. **"Fidelity" is a "faith" word**, and so it has the idea of **keeping faith with the covenant with God** whereby we uphold our end (the light end) of the covenant, even as God upholds the heavy end. Nehemiah labored in a very difficult role to fulfill the calling that God had placed upon his life, and he did so in accordance with the covenant, displaying godly qualities even in the face of difficulty and opposition. Participation in this covenant is a gift of grace, and yet that inclusion comes with the desire and responsibility to reflect the character of God in the outworking of His will and ways. It's living in right relationship with God, a relationship that is given, but then lived-out in practical ways.

Potbelly's loyalty program includes no covenant, no grace, no relationship, and the cheapest of rewards. March 21 has passed, and your free sandwich has expired. That's loyalty for you.

Glorious Freedom by Richard Sibbes

Then again, we all expect glory in heaven; and how can we do that except we be fitted for it? The church is the fitting place for glory. We enter into heaven in the church here. We are hewn and squared here. If we be not holy here, we shall never enter into heaven. There must be a change begun here if ever it be perfected in heaven.

Notes:

Sunday School classes for youth and adults meet each Sunday, 10 a.m.

Ladies Bible Study meets on **Tuesdays, 10 a.m.** with a study of Ezra and Nehemiah

American House service this Sunday, 3 p.m.

Our Easter service is 11 a.m. on Sunday, April 20. An Easter breakfast will precede the worship service, beginning at 10 a.m. Pancakes will be provided, and you all can provide the side dishes that will make it even better.

Good Friday service is Friday, April 18, 6 p.m.

Weekly Worship @ 11:00 a.m.

This Sunday, April 6, we will prepare for Lord's Table with a **"Gospel Conversation"** between **"Jesus and Judas,"** assembling from the Gospel three stages of separation between the Savior and this particular sinner.

Last Sunday, March 30, we completed our Winter Series from Paul's letter to Titus with a final message bearing the series title: **Grace and Good Works** (3:8-15). [Listen to the message here.](#)

[Milford Baptist Website](#)

[Milford Baptist Facebook](#)