

Dear Friends,

July, 2025

Our beloved country will be 250 years old on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026! Many question what its future will be and others become offended if you say anything against this country. As a veteran who volunteered for service in the Army, I would consider myself a patriotic citizen. When I was sworn into the service I had to commit myself to be loyal to this country, with consequences if I broke my promise!

Jesus, in so many words, asks His followers to do the same, Matthew 6:33 ***"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness...."***, I interpret the term 'His kingdom' as similar to a country requiring loyalty. James strongly declares, in chapter 4:4, that friendship with the 'world' is hostility toward God. James is insisting that Christians be loyal to God over all other allegiances, or you will be declared an enemy of God. My Bible notes say there are ten verbs in James 4:7-10, all commands that require us to break with the old self life and walk humbly in the new life of loyalty to Christ above all else. If our commitment to God is weak it will often show in disloyalty in other areas of life. So much of the pain and heartache that comes to Alpha is caused by this problem the lack of loyalty. In time of war a country requires loyalty of it's citizens or a severe penalty is exacted. We see the penalties that come from lack of loyalty in family relations. Divorce is just one of the symptoms we see, others are mental /emotional problems, stress related illness, and ongoing family strife.

What is our responsibility in this need of being loyal? The 'world' screams in every venue "be true to yourself. This is not God's message but I hear many Christians thoughtlessly quote and practice putting self first and then wonder why they have so many problems. God will not make us be loyal, but He shows us how to put Him first. I use Romans 12:1 & 2 in our counsel to encourage loyalty. Paul is strongly urging us to surrender to God on all levels. Again the conflict between loyalty to God and the 'world' is apparent. ***"Do NOT be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is,..."***. Hebrews 11 discusses faith as a tangible and useful element of the Christian life and in verses 13-16 it says ... ***"and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth...they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God for He has prepared a city for them."*** Chapter 12 ***"...since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every obstacle and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus...."*** Loyalty is all about putting Jesus in the place of importance and ourselves as His loyal servants.

Please continue to pray for Alpha through the summer months.

Thank you for your generous grace to Alpha,

*Richard.*

Alpha Counseling

20730 Bond Road/Poulsbo, WA 98370

Alphapoulsbo.org/ (360) 779-3624