

The Power of Love and Loyalty

The Greek word *agape* is one of the most important words in the New Testament. It means unconditional love – the no-strings-attached love with which God loves us.

Agape's Hebrew parallel in the Old Testament, *hesed*, is less familiar but no less important. It means loyal love, and describes God's everlasting love for His people, Israel (and Israel's spiritual descendants, the church).

Writing about *agape* and *hesed* in his book, *Turning Points*, Dr. David Jeremiah, senior pastor of the Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California, observed: "Loyalty is almost a lost value in today's world. Everything seems to be for sale, including friendship, affection and devotion – the things that make up loyalty.

"Even Jesus' disciples found themselves lacking in loyalty on the day Jesus was crucified – all the disciples except one, that is. The disciple named John seems to have had a devotion to Jesus that the others lacked prior to His resurrection. John was the only one of the original band of disciples who stood at the foot of the cross in Jesus' final hours," Dr. Jeremiah said. "John was loyal to the very end. Every Christian should ask himself, 'Would I have been there with John? Will I be loyal to Jesus regardless of the price?'"

Dr. Jeremiah poses a question worthy of introspection for each of us as we consider our spiritual commitment.

And on the professional side – the mission we are called to do – unconditional love and loyalty are qualities that produce the highest form of relationship and peerless service to our residents. They are entrusted to us by God, and they deserve no less.

At the same time, love and loyalty among associates are central to the establishment and functioning of the ultimate in teamwork. And exceptional teamwork produces exceptional care.

– Beecher Hunter