

Nine Secrets of Healthy Relationships

Faithfulness – Part Eight

Galatians 5:22-23 (KJV) ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT) ²² But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law.

- Faithfulness is not a common word anymore. We use it at silver wedding anniversaries, or when we present a gold watch to a man who is retiring from a lifetime spent with his company. But 25-year marriages and one-career lives are quickly going the way of the dinosaur. With faithfulness pushed so far into the background, you might wonder if we understand what the words means anymore!
- But ironically, faithfulness is extremely common in other ways in our modern society. It is an integral part of human existence, and without it society would disintegrate. Just ask the residents of Chicago whose family members took Tylenol on September 29, 1982 expecting it to be a painkiller and not a life-taker. Just ask the families of World Trade Center employees, Pentagon employees, and airline passengers who saw their moms, dads, brothers and sisters off to work on September 11, 2001 expecting that everything would be as it always had been on every other workday.
- It is always an incredible shock to discover that something we have relied on has let us down; this shows us just how much we take faithfulness for granted!
- **FAITHFULNESS IS IMPORTANT TO HUMAN WELL-BEING BECAUSE HUMANS WERE MADE TO OPERATE ON THE PRINCIPLE OF FAITH.** (We inhabit a planet suspended without visible means of support, constantly spinning in space; there is nothing we can do to perpetuate the process, and nothing we could do to fix it if it started to go wrong!)
- Every day we breathe air we cannot see, eat food we have not examined, pass through traffic lights we assume will prevent accidents, and board planes we trust will stay up until they are meant to come down! We are totally dependent on things that are external to us. **That is what faith is ... FAITH IS DEPENDENCE!**

- **Hebrews 11:1,6** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ... But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.
- But **FAITH WITHOUT FAITHFULNESS is misplaced faith**, which only ends in disaster. That is why these two words in English are one word in the Greek language, because they are INSEPARABLE! (That's why some translations say "faith" and others "faithfulness")
- The Greek word "PISTIS" does mean "belief" but also "conviction, trust, confidence, fidelity, reliability, dependability." And **God is the best example of faithfulness!** He is faithful even when we are not!
- **2 Timothy 2:13** If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.
- **Revelation 19:11** And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.
- **GOD IS FAITHFUL TO ...**
 - **BLESS ME**

Lamentations 3:21-23 ²¹This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. ²²It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. ²³They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.
 - **PROTECT ME**

1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.
 - **FORGIVE ME**

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - **KEEP ME**

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 ²³And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

- The Bible teaches that I am saved by faith, and that I must walk by faith, live by faith, stand by faith, pray in faith and overcome through faith! But my faith has no power unless God remains faithful!
- Since the Fruit of the Spirit is all about reproducing the character of God in my life, what does FAITHFULNESS mean to me personally?
- **FAITHFULNESS IN MY LIFE MEANS THAT I HAVE ...**
 - **CONFIDENCE**
Revelation 2:10 (NIV) Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.
 - **CONVICTION**
3 John 3-4 (NIV) ³ It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. ⁴ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.
 - **COMMITMENT**
1 Timothy 1:12 (NIV) I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.
 - **CONSISTENCY**
Luke 16:10 (NLT) Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won't be faithful in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities.
- The Bible teaches that faithfulness must be demonstrated in our relationships with people as well as in our relationship with God. Only a relationship built on confidence, conviction, commitment and consistency can survive the pressures of life!
- Remember that faith/faithfulness is DEPENDENCE. That is the foundation of true friendship – you can depend on your friend, and they can depend on you! (Abraham was a “friend of God”!)
- The traits mentioned above are invisible to the casual observer, but painfully obvious to those who know us well. And faithfulness to God is found in the habits of our lives that no one else can see!
- Today, on Remembrance Day, we pause to honor those who were faithful because they believed in a great cause – our freedom.
- **We have an even greater “cause” to be faithful to!** And one day, we will stand before God to be judged, not on the basis of our successes, our achievements, our talents, our reputations, or our sacrifices, but solely on the basis of our faithfulness!
- **Matthew 25:21** His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.
- **1 Corinthians 4:2 (NIV)** Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.