

The Importance of Faithfulness

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Galatians 5:22–23 (NKJV) “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentle-ness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

James Dobson wrote, “One of the most tragic events during the Reagan Presidency was the Sunday morning terrorist bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, in which hundreds of Americans were killed or wounded as they slept. Many of us can still recall the terrible scenes as the dazed survivors worked to dig out their trapped brothers from beneath the rubble. A few days after the tragedy, I recall coming across an extraordinary story. Marine Corps Commandant Paul X Kelly, visited some of the wounded survivors then in a Frankfurt, Germany hospital. Among them was Corporal Jeffrey Lee Nashton, severely wounded in the incident. Nashton had so many tubes running in and out of his body that a witness said he looked more like a machine than a man; yet he survived. As Kelly neared him, Nashton, struggling to move and racked with pain, motioned for a piece of paper and a pen. He wrote a brief note and passed it back to the Commandant. On the slip of paper were but two words--‘Semper Fi’ the Latin motto of the Marines meaning ‘forever faithful.’ With those two simple words Nashton spoke for the millions of Americans who have sacrificed body and limb and their lives for their country—those who have remained faithful.”¹

Faithfulness has become a rare quality in this generation. King David lamented in his generation, “*Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.*”² David found it hard to build his kingdom with unfaithful men. His son Solomon made a similar observation: “*Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?*”³ The prophet Micah linked spiritual decline with unfaithfulness: “*The faithful man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among men...*”⁴ Faithfulness is important.

What is faithfulness? Faithful-ness is listed among the fruits of the Spirit. Faithfulness in spiritual things is evidence of the Spirit’s work in a person’s life. Drifting away from faithfulness is evidence of drifting away from the Lord. Faithfulness is the perseverance of faith, steadfastness in loyalty, and responsibility in stewardship. What we truly believe is what we truly value and we are committed to the things we value most. Therefore, what we truly believe and value is measured by the degree of our faithfulness.

Faithfulness is the fruit of true consecration. Fred Craddock, in an address to ministers, caught the practical implications of consecration. “To give my life for Christ appears glorious, to pour myself out for others...to pay the ultimate price of martyrdom—I’ll do it. I’m ready, Lord, to go out in a blaze of glory. We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking \$1,000 bill and laying it on the table—‘Here’s my life, Lord. I’m giving it all.’ But the reality for most of us is that he sends us to the bank and has us cash in the \$1,000 for quarters. We go through life putting out 25 cents here and 50 cents there. Listen to the neighbor kid’s troubles instead of saying, ‘Get lost.’ Go to a committee meeting. Give a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home. Usually giving our life to Christ isn’t glorious. It’s done in all those little acts of love, 25 cents at a time. It would be easy to go out in a flash of glory; it’s harder to live the Christian life little by little over the long haul.”⁵

How important is faithfulness? We can answer this question by considering practical applications. How important is faithfulness in the workplace—faithfulness to show up--faithfulness to do the job--faithfulness to do the job right day in and day out? Proverbs 25:13 (NKJV) says, “*Like the cold of snow in time of harvest is a faithful messenger to those who send him, for he refreshes the soul of his masters.*” Proverbs

¹ J. Dobson & Gary Bauer, *Children at Risk*, Word, 1990, pp. 187-188.

² Psalm 12:1 (NKJV)

³ Proverbs 20:6 (NKJV)

⁴ Micah 7:2 (NKJV)

⁵ Darryl Bell. www.sermon.com

25:19 (NKJV) says, *“Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint.”* Education, skill, intellect, and health mean nothing if the man is unfaithful.

How important is faithfulness in marriage? How important is it to you that your spouse remains faithful? Faithfulness to the marriage covenant is the foundation of a marriage. Hebrews 13:4 (NKJV) says, *“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”*

How important is faithfulness in ministry? 1 Corinthians 4:1–2 (NKJV) *“Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”* Ministry is a steward-ship given by the Lord. Faithfulness is not an option; it is a requirement.

How important is faithfulness as a test of one’s character? Jesus said, *“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. ¹¹ Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?”⁶* In other words, if we cannot be faithful with one dollar who will entrust us with one hundred dollars? If you are not faithful with little, who will entrust you with more?

How important is faithfulness in worship? If we are not faithful in our dealings with others, it will affect our ability to approach God in worship. Psalm 15:1–5 (NKJV) *“LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? ² He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; ³ He who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; ⁴ In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the LORD; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change; ⁵ He who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.”*

How important is faithfulness to the Church? Is it important that the preacher show up each week? Is it important that the worship leader be faithful to lead? Is it important that the ushers be there to serve? Is it important that the Sunday School teachers be present to teach their class? Is it important for the nursery workers be there for the little ones and their parents? Is it important that someone is faithful to clean the church each week? Is it important that people are faithful to support the church with their tithes? Is it important that people are faithful to attend the services? What would a church be like if everyone was as faithful as we are? Hebrews 10:23–25 (NKJV) says, *“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”* Vance Havner once said, *“God is faithful, and He expects His people to be faithful. God’s Word speaks of faithful servants, faithful in a few things, faithful in the least, faithful in the Lord, faithful ministers. And all points up that day when He will say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” What terrible times we have in our churches trying to keep people faithful in attendance and loyalty! How we reward and picnic and coax and tantalize church members into doing things they don’t want to do but which they would do if they loved God! The only service that counts is faithful service. True faith shows up in faithfulness. Not everyone one can sing or preach, but all can be faithful.”⁷*

How important is faithfulness in representing God? It is important that God’s people faithfully represent Him before others in both word and deed. Moses was chosen over his older sister and brother to be God’s leader because of his faithful character: *“Then He said, ‘Hear now My words: if there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. ⁷ Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. ⁸ I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in*

⁶ Luke 16:10–12 (NKJV)

⁷ Vance Havner, *Hearts Afire* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming Revell Co., 1952).

⁸ Morgan, R. J. (2000). *Nelson’s complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes* (electronic ed., p. 292). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

*dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?”*⁸ Miriam and Aaron had spiritual abilities but Moses was faithful. The Lord declared in Jeremiah 23:28 (NKJV): *“The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; and he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?” says the LORD.*” Those who represent the Lord must declare His word faithfully. How we need this in the church today!

How important is faithfulness in success in the kingdom of God? Many evaluate success by man’s standard. However, true success is determined by what we have accomplished in light of what God has planned. We are all entrusted with something from God. We will not be evaluated on the basis of the size of what we have been given but on the basis of our faithfulness to do with it what God has required. Success in the kingdom is determined by faithfulness. In His Parable of the Talents Jesus gave the master’s response to those who were faithful: *“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”*⁹ Faithfulness now will be all that matters then.

How important is God’s faithfulness to you and me? How much does it mean to you that God remains faithful to you? Have you considered that? What if God decided one day that He wanted to just do His own thing and not give attention to your life? What if you did not wake up this morning? What if the sun failed to shine? What if God decided He would not keep His promises? What if God decided that He would not be with you today? No, God is faithful. Deuteronomy 7:9 (NKJV) says, *“Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;”* Hosea 11:12 says that the Holy One is faithful. 1 Thessalonians 5:24 (NKJV) says, *“He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.”* Hebrews 10:23 (NKJV) says, *“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”* And again, Revelation 19:11 (NKJV) says, *“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.”* A. W. Tozer wrote in *The Knowledge of the Holy*, “Men become unfaithful out of desire, fear, weakness, loss of interest, or because of some strong influence from without. Obviously none of these forces can affect God in any way...The tempted, the anxious, the fearful, the discouraged may all find new hope and good cheer in the knowledge that our Heavenly Father is faithful.”¹⁰ God is faithful even when we are not. 2 Timothy 2:13 (NKJV) says, *“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”* Psalm 37:3 (NKJV) says, *“Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.”* One of the most beloved hymns of the church is “Great is Thy Faithfulness”. God is faithful. He is our Example!

We see then the importance of faithfulness. In addition, there are also blessings and rewards that come to those who are faithful. Consider the following. Psalm 31:23 declares that the Lord preserves the faithful. Psalm 101:6 tells us that the eyes of the Lord are on the faithful. Faithfulness receives the Lord’s acclamation of praise in Matthew 25:21 saying, *“Well done good and faithful servant.”* Faithfulness is rewarded with promotion in the kingdom of God, *“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.’”*¹¹ Faithfulness allows entrance into the joy of the Lord: *“Enter into the joy of your lord.”*¹² Those who are faithful will receive the crown of life.¹³

The unfaithful will not only lose the blessings and rewards that come with faithfulness, they will also be punished for their unfaithfulness. Proverbs 2:22 (NKJV) says, *“But the wicked will be cut off from the earth, and the unfaithful will be uprooted from it.”* Proverbs 11:3 (NKJV) says, *“The integrity of the upright will guide them, but the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.”* Proverbs 11:6 (NKJV) says, *“The*

⁸ Numbers 12:6–8 (NKJV)

⁹ Matthew 25:21 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Morgan, R. J. (2001). *Nelson’s Annual Preacher’s Sourcebook* (2002 Edition, p. 27). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

¹¹ Matthew 25:21 (NKJV)

¹² Matthew 25:21 (NKJV)

¹³ Revelation 2:10 (NKJV)

righteousness of the upright will deliver them, but the unfaithful will be caught by their lust.” Proverbs 13:15 (NKJV) says, “Good understanding gains favor, but the way of the unfaithful is hard.” Ezekiel 14:13 (NKJV) declares, “Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it.” Consider the master’s response to the unfaithful servant in the Parable of the Talents: “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.’²⁷ So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.²⁹ For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.³⁰ And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”¹⁴

Faithfulness is important. Faithfulness distinguishes the *possessors of faith* from the *professors of faith*. People are faithful to what they truly believe. Prove that your faith is real. Be faithful and cultivate faithfulness in others through your example.

¹⁴ Matthew 25:26–30 (NKJV)