

Faith

Faith has been described as taking God at His word and doing whatever He says (cf. Hebrews 11:1, 6). A person who lives by faith is faithful to God (2 Corinthians 5:7). He is reliable and dependable in everything relating to God. He is trustworthy to the cause of Christ. He can be counted on to obey the word of God. On the other hand, unfaithfulness to God shows a lack of faith. The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22 includes "*faith*" (KJV) or "*faithfulness*" (NKJV, ASV). There are several areas of faithfulness which need to be discussed.

First, there is faithfulness in little things. 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*" (Luke 16:10). Our faithfulness is seen by how we handle "*little*" things. Jesus used our care for material matters to illustrate how we will care for spiritual matters.

Second, there are faithful servants. Oh, how faithfulness is needed in the church of Christ! Faithfulness is a matter of loyalty to Christ. The "*faithful and wise servant*" is loyal to his Lord, honestly fulfilling his duties as a servant even when his master is not personally present to oversee his work (Matthew 24:45-47). God sees and knows what we say and do. If we are unfaithful (unreliable, negligent, and disloyal) servants, we will receive eternal punishment when we face God (Matthew 24:48-51). Let us be faithful to Him by fulfilling the tasks He gives us in His house, the church (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 4:2; cf. Gaius, 3 John 5-8).

Third, there is faithfulness in families. Consider what a difference it would make in the world if faithfulness were in every home. What if every husband and every wife were loyal to each other; if each could totally trust the other to be faithful to the interests and welfare of their marriage? Broken homes would be eliminated. What God has joined together would stay together. Millions of parents and children would not face the emotional, financial, and spiritual devastation of divorce. The positive impact on society would be tremendous. The effects of unfaithfulness on the family are profound, including infidelity, child and spousal abuse, selfishness, poverty, neglect, and chaos (Ephesians 5:22-33 1 Peter 3:1-2, 5-7).

Fourth, there is faithfulness at work. Faithfulness on the job is required of the Christian; he works with "*all good fidelity*" (Titus 2:9-10). Here, the Christian's faithfulness is contrasted with insubordination, abusive confrontation, and stealing from his master. When a Christian is trustworthy

at work he beautifies or adorns the gospel (vs. 10). When he is unfaithful, he tarnishes his name and blackens the name of Christ.

Fifth, there is faithfulness when we are tempted to sin. We need faithfulness to resist temptations. Withstanding temptation is accomplished through faith (1 Peter 1:6-9; 5:8-9; 1 John 5:4).

Being faithful calls for all our energy to be directed toward heaven (Colossians 3:1-3). Faithfulness helps us be deliberate and diligent in fulfilling our duties to the Lord. Hebrews 6:11-12 says, "*And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*" (Hebrews 6:11-12). Obedience to Christ increases our faith and assures us the victory of faith, eternal life (Luke 17:5-10; Hebrews 10:36-39; Revelation 17:14).

Adapted From Joe R. Price