

Christian Character in Recovery – Faithful Love For Each Day

Our society is becoming increasingly self-centered. People quickly discard spouses, friends, and promises if they seem to outlive their usefulness. Faithfulness seems to apply to only one person -- me. We want others to be faithful to us and to be dependable to do what they tell us they will do. But, what measure of faithfulness would others attach to us? How faithful would God say we have been to Him?

Faithfulness means to be trustworthy or reliable. Because God is faithful, His Spirit desires this quality in his children and when the Spirit of God develops faithfulness in our lives, the results are quite different from trying to do things on our own. God calls us to faithfulness by first being faithful to us. God responds to our prayers -- even our complaints -- and meets all the needs that no one else could possibly fill. His ultimate purpose is to make us faithful and obedient to his laws.

I dare to hope when I remember this: The unfailing love of the Lord never ends. By His mercies we have been kept from complete destruction. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each day. I say to myself, "The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in Him." The Lord is wonderfully good to those who wait for him and seek him. So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the Lord. And it is good for the young to submit to the yoke of his discipline. (Lamentations 3)

As God has been faithful to us, so He has given us many practical commands for faithfulness in service to others -- to strangers, to prisoners, those who are suffering, and to our spouse. Many of us with a dysfunctional background struggle to determine which behaviours and attitudes are acceptable. We've lived too long in the chaos of our own hearts and broken relationships around us. We've lived first for ourselves -- our wants, our desires, our perceived needs. We haven't known what it is to live for God first and do His will, and then find that our needs are met. We're used to living with expectations of how others should be doing certain things so our lives are okay rather than reaching out first to serve others knowing that God will take care of us if we do. God invites us, his disciples, to live in a way that has us

"being there" for others. We are to be people who can be depended upon to do good in a variety of circumstances. For example:

- *Continue to love each other with true Christian love.*
- *Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it.*
- *Don't forget about those in prison. Suffer with them as though you were there yourself.*
- *Share the sorrow of those being mistreated, as though you feel their pain in your own bodies.*
- *Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery.*
- *Stay away from the love of money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never forsake you."* (Hebrews 13)

God has demonstrated that He will always be there for us - on our good days and during our difficult times. God wants to live that same faithfulness in us as we relate to others - particularly when we feel let down by them. God has the desire and the power to fill us with courage and strength so we can be people of our word who make and keep promises, who do good to all people at all times, and who are known to be steady and solid in living God's values in our actions and our attitudes. Faithfulness is developed during challenging times and in imperfect moments in relationships. Instead of only treating people as they have treated us, we consistently treat them as we would want to be treated and as God has done so for us. We can be confident that God's presence and power are available to help us practice this kind of right living.

Faithfulness demands holding hard onto God and being steadied by God rather than knocked about by circumstances and the actions of others. God is faithful to bring us to this steady and satisfying lifestyle if we will surrender our choices and our actions to His plans and purposes. God is a faithful God who is longing to demonstrate His faithfulness to the world through us, His faithful disciples.

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. How does God invite us, His children, to be faithful to others?
2. What keeps us from being faithful in some circumstances?
3. Where am I struggling to be faithful these days and how can I walk in God's way in that relationship?