

Bite Size Bible Study

Faithfulness #239

By Lee Logue

For most of us, an eye-opening reflection is how faithful we have been throughout our lives so far and leaves us with a less than exquisite grade.

Have we been faithful to our family? To our friends? To our employers? To our church family? And to our God?

Judging from statistics I would have to assume that in the Western world, we as a group fall pathetically short of the goal.

Spouses pledge undying faithfulness to each other at their wedding, but 40 to 50% of those pledges are broken, sometimes more than once. 7000 children are also abandoned per year, revealing a lack of faithfulness to the child we brought into the world.

We also don't always display our faithfulness to our employer. We may waste time on the job, we may use our sick leave for other purposes, and so on. Or we may quit without good cause or prior notification.

Do we support our church family (if we have one)? Or do we feel that attending services once a week is all that is needed?

Lastly, but most important, our faithfulness to God. Do we try to follow His teaching to the best of our understanding? Do we study that teaching? Do we act on that teaching?

You might be feeling pretty low from what was written above. But don't despair. We are all learning and often awareness of past errors can help us succeed in the future.

Faithfulness is the action of remaining trustworthy to someone or something, and putting that loyalty into consistent practice regardless of extenuating circumstances.

Love and faithfulness are often paired together. Love (*hesed*) involves loyalty and more specifically covenantal loyalty. It is the love and loyalty God has toward humankind. Love involves being loyal or faithful to the one someone loves.

*Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
Then you will win favor and a good name
in the sight of God and man.* Proverbs 3:3-4 NIV

Something around one's neck is a constant reminder of the thing that is represented by that object. If that object calls for action on our part, then we have made it part of our character, and our actions will represent that object. Some

people wear a cross around their neck, which should remind them to act like Jesus, being loving and faithful.

*Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for;
through the fear of the Lord evil is avoided.*

Proverbs 16:6 NIV

When this was originally written it meant that through the love and faithfulness to the Torah, sins are atoned for because one is taught to avoid sinning.

But as we follow it through to the New Testament, we see that though Jesus' love and faithfulness to us, He did atone for our sins. But it is still our love for Him and our faithfulness to His teaching and way of life that we avoid future sins.

*Love and faithfulness keep a king safe;
through love his throne is made secure.*

Proverbs 20:28 NIV

Faithfulness to God keeps us safe, and through our love of God our being is secure.

*Like a broken tooth or a lame foot
is reliance on the unfaithful in a time of trouble.*

Proverbs 25:19 NIV

If we are unfaithful and can't be trusted, we are of no use to others. Our "yes" is only a "maybe if it suits me" so only few will trust what we promise.

Jesus when speaking to some Pharisees, mentioned that Faithfulness is just as important as other virtues.

*"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and **faithfulness**. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.* Matthew 23:23 NIV

Paul also tells us that faithfulness is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Unless we listen to the Holy Spirit and follow His instructions we will miss out on some of the joys of life.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, **faithfulness**, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

Galatians 5:22-23 NIV

Spend some time thinking about your own faithfulness. Where have you fallen short? What lessons can be had from those failures. This life was given to us to learn from the lessons we have now, the answers will go with us into eternity.

Let's make the most of our time now.