

Fruit of the Spirit #8

Galatians 5:22-23

So why talk about faithfulness? Because faithfulness sets us apart from other people in key ways, like: Faithfulness separates success from failure, the finisher from the quitter, the responsible from the irresponsible, the mature from the immature, and the righteous from the sinful.

We all have grown up and now live in a society that is unfaithful. Think about it. We live in a society where we can break up with someone without even verbally speaking to them. We speak in abbreviations and emoji's. (Case and point.) Show picture.

Even Hallmark has a card that says, "I can't promise you forever, but I can promise you today." I'm glad God promises us more than just today!!!! Psalm 100:5 says "For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations."

No matter how you feel about yourself, "His love endures forever." No matter what you've done "His love endures forever." No matter what people say about you, "His love endures forever." No matter what your past is, "His love endures forever!"

So let's be specific, what is Faithfulness? The American Heritage Dictionary defines it this way: Adhering firmly and devotedly, as to a person, cause or idea. Faithfulness is a stick-to-itiveness that won't be broken. It's the superglue of the heart that holds fast and won't let go. Faithfulness means you follow through with your commitments regardless of what it costs.

Throughout this series on the fruit of the Spirit, I have described each fruit as an expression of love for example: Joy is love rejoicing, patience is love enduring, peace is love trusting, kindness is love serving, goodness is love extending, gentleness is love touching, and self-control is love restraining, and faithfulness is love proving.

So now that we know how faithfulness is defined, let's see what faithfulness looks like.

Faithfulness in one word is Jesus!!! Hebrews 2:17 "It was necessary for Jesus to be in every aspect like us...so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God." Jesus lives his life with unwavering commitment and faithfulness. He didn't quit or throw in the towel when things got hard. Jesus remained true to His commitment regardless of the cost!!

How will we recognize faithfulness when we see it?

- The faithful will hold on to truth.
- Opinions will change; values will differ but truth remains the same. What is true for you is true for me, and what is true for me is true for you.
- Our society wants us to believe that truth is relative, that there is NO absolute truth but did you notice the contradiction in such a belief? How can you claim absolutes don't exist with an absolute statement?
- Revelation 2:25 says, " To the church in Thyatira Jesus says, hold on to the truth."

Values are relative; values will differ from person to person or culture to culture. Truth is absolute so hold on to truth!!!!

1 Here are truths we all need to hold onto:

- The Bible is the authoritative guide for how we live.
 - Jesus is the only hope for salvation.
 - People are more important than things.
- God owns everything and loans it to us for a short time.
 - What happens IN ME is more important than what happens TO ME.

So the first way we recognize faithfulness is by holding onto truth.

2. The second way we will recognize faithfulness; The faithful will PERSEVERE through difficulty.

- I have learned that there are 4 basic responses to difficulty in life but only 2 are the right ones. You can give up and be crushed. YOU CAN WHINE AND COMPLAIN, OR YOU CAN PRAY VICTORIOUSLY, AND REFUSE TO GIVE UP!!!
- Mark 11:23 “I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, go throw yourself into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.”
- I pray that when you have trials and difficulty God gives you an abundance of faith by which you can pray victoriously!! And other times when that mountain doesn't seem to want to move you have to stay faithful and persevere and with Gods help you can tunnel through your mountain!!
- Let's look at some of the Saints who had to persevere in faithfulness:
Hebrews 11:32-39

3. The 3rd way we will recognize faithfulness: The faithful keep their commitments.

- Jesus lived by commitment not by feelings. Jesus said, “Not my will but your will be done.” At the judgment seat, Jesus is not going to ask if we were successful, He's going to ask if we were faithful!!!!

4. Lastly, we will recognize faithfulness because: Faithful makes a fresh start.

- Psalms 51:10 “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

When you know that things are off in your life don't ignore them!!! Instead, face them and cry out to the one who can create in you a pure heart and can renew a right spirit with you!!!!