

FAITHFULNESS: The Fruit of the Spirit #8

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, **FAITHFULNESS**, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (*Galatians 5:22-23*)

The motto of the USMC is *Semper fidelis*, means “Always faithful.” We can count on one another. No man left behind.

Trustworthiness, fidelity, integrity.

Jesus was faithful because He finished the work he said he would do, He kept the commitment He made to His Father, He kept His promise, He sacrificed Himself on the cross.

Thayer’s Lexicon on *pistis*: (noun)

1) conviction of the truth of anything, belief

1d) belief with the predominate idea of trust

2) fidelity, faithfulness

2a) the character of one who can be relied on:

Mt 23:23; Ti 2:10; Gal 5:22

Titus 2:10 (ESV) ¹⁰not pilfering, but showing all good faith (fidelity, trustworthiness), so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

1 Cor 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. (*trustworthy - ESV, adjective - pistos*)

To be faithful (trustworthy) is to tell the truth, to keep our word, our promises, our commitments.

James 5:12 (ESV) ¹²But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

Matthew 5:37 (NKJV) ³⁷But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

“Above all...” make sure your words have integrity or else you will be condemned. I would have said, “Above all, have faith in God.” Or “Above all, love the Lord.” Or “Above all, love one another.” But James, the practical preacher, says above all, our words must have integrity.

Why is keeping your word *above all*? That is the question I want to explore as we consider... *faithfulness*

Faithfulness is claimed by many but found only in a few

- “Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, **but who can find a faithful man?” (Prov 20:6)**
- Paul found a few faithful men he could count on.
 - **Epaphras – Colossians 1:7 (NKJV)** ⁷as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is **a faithful minister of Christ** on your behalf,

- **Timothy – 1 Corinthians 4:17 (NKJV)** ¹⁷For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is **my beloved and faithful son in the Lord**, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.
- **Tychicus & Onesimus – Colossians 4:7 (NKJV)** ⁷Tychicus, a beloved brother, **faithful minister**, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.

Faithful – trustworthy in whatever God has placed in our hands.

Matthew 25:20-21 (NKJV) ²⁰“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ ²¹His 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.’

Matthew 25:28-30 (NKJV) ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. ²⁹For 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. ³⁰And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Faithful – trustworthy even in the small things.

In this way we prove our fidelity for greater things.

Luke 16:10-13 (NKJV) ¹⁰He 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. ¹¹Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*? ¹²And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own? ¹³“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

(future lessons on faithful stewardship, but now we turn our attention to the subject of lying)

Everybody lies!

Romans 3:10, 13 (NKJV)

¹⁰ As it is written: “*There is none righteous, no, not one;*

¹³ “*Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit; The poison of asps is under their lips*”;

Most people have no problem with lying. According to one poll, the majority of people interviewed said they have lied and would do so again, either to protect themselves or to keep from hurting someone else’s feelings, or to get out of trouble.

Maybe a father comes home after a long day at work, and as the family is sitting down to relax and eat dinner, the telephone rings. Someone answers and the call is for the father...and it’s a telemarketer. It is so easy for dad to say, “Tell them I’m not here!” Might say it without even stopping to think about it.

Lying without repentance and forgiveness leads to “the second death” described in Revelation, which says, “*all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death*” (Rev 21:8).

Psalms 89:14 (NKJV) “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face.”

God Keeps His Word

Hebrews 6:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation....

Numbers 23:19-20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ “God *is* not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? ²⁰Behold, I have received *a command* to bless; He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.

2 Timothy 2:13 (NKJV) ¹³ If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

AN ABOMINATION TO GOD

Proverbs 12:22 “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight.”

Proverbs 6:16-19 “These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.”

THE NEW MAN

Ephesians 4:22-25 ²²that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. ²⁵Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak TRUTH each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

FELLOWSHIP

Psalms 15:1-2 “Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart;”

Why Do People Lie?

- **For financial gain**
 - **Proverbs 11:1 (NKJV)** ¹Dishonest scales *are* an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight *is* His delight.
 - **Deuteronomy 25:15-16 (NKJV)** ¹⁵You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord your God is giving you. ¹⁶For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, *are* an abomination to the Lord your God.
 - A person might lie on his taxes in order to keep more of his money.
 - A salesman might lie to the customer about a product to make a sale. (*Some might say, “Oh, that’s just business. You can’t make a living in the car business if you don’t fudge the truth a little bit!” If that is true, then that person better get out of the car business, because he can’t go to Heaven if he continues to lie.*)
 - A man looking for a job might lie to the employer about his credentials in order to be hired.

- Someone else might lie to his employer by calling in and claiming to be sick when he actually just wants to take a day off.
- This is a very accepted sin in our society, but **Proverbs 21:6** says, “Getting treasures by a lying tongue is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death.”
- **For honor, prestige, reputation**
Acts 5:1-9 – Ananias & Sapphira
- **Fear, to stay out of trouble, to avoid looking bad**
 - Peter *Matt. 26:69-75*
 - We fear man instead of God
Luke 12:4-5 (NKJV) ⁴“And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. ⁵But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!
 - We see this in children caught with their hand in the cookie jar.
 - We see this with adults who might lie to the police. They are stopped for some traffic violation, and they may deny it altogether, or concoct some fabrication like, “I’m late picking up my child from school,” or “I’m on my way to the hospital.”
 - Clinton played word games before Congress to try to turn his lie into something other than a lie., "It depends on what the **meaning** of the word 'is' is" in his statement "there's nothing going on between us." He said it was truthful because at that time he had no ongoing relationship with Lewinsky.
- **To avoid responsibilities or inconvenience**
 - Excuses are often “made up”
 - **Luke 14:18-20 (NKJV)** ¹⁸But they all with one *accord* began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ ¹⁹And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ ²⁰Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’
- **To hurt someone**
 - Envy & hatred - *Jewish rulers – Matt. 26:59-61; Mark 15:10*
 - Revenge – *Potiphar’s wife Gen. 39:16-20*
- **For the “greater good” (not to hurt feelings)**
 - Ends justifies the means **Romans 3:8 (NKJV)** ⁸And why not say, “Let us do evil that good may come”?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. *Their condemnation is just.*
 - God defines what is “good”; no lying