



WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS FROM PASTOR LYLE WAHL

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Faithfulness

To most people faithfulness refers to the quality of doing what you say, or keeping your word, your promises. It describes being reliable and trustworthy, loyal. We even find it used to describe “man’s best friend”, dogs, who many consider the most faithful animal.

The New Testament word in Galatians 5:22 has the basic ideas of faith, trust and confidence, and then of someone who is trustworthy, reliable, *faithful*.



The Old Testament term is based in truth, and so being faithful, steadfast. Moses told Israel, “Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His faithfulness ...” (Deuteronomy 7:9)

We sing the great hymn *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* which is based on Lamentations chapter 3, “The LORD’s acts of mercy indeed do not end, for His compassions do not fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness” (22-23).

By nature people are not faithful. The pages of the Bible, of human history, paint a graphic and painful picture of our faithlessness. We could turn to many parts of the Bible to see this described. For example, the short book of Malachi, which closes the Old Testament, shows us God’s people not being faithful to Him, cheating and robbing Him, not holding to the truth, being unfaithful in marriage, and serving self because they see *no profit* in serving God. That is because, as God told us through Jeremiah, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?” (17:9).

We see this all the time in marriage, work, social settings, in academic settings. It is sobering to realize that over 60% of university students admit to cheating on exams, plagiarizing, or making up data during their university studies, that almost one out of five people admit to some kind of minor fraud, and that over 50% of people admit to not keeping confidences and jumping ship on a friend who is going through a crisis.

The Holy Spirit is at work to transform our character to be like that of Christ, including having the quality of faithfulness—Paul declares “the fruit of the Spirit is ... faithfulness.”

The critical question is “How does this happen?”

First, don’t skip the obvious. It is God’s gift by the work of the Holy Spirit. It is a quality of God that He wants you to have. Yes, we have our part in this, but faithfulness is part of the character that the Holy Spirit produces in faithful believers. Along with Galatians chapter 5 there is Philippians chapter 2, “it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to work for His good pleasure” (13).

Second, picking up on Philippians 2:13, we need to have the committed desire to be faithful, faithful to God, faithful to others. It means to truly mean what we sometimes sing,

“may all who come behind us find us faithful. May the fire of our devotion light their way. May the footprints that we leave inspire them to believe, and the lives we live inspire them to obey. Oh, may all who come behind us find us faithful.”

Building on that, stay close to and current with God. Jesus tells us,

“Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:4-5).

We have our part to play. Part of that includes, as Paul wrote in Ephesian chapter 4, “rid yourselves of the old self” (22), and “put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth” (24). Or, as Paul told Timothy, “flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22).

As you walk with God and allow God to work in you, He will make you to be faithful to be, in the word of king Solomon, “a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24), to be like God who has promised us “I will never desert you, nor will I ever abandon you” (Hebrews 13:5).

Pastor Lyle