

Step #3 – Becoming Faithful People

When we recognize God’s faithfulness, we recognize our own failures.

By examining our character traits in comparison to God’s character traits we see our own failings, both those we commit from honest error as well as our stubborn and rebellious nature.

- 1.) Recognizing that God’s faithfulness is first expressed in mercy, and recognizing that our faithfulness is imperfect and usually selfish, how should we respond to God’s offer of mercy?

Godly faithfulness is Christ- and others-centered.

(I Corinthians 1:9, II Corinthians 5:19-21, Philippians 2:4-7)

For God to demonstrate his character of faithfulness he had to send his son, Jesus Christ as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Jesus, demonstrating God’s faithfulness, took our punishment for the sins we have committed. In turn, God requires us to imitate his example in Christ by becoming people of faithfulness – true to our word and the attributes of mercy and grace.

- 1.) Make a list of some of the areas of your life where you ascertain yourself to be an unfaithful person. Marriage? Family? Work? Community? Speech? How can you exercise more faithfulness in these areas?

Becoming a faithful person first requires faith in God, and trust in his Word that lead us to acts of faithfulness.

(Hebrews 10:23-25, 11:6)

The essence of faithfulness is “trust.” When we trust something is true, we behave in a manner that is faithful to the trust we place in that truth. In other words, we become faithful. The first step to becoming faithful is to put faith and trust in Jesus Christ by believing in him, repenting of our sin, and receiving him as our Lord and Savior.

- 1.) Do you believe that Jesus Christ can make you a person of faithfulness?
- 2.) Our sin keeps us separated from God and faithless. Do you want to confess your sin to God and let him redeem you from unfaithfulness?

God’s Character & Man’s Ethics, Study #3 The Faithfulness of God and Man

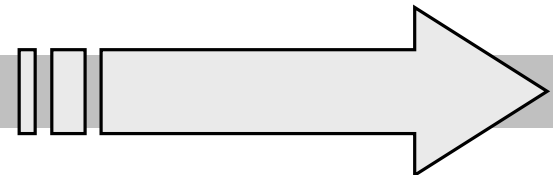
The Bible teaches that God “is the faithful God” (Deuteronomy 7:9), who always acts in faithfulness toward those whom he loves. The most important trait of God’s faithfulness is that he *always* does what he says (Numbers 23:19). When God speaks and says he will do something, whether it is to save or to condemn, we can be sure that he will always carry out what he says without fail (II Peter 3:9). Man, however, is not like God. He does not always keep his word.

Because we are first motivated by our own selfish desires and want to control our own lives instead of letting the faithful God control our lives, God counts us as unfaithful to his original purpose for creating us.

Thankfully, God’s faithfulness is more than just his acts to keep his word. God’s faithfulness is deeply connected to his goodness and truth. It is impossible to be faithful without also being true and good. God is true. God is good. God is faithful.

God has truthfully revealed himself to us. He has shown himself to be good in sending his son, Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins. And he has acted faithfully in that he promises from ages past to make a way for us to be saved from our sin – which he did through Jesus Christ.

In this study we will see that faithfulness is more than doing what we say (though that is of first importance). God’s faithfulness is an expression of his grace and mercy, and he can give us the same character trait of faithfulness that he possesses.



Step #1 – The Faithfulness of God

God's faithfulness is the dependability, loyalty, and stability of his thoughts, feelings, words, and actions toward himself and toward man.

(Exodus 34:6, Deuteronomy 7:9, Psalm 33:4-5, 89:14, Jeremiah 31:3, Ezekiel 24:14, John 14:14)

God's faithfulness is closely related to his attributes of truth and goodness. In fact, it is impossible to be faithful without the attribute of truth. Faithfulness means that God's always does what he says without fail.

- 1.) God's thoughts, feelings, words, and actions toward us are first expressed from his love, mercy, and grace for his creation. What would God's faithfulness be like if he was always angry toward us?

God's faithfulness is forgiving and redemptive in nature.

(Romans 5:10, I Corinthians 1:9, I John 1:9)

While God is just and right to take his wrath upon sin, the Bible also declares that the heart of faithfulness is first forgiving and redemptive. God always seeks to redeem the sinner from his sin, therefore, God's faithfulness is also first expressed through his mercy.

- 1.) God is "the faithful God" (Deuteronomy 7:9) who cannot become unfaithful. Of all of the so-called gods and spirits of the world, how is the One True Living God different?

God always thinks and acts in faithfulness even when we think and act unfaithfully.

(Numbers 23:19, Romans 3:3-4, II Timothy 2:11-13)

The true Christian has a relationship with God that pardons and removes God's wrath from him. God's faithful expressions of forgiveness and love will never change toward the Christian. It is God's faithfulness to us that guarantees our salvation even when we act in an unfaithful way.

- 1.) Since God always thinks and acts toward us in faithfulness, how should we respond to him when we are unfaithful and commit sin?

Step #2 – The Faithlessness of Man

Man is faithful to his own sinful character, but not always faithful to others.

(I Kings, 8:46, II Chronicles 29:6, Romans 6:23, James 3:14-16)

Man has the ability to do good things including showing kindness and faithfulness to those we love (Luke 6:33). But we are also sinners – people who have rebelled against God's faithfulness by rejecting God's Son, Jesus.

- 1.) Is your life characterized by faithfulness or unfaithfulness?
- 2.) Would others say you are faithful to your word, unfaithful, or somewhere in between?

Man's faithfulness is self-centered in nature.

(Galatians 5:19-21)

In contrast to God's forgiving and redemptive faithfulness that is directed at us, our faithfulness is first dedicated to our own will and desires. We are faithful to what we want, instead of putting God's will, or others needs, first.

- 1.) Read the following passage: Philippians 2:4-7. What are some ways that you can imitate these traits of humble faithfulness by Jesus Christ?

Though man often acts unfaithfully, he is the constant recipient of God's faithfulness.

(Exodus 34:6-7, Psalm 96:13, Acts 17:31, II Timothy 2:11-13)

Until our dying breath God patiently performs faithful acts for the righteous and unrighteous alike (Matthew 5:45). But his *patient faithfulness* is limited. He always acts faithfully to His character traits of love, mercy, and grace. But God is also a God who promises to one day punish those who have rejected his faithful demonstrates of mercy. Some day mercy will give way to judgment, and God says he will also be faithful to judge those who have rejected him.

- 1.) We can be on one of two sides of God's demonstrations of faithfulness. We can receive his faithful display of wrath, or his faithful display of forgiveness and love. Which side are you on now?

