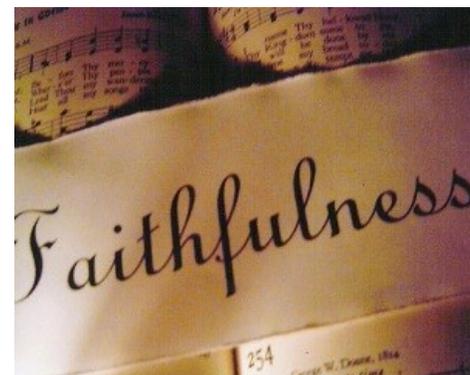


*Be Faithful
in
All Things*



Faithfulness

“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I hope in Him.’”
Lamentations 3:22-24

According to the Oxford Dictionary, being “faithful” means to remain loyal and steadfast. To be loyal is to have “a strong feeling of support or allegiance”, and to be steadfast is to be “resolutely or dutifully firm and unwavering”. Those are words with impact, and faithfulness is an impacting virtue.

When we think of faithfulness we may think of Old Faithful. Old Faithful is a cone geyser located in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, United States. It was named in 1870 during the Washburn-Langford-Doane Expedition and was the first geyser in the park to receive a name. It is a highly predictable geothermal feature and has erupted every 44 to 125 minutes since 2000. Old Faithful can be counted on to

erupt!

Faithfulness was one of the qualities evident in Ruth. Naomi had two sons, and both die leaving their widows behind. Naomi entreated both daughters-in-law to return to their own homes and families, but Ruth affirmed, “Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you. For wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me” (Ruth 1:16-17). Ruth was loyal and steadfast.

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960) penned these words in his great hymn, Great Is Thy Faithfulness: “Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with Thee. Thou changest not; Thy compassions they fail not. As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.” God is faithful. What about us?
...lsg



Volume 38 - Number 6 - Nov/Dec 2019
BC is published every other month. Send all inquiries, address changes and subscriptions to the editor: L Scott Gage, PO Box 3425, Fayetteville, AR 72702-3425 Voice 479-521-6809 Email: Lsgage129@cs.com

www.basicchristianity.net

Southerner was a typical gentleman of the old school. “What can I do for you?” asked the banker.

“Well,” replied the Southerner, “about thirty-five years ago I loaned a man down south some money---not a very big sum. I told him that whenever I should need it I would let him know, and he could pay me the money. I need some money now, so I shall let him know, and I should like to have you transact the business for me.”

“My good friend,” replied the banker, “you have no claim on that money. The statute of limitations has run out against that loan years ago.”

“Sir,” replied the Southerner, “the man to whom I loaned that money is a gentleman. The statute of limitations never runs out against a gentleman.” So the banker sent for the money. And within a reasonable time thereafter the money came. There was a gentleman at the other end of the transaction also.

There is an old English proverb that states, “A man’s word is his bond.” This simply means that a gentleman doesn’t tell you one thing today and then change his mind tomorrow. To the best of his ability a gentleman keeps his word.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful to live in a world where everyone kept his word? As Christians we are

encouraged to create just such a world. John writes, “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18). In essence John is saying that our words and our actions should produce an equal sum.

Abraham Lincoln is credited with this sage advice, “We must not promise what we ought not, lest we be called upon to perform what we cannot.” We should be careful what we promise and be sure that we keep our promises.

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.” Psalm 19:14

L Scott Gage
Vitamin E(ncouragement)
Mar. 8, 2010

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“It’s not whether you get knocked down. It’s whether you get up again.” ~ Vince Lombardi, American Football Coach

Deut. 31:6, “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”

Isa. 41:10, “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

Zeph. 3:17, “The Lord your God in your midst, The Might One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.”

2Cor. 4:16-18 “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the in-

ward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

1Cor. 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

Matt. 11:28-29, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

A Man and His Word

“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because

you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.” Matthew 6:33-37

The story is told of an old Southerner who walked into a banker’s office one day. The

Be Faithful in All Things

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.” Hebrews 11:1-2

At our calling we were excited about having found God and His truth. We may have even thought we were ready to face the lion’s den, crucifixion, the fiery furnace, or boiling oil. In retrospect, however, our failure to follow all God’s instructions, our weakness in trials, our impotence in tests of faith are mute testimony that our zealous, early faith, though encouraging, was not the kind Christ is looking for in His elect.

We may have even thought we were ready to face the lion’s den...

God seeks mature faith as we see in these Christians in Hebrews 11. They were faithful in little and followed through when everything was on the line. This is the mature, living, unwavering faith required for salvation that allows us to please Him. Have we reached the point where we do not fear those who can destroy the body, but He who can destroy both body and soul? (Matt. 10:28) Do we practice this living faith in our daily

walk? To do so would mean not only being faithful in the “big” things but the “little” as well. What are some of the little or daily things we should be faithful in?

One of the little things is church service attendance. (Hebrews 10:25) Almost all preachers go to this passage and state this is a mark of faithfulness. Indeed, it can be, but the Pharisees are good examples of people who faithfully “attended” services while their daily lives were failures in faithfulness. A Pharisee was a highly respected religious leader in the contemporary society. He did indeed stick to a rigorous, self-disciplined lifestyle in an effort never to break one of God’s Laws. But in his self-deceit, he gloried in his achievements, his fasting, giving etc., thinking that he would by that effort be acceptable to God. Christ spoke of their failed faithfulness (Matthew 23:1-7,15,27-28).

Attending services often becomes our outward show of faithfulness. Others may see us being very faithful in attendance, but we are actually failures in faith in daily living. So, if we think faithful attendance is a big show of faithfulness, what are the things we overlook that we may deem little or insignificant

attributes of faithfulness? (Luke 16:10)

Great men of faith learned to serve God by doing little things. Moses went from wealth and comfort to tending sheep for 40 years before God called on Him to set His people free. While Moses was revered by the people and honored by God's presence, Joshua was simply an obedient assistant. Yet through his simplicity of obedience, God

Great men of faith learned to serve God by doing little things.

raised a mighty warrior who would defeat all the enemies of the nation of Israel. By doing the smaller tasks of assisting Moses, Joshua proved that he was prepared to take hold of leadership. David was a humble shepherd. He defended his sheep from both the lion and bear in preparation for future battles. David was anointed by God to overcome the obstacles of being a shepherd before he could strategize and defeat the enemies of Israel. His courage was emboldened because of prior experiences of being tested when under threat. David started with learning the smaller responsibilities of being faithful under duress so that he could become a capable and mighty warrior for God. I do not have the time to speak of: Ruth, Esther, Gideon, Stephen, Paul and even the faithful-

ness of Jesus in doing the "little" things.

What are some of the small things in being faithful to God that we may overlook? Prayer is possibly one of them (Romans 12:12). Prayer should be as much a part of our lives as breathing. Do we pray in private? Are we ashamed to be seen praying in public? We are to continue instant in prayer; prayer is always needful, but especially in times of tribulation and distress, whether inward or outward. Prayer should be made without ceasing; saints should watch unto it with all perseverance; men should pray always, and not faint. We should never give out and over or be discouraged.

Another small thing we may overlook is good works (Ephesians 2:10; Galatians 6:9). We were created for good works. We are told to not grow weary in doing good works. There are many "little" things we can do. Visit the sick, invite others to services, feed and clothe brethren, strangers and even enemies, etc. Jesus said even something as small as giving a stranger a drink of water in His name could have eternal rewards.

Love is another way that we show our faithfulness to God. We are to love God because He first loved us, that we know. We are to love the brethren as the

Some Words of Encouragement

"I cried aloud to the LORD, and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah" ~ **David, King of Israel & Judah**

"It is said an Eastern monarch once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence to be ever in view, and which should be true and appropriate in all times and situations. They presented him the words: 'And this, too, shall pass away'." ~ **Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States of America**

"The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty" ~ **Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of England during WWII**

"When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on." ~ **Franklin D. Roosevelt, 32nd President of the United States of America**

"When written in Chinese the word 'crisis' is composed of two characters one represents danger and the other represents opportunity." ~ **John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the United States of America**

"Put yourself in a state of mind where you say to yourself, 'Here is an opportunity for me to celebrate like never before, my own power, my own ability to get myself to do whatever is necessary'." ~ **Dr. Martin Luther King, American Clergy-**

man and Leader of Civil Rights Movement

"There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why... I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?" ~ **Robert "Bobby" Kennedy, American Politician and Civil Right Activist**

"If you hear a voice within you say 'you cannot paint,' then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced." ~ **Vincent Van Gogh, Dutch Painter**

"When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us." ~ **Alexander Graham Bell, Scottish Scientist and Inventor**

"When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it." ~ **Henry Ford, American Industrialist, Founder of Ford Motor Company**

"I'd rather be a could-be if I cannot be an are; because a could-be is a maybe who is reaching for a star, I'd rather be a has-been than a might-have-been, by far; for a might have-been has never been, but a has was once an are." ~ **Milton Berle, American Comedian and Actor**

Excuses of a Faithful Church Member

Dear Pastor,

You often stress attendance at worship as being very important for a Christian, but I think a person has a right to miss Sunday worship now and then. I think every person ought to be excused for the following reasons and the number of times indicated:

Christmas (Sunday before or after for traveling purposes)
New Year (Sometimes the party lasts too long)
Easter (We have to be away for holidays)
4th of July (National holiday)
Labor Day (Need to get away again)
Memorial Day (Visit family and BBQ together)
Spring Break (Kids need a break)
School Opens (One last summer fling)
Family Reunions (Mine & Wife's)
Two Sundays for sleeping late (Because of Saturday night activities)
Death in family (Average 2 per year)
Anniversary (Second honeymoon)
Sickness (One per family member)
Business Trips (A must)
Vacation (Three weeks)
Bad weather (Ice, snow, rain, sometimes just clouds)
Ball games (Six per season)
Unexpected company (Can't walk out and leave them)
Time change (Spring ahead, Fall Back)
Specials on TV (Super Bowl, World Series, etc.)

Pastor, that leaves two Sundays per year. So, you can count on us to be in church on the fourth Sunday in February and the third Sunday in August, unless providentially hindered.

Sincerely,

A Faithful Member

(Author unknown)

Lord loved us! (John 13:34) Notice 1 Corinthians 13:7. Do we love the brethren enough to bear with them? By using the word 'stego' (meaning "cover, conceal, protect"), Paul means that it is an act of godly love when we keep silent about unfavorable matters.

I am not talking about overlooking the sin or letting it lie. In Galatians 6:1 we are told to go to that brother and HELP him. We are being told to restrain ourselves from talking about somebody else's sin. We are to refrain from hypocritical judgment and to help keep our brother's reputation intact; when we keep a sin or a fault "hush, hush" between us and the walls, as it were, that person has time to repent and to recover from it. We need to be careful not to let any of our brothers' sins become a source of mockery toward the church because we "let the cat out of the bag" and gossiped about it.

Here is the secret about what Paul taught on love in 1 Corinthians 13. Paul delivers to the church in Corinth one of the most remarkable, yet challenging, pieces of text about true love. In the process, he shatters the myths that abound today about love. He effectively says, "It doesn't matter who you are, who you think you are, or who others think you are; if you sacrificially act toward others with agape love, your life will be

meaningful." Christ told us several ways to DEMONSTRATE Christian love in Luke 6:35 and Matthew 22:37-40.

There are many other small things in which we can be faithful. And yet, there are no small things in being faithful to God.

Faithfulness in the smaller responsibilities speaks loudly to God's calling on our lives.

What task can we humble ourselves in today in order to be prepared for the future? Our willingness to do the small but necessary tasks can most certainly open the doors of greater opportunities for God to use us. We must trust God in the minor issues of life in order to gain a larger perspective of His purposes. Faithfulness in the smaller responsibilities speaks loudly to God's calling on our lives. May we be found faithful and willing to accomplish His will even in the perceived inconsequential things!

James Dunigan
Farmington, AR

Never Give Up

Millions will be watching a tennis match scheduled for later today. Not because they have heard of either of the players; John Isner of the U.S. is seeded 23rd in the tournament at Wimbledon; his opponent, Nicolas Mahut of France, is ranked 148th in the world. The interest is there because these two warriors have already played for 10 hours - in the same match!

Let's have a quick refresher on the rules of tennis. To win a match a player must win three sets (men's rules). To win a set, he must win six games, and he must win by at least a margin of two games. If the match goes to a fifth set, they play for as long as needed until one of them has a two-game margin.

Isner and Mahut played close to three hours to get through four sets. The fifth set has been going for 7 hours, 6 minutes and counting. The match began on Tuesday but was suspended because of darkness. The same happened on Wednesday. At 3:30 p.m. today they will try again to reach a decision. (No previous match in professional tennis history has ever gone nearly so long.)

I shake my head in amazement as I consider what these two are doing. Would I hang in there for

so long? I frankly doubt it. For one, I know my body couldn't endure it. But even if the body was able, would I be willing to keep slugging it out? Or would I deliberately flub just so I could get back to the locker room and down some more Gatorade? There would be no shame in such an act after battling for so long.

The apostle Paul once wrote about the need for endurance in living the Christian life: "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown" (1 Corinthians 9:24,25).

Isner and Mahut are a long way from winning the coveted championship at Wimbledon. No one gives either of them much of a chance. But even if they did, they would be handed a silver cup which would soon tarnish and would someday be destroyed. Compare that to the prize awaiting all Christians who successfully finish their assigned course!

But living faithfully can be so draining! We sometimes won-

der if it's worth the effort. Why not just flub the next serve and join the spectators in the stands? One inspired writer pointed to others who had endured, and then gave this exhortation: "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). If we need additional motivation, he tells us to look to the example of Jesus (Hebrews 12:2).

People haven't changed very much in the 2,000 years since that epistle was written. Our temptation to throw in the towel was felt by those Christians long ago: "Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:35,36).

Take some time to contemplate the slugfest making headlines at Wimbledon. Then ask: "If they can hang in there in hopes of winning some metal trophy, why can't I keep going as I run for the eternal prize?"

Timothy D. Hall
LightGrams
June 24, 2010

Why did Winston Churchill say never never give up? He didn't.

What he did say was:
'...never give in, never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense.'

Churchill said this on the 29th of October 1941 in a speech at the school he attended as a boy, Harrow School just outside of Central London. Churchill went on to say: 'Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.'

Churchill loved to visit his old school and did so many times. On this occasion, his speech, which is so often misquoted, was about twenty minutes long. One can imagine the context of the time of the speech in October of 1941, which were desperate times—before the Americans entered the war in December of that year. Great Britain was very much on her own as Poland, France, Czechoslovakia and the low countries had all fallen in the wake of Hitler's blitzkrieg (or 'lightning war').

Incidentally, Churchill had a photographic memory and even late in life he loved to sing the old Harrow School songs which he knew word-for-word.
<https://www.quora.com/Why-did-Winston-Churchill-say-never-never-never-give-up>