

Faithfulness

Purpose: To inspire the students to be faithful in all their relationships and their responsibilities.

Objective: By the end of the devotional the students will:

1. Understand what the word faithfulness means biblically.
2. Understand how this virtue is attributed to well known as well as to less known people.
3. Commit themselves to being faithful to the Gospel and to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others.

Key Verses: Matthew 25:14-29, esp. v. 21

I. Introduction

(Use an illustration talking about faithfulness. It could be about a faithful person or even a faithful dog or another animal.)

We have been looking at the fruit of the Spirit. The first three are God to man related. Love, joy and peace are gifts that God gives to us (I John 4:19, John 15:11, John 14:27). The middle three fruit of the Spirit are man-to-man. Patience, kindness and goodness are virtues that we exercise in our relationships with one another. The final three, beginning with faithfulness, are man to self related, involving personal integrity.

II. Meaning of the word faithfulness.

- Loyalty and trustworthiness in one's dealings with others.
- The faithful person is one on whose loyalty we may depend, whose word we can unreservedly accept.
- The person in whom there is the unswerving and inflexible fidelity to Jesus Christ and utter dependability on God.

Transition: Faithfulness is something we readily see exhibited in the lives of people. Crawford Loritts, in his book Never Walk Away has said that faithfulness is doing (a) what you said you'd do, and (b) doing what you're supposed to do. He goes on to mention that this is a character trait that parents must be exemplifying to their children and parents must also be trusting God and working with God to build it into their children. Who are some people you'd say are characterized by the virtue of faithfulness? *(Let them share a few, affirming their contributions. If not mentioned, you could say Billy Graham, Bill Bright, and other men or women with proven records of integrity in the ministry of the Gospel. They maintained integrity with their calling and fulfilled what God guided them to do. You may use other examples of well-known people of God from various cultures. The students should be familiar with the examples.)*

III. Examples of faithful people.

A. Examples of well-known faithful Christians

1. Timothy is referred to as “my beloved and faithful child in the Lord,” by Paul in I Corinthians 4:17

B. Examples of common people who are faithful.

Paul refers to many of his compatriots as faithful, most of whom are probably not in the forefront of our minds. Faithfulness and notoriety don't necessarily go together.

- Tychius (Tik-e-us) is called “a faithful minister in the Lord” according to Ephesians 6:21 and Colossians 4:7.
- Epaphras is “a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf” according to Colossians 1:7.
- Onesimus is referred to as “our faithful and beloved brother” according to Colossians 4:9.

C. Summary

Faithfulness applies to all of us. It is not something for the select few. It is the necessary qualification of the steward (I Corinthians 4:2), which we all are, and a teacher (II Timothy 2:2). Each of us is to be faithful.

(Share an example, personal or otherwise, of faithfulness or use this one:)

One of the most tragic events during the Reagan Presidency was the Sunday morning terrorist bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, in which hundreds of Americans were killed or wounded as they slept. Many can still recall the terrible scenes as the dazed survivors worked to dig out their trapped brothers from beneath the rubble.

A few days after the tragedy, an extraordinary story surfaced. Marine Corps Commandant Paul Kelly, visited some of the wounded survivors then in a Frankfurt, Germany, hospital. Among them was Corporal Jeffrey Lee Nashton, severely wounded in the incident. Nashton had so many tubes running in and out of his body that a witness said he looked more like a machine than a man; yet he survived. As Kelly neared him, Nashton, struggling to move and racked with pain, motioned for a piece of paper and a pen. He wrote a brief note and passed it back to the Commandant. On the slip of paper were but two words, "Semper Fi," the Latin motto of the Marines meaning, "forever faithful." With those two simple words Nashton spoke for the millions of Americans who have sacrificed body and limb and their lives for their country — those who have remained faithful.

IV. Conclusion

How much more should we as Christian soldiers in the battle for the souls of people glorify God with the fruit of faithfulness! Are you exhibiting faithfulness in your relationship to God, your spouse, family, ministry commitments, etc.? Are you faithful to the truth of the gospel? Are you sharing the gospel with others on a regular basis? Are you faithful in the little things as well as the big things?

Ask God to show you where you are being faithful. Thank Him for developing these areas of your life. Then ask Him where you are not being as faithful as you should be. Breathe spiritually. Ask God to fill you with His Spirit and to glorify Himself by manifesting in you the fruit of faithfulness.

V. Pray.

Praise God that He is faithful even when we are faithless. He cannot deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13). Ask Him to build this character trait in us.