

Faithfulness

by Wayne Goff

“Faithfulness” is also a fruit of the Spirit. Christians are to bear *“fruit”* for the Lord, and Paul’s letter to the Galatians tells us this fruit comes from the Spirit. *“You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them”* (Matt. 7:16-20). The lesson of Jesus for us is that if we are following Him through the Spirit then we **will** bear good fruit. So how do we bear the fruit of *“faithfulness”*?

Faithfulness Defined

“Faithfulness” (translated *“faith”* κϋν) is used in the New Testament to mean “trustworthiness, fidelity, the character of one who can be relied on, reliability.” The Greek word under consideration is more often translated “faith,” but is sometimes to be understood as “faithfulness.” But how can one Greek word be translated in two different ways? One authority explains it this way: “In accordance with the Greek feel for language (faith) can denote not only the confidence one has but also the confidence one enjoys . . . that is, ‘trustworthiness.’ This is related to ‘reliability’..., though there is a distinction...” [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, VI:176]. The same authority also said about this usage in the New Testament: “As in Greek this can mean both ‘faithfulness’ and ‘trust,’ though it is seldom used in the former sense” [p. 204]. The references cited include Romans 3:3 (of God’s faithfulness), Matthew 23:23; Galatians 5:22; Titus 2:10 (of human faithfulness). Therefore, from this explanation we can understand the connection of “faith” to “faithfulness” while realizing that Christians are required of God to be reliable, trustworthy; and one who can be depended upon by God and the brethren.

Am I Faithful?

For the purpose of self-examination, each one of us should ask ourselves: “Am I a **faithful** Christian?” “Am I reliable, trustworthy, and dependable?” Those who are led by the Spirit through God’s Word are such. We clearly understand the meaning of **“faithfulness”** since it is required of all employees by their employers, but we do not always expect of ourselves such faithfulness in our relationship to God.

For example, we know that we **must** faithfully work at our jobs. That means that we must be counted upon to be at work, to arrive on time, and to do our assignment(s) correctly and punctually. Another example is that of the school student. The school or college **expects** the student to attend classes, obey the teacher, do the assignments, and take home work to be completed and returned in a timely fashion. A third example is found in the home. What wife would say that her husband was “faithful” if he did not come home except every third night, if he did not work at some gainful employment to support his family, and if he did not keep himself to her alone? So we **know** the meaning of “faithfulness” in the family, the work place, and in school. Failure to be faithful would result in the termination of our jobs, or in “failing” school, or in the destruction of the family! Do we honestly think then that a lack of faithfulness to the Lord in our personal lives will not work harm?! Do we think that the church will not suffer when we are unfaithful in attendance, when we fail to faithfully serve, and when we are nothing more than a “dead limb” on the tree? We know better than that, but we suppose that since no *immediate* termination with God takes place that we are acceptable. If you think this way, then I admonish you to read Revelation 2 & 3!

How can I learn to be “faithful”? If we will follow the teachings of the Lord and keep His commandments, then we will become faithful. The matter is not really a question of *understanding* as much as it is one of *habit* and *practice*. Remember, dear reader, *“the just shall live by faith”* (Rom. 1:17; Hab. 2:4).

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