

Vital Supplement for Spiritual Vitality

Are you faithful?

Personal Reflections on the Exhortations to be faithful in Jude 17-25

If faith is placing your trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, believing that Jesus is God, and that He died on the cross for your sins and rose, again, then what does faithfulness look like? To be sure, being faithful to Him, at its core, is placing our trust in Him in the moment-by-moment details of daily living. Thus, the same requirement for salvation is the same requirement for growing in conformity to Jesus Christ (sanctification): faith.

But, if you are like me, you are concerned at times whether you will live a life of faithfulness because you recognize how frail you are—even though you are new creature in Christ. You observe how often you fail in loving the Lord your God from out of your whole mind, heart, soul, & strength. You recognize how often you are attacked by the conflicting desires in your own life because of both selfishness & habits you have formed (perhaps years ago) that are inflamed by the allurements of the world, & energized by Satan's counterfeit kingdom. Though you recognize the necessity to depend upon God by means of the open arms of faith, & you see the testimony of your past where He has carried you, you lack endurance, consistency, & constancy. Perhaps you believe you are plagued with too many "stops" & "starts" to even honestly describe yourself as one who is faithful.

In contrast you also see people who have been faithful. Sure, they've had their stops & starts as well, but they exemplified faithfulness as a way of life. People like the Apostles Paul, John, & Peter, & Christians like Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, Corrie Ten Boom, Francis & Edith Schaeffer, B.B. Warfield, Lewis S. Chafer, & John F. Walvoord left us with testimonies of faithfulness. Their legacies are there for us to see that we too can be faithful to the end.

Therefore, what does faithfulness look like? Perhaps one of the ways we can observe what faithfulness looks like is to first consider what mistakes we make that keeps us from being faithful. Afterwards we will consider some of the tendencies that represent faithfulness.

We are not faithful when our responses to situations are: (1) *Panic ridden*: i.e., anxiety, fear, or haste; (2) *Well-intentioned but not good enough*: We use wrong methods or poor timing; (3) *Marked by passive-negligence*: We are lazy, lack discipline, or are inconsistent; (4) *Identified with*

unrestrained curiosity: We pursue those things that are sensational, demonic, or sinfully enticing; (5) *Compromised by blind-spots*: Ignorance, poor habits that keep us from seeing, or certain influences. These five responses involve trusting in our own understanding, being controlled by our flesh rather than by the Spirit, a failure to trust God, quenching & grieving the Holy Spirit by lack of sincere confession of sin & yielding to Him, & our unwillingness to proactively address & mortify certain sinful habitual appetites or sinful tendencies.

On the other hand, faithfulness involves depending upon God, being controlled by the Holy Spirit, trusting Him, immediate sincere confessions of sin, walking by means of the Holy Spirit, & facing & mortifying our sinful appetites & tendencies. Thus, faithfulness, at its core, is exemplifying the characteristics of Jesus Christ by yielding to the Holy Spirit in the moment-by-moment choices of life. Thus, faithfulness is demonstrated when you...

... (1) engage in the "deepest joys of heaven" while your enemies attempt to thrash & ruin you; (2) Live out with resolve & determination truth in love & love in truth— even if it costs you everything; (3) Trust/rest in the promises of God even when you feel useless or used up; (4) Wash even the feet of those who stink; (5) Do not worry about tomorrow, next week or next year. (6) Like Jesus' prayer for daily sustenance, you know God's help comes day by day; (7) Refuse to waste temptations, trials, or tests; (8) Rather than permitting these temptations, trials, & tests to drive you away from God, you allow them to drive you to Him; (9) Sincerely offer forgiveness to those who pained you in both your talk & touch; (10) Are purpose-driven: You are able to trust God even if He never answers your "Why this..." questions. You are able to trust Him because God is the sum-total of His infinite perfections; everything is under His providential Care; (11) When you see sin from God's perspective; (12) You refuse to waste your life with those things that are temporary & insignificant but live for what is beautiful to God; (13) Take ownership of God's priorities to the extent that His priorities become yours. In other words, you live for Him; (14) Are a faithful steward of what God has given you; (15) Seek to demonstrate your love to God the most in your moment-by-moment choices; (16) "Maintain" or "keep" yourself in the love of the Lord; (17) See prayer a joy & a consistent discipline in your life; (18); You refuse to let up, give up, or be casted down; (19) Earnestly contend for the Christian faith; (20) Your singular ambition life & death is to please the Lord.