

# Be Faithful until Death

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## INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about Penelope, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #3398.
- B. We Christians must be faithful.
  - 1. “Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints! For the LORD preserves the faithful, And fully repays the proud person” (Ps. 31:23).
  - 2. “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).
  - 3. “It is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2).
  - 4. “Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).
- C. However, many Christians are not as faithful as they need to be in their service to God.
  - 1. They worship every now and then but not with any kind of regularity.
  - 2. After their conversion, they stop using alcohol but after a while they begin using it again.
  - 3. Once they become a Christians, they begin visiting the sick and shut-in but it’s “just too much trouble” so they quit.
- D. This morning, we want to examine the biblical teachings concerning our faithfulness and call us to faithfulness to God.

## WHAT KEEPS PEOPLE FROM BEING FAITHFUL?

- A. The things of this world prevent people from being faithful.
  - 1. The Bible shows us this.
    - a. “The ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity” (Lk. 8:14).
    - b. “Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Tim. 4:10).
  - 2. There are so many things in this world, which keep people from being faithful.
    - a. Money causes individuals to work long hours and thus neglect their families. Then, they feel they don’t need God, because they’ve succeeded in life.
    - b. Pleasure leads many to neglect the Lord. Instead of worshipping as they should, they play golf on Sunday mornings or they go the racetrack or they go fishing.
- B. Losing focus of what’s important in life prevents people from being faithful.
  - 1. This was the problem with the Ephesian church—“I have this against you, that you have left your first love” (Rev. 2:4). What was important to them in the beginning was no longer important.
  - 2. We, too, can lose focus of what’s important in life.
    - a. We allow ourselves to be involved in so many activities that we no longer have the time to devote to Bible study and prayer.
    - b. We fail to put God first in our lives—we don’t base all our decisions based on what he would want, we neglect to mention the Gospel to our family and friends.
- C. Evil influences prevent people from being faithful.
  - 1. The Bible contains many examples of those who forsook God because of evil influences.
    - a. “It was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David” (1 Ki. 11:4).
    - b. “There was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in me sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up” (1 Ki. 21:25).
  - 2. Illustration about a guest putting coffee in his saucer because Calvin Coolidge did so, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #1686.
- D. False doctrine prevents people from being faithful.
  - 1. The Bible shows this.
    - a. “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel” (Gal. 1:6).
    - b. “You allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols” (Rev. 2:20).
  - 2. False doctrine leads many astray.
    - a. Individuals become Christians and know the truth, but they have a friend who attends a denominational church, so they attend every now and then, and before they know it, they believe what that church teaches.
    - b. A new convert never studies Scripture, and so when a denominational group knocks on his door he falls for what they teach.
- E. Selfishness prevents people from being faithful.

1. “The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways” (Prov. 14:14).
  2. So many fall away because they are selfish—they don’t care what God says they’re going to do what they want to do.
- F. What is preventing you from being faithful?

## HOW CAN WE BE FAITHFUL?

- A. We can remember the love that God has for us.
1. The love of God is a powerful force in our efforts to be faithful.
    - a. “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love” (Jn. 15:9).
    - b. Speaking of winning the lost, Paul says, “The love of Christ compels us” (2 Cor. 5:14)—Just as Christ’s love compelled Paul to evangelize, it should compel us to live holy lives.
  2. As we think of God’s love, what could we do but be faithful? When we think of all Jesus endured to save our souls, how could we not be faithful?
  3. Illustration about William Dixon rescuing a boy from a fire, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #4482.
    - a. That boy owed his life to that man’s love, and the boy, therefore, would undoubtedly return that love.
    - b. Because God loves us, we should return that love. Are you returning God’s love?
- B. We can remember the benefits of remaining faithful.
1. There are many benefits to remaining faithful.
    - a. “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Gal. 6:9).
    - b. “The LORD preserves the faithful” (Ps. 31:23).
    - c. “Hold fast to what you have, that no one may take your crown” (Rev. 3:11).
  2. Since we know that God will richly reward us, we should be faithful.
    - a. If we are faithful, God will save us and glorify us in the life to come.
      - 1) As the song says, “Just one glimpse of him in glory will the toils of life repay.”
      - 2) Surely, seeing Jesus face to face will be reward enough for our faithfulness.
    - b. Are you faithful? Will God reward you’?
- C. We can remember the things of God.
1. Scripture is a powerful force in our efforts to remain faithful—“You must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them” (2 Tim. 3:14).
  2. Remembering the things of God will help us overcome temptation.
    - a. “Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You” (Ps. 119:11).
    - b. Each time Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus replied, “It is written.”
    - c. One of the best ways to learn how to sin well is never to read the Bible. Because if we’re reading Scripture, we’ll have the power to overcome temptation.
  3. As we remember the words of Scripture, we will be able to fight off temptation and thus remain faithful.
- D. We can remember the great examples of Scripture.
1. “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” (Heb. 12:1).
    - a. The author of Hebrews had just finished writing about great men and women of faith—He wrote about how they obeyed God out of their faith.
    - b. He uses these reminders as an example to us of how we, too, can accomplish great things through our faith.
  2. Here’s the key—those men and women were just like we are.
    - a. In a different context, James says, “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours” (Js. 5:17)—His point is that Elijah was a human being just like everyone else, yet his prayers accomplished much.
    - b. The same thing is true of those in Heb. 11.
      - 1) They were human beings with faults just as we are; yet they accomplished much through their faith.
      - 2) If they were faithful to the end, surely we can be as well.
- E. Are you being faithful?

## CONCLUSION

- A. We don’t want to make the mistake of saying that just because one worships three times a week every week he is faithful.
1. It would be possible for one to worship weekly and yet be as unfaithful as one who seldom, if ever, attended.
  2. The Bible discusses faithfulness as being much more than worshipping God.
    - a. Hezekiah “held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments” (2 Ki. 18:6).

- b. Job said, “My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go” (Job 27:6).
  - c. Paul said, “None of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself so that I may finish my race with joy” (Acts 20:24).
  - d. “We are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:39).
- B. Faithfulness involves giving our whole heart to God and trying to please him each day we live.
- 1. In order to be faithful, we must put God first in our lives — “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Mt. 22:37).
  - 2. It is far too easy to go through the motions of being faithful without really being faithful.
    - a. The Pharisees did that (Mt. 23:127).
    - b. We dare not just go through the motions without loving God with all our heart.
  - 3. How faithful are you this morning? Is God first in your life? Do you need to come to Jesus right now?