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Is the Character of Faithfulness working in you? Here is how you can find out. Take a careful look at this character and fruit of Faithfulness from God's most precious Word by examining the passages below. Now ask yourself:

1. How do I exhibit Faithfulness in my daily life?
2. What can I do to develop a better attitude of Faith?
3. What blocks Faithfulness from working and being exhibited in me?
4. How can I make Faithfulness function better, stronger and faster, even in times of uncertainty and stress?

Faithfulness is the application of our faith in action; because we are saved by Christ, He dwells in our hearts. Thus, we are infused with dependability because as we praise His name, it hits home in our being. It is not faith itself; rather, it is the fruit and character of faith. It is the "gluing" fruit that will preserve our faith and the other characters of the Spirit, and identify God's will, so we can be dependable and trusting to God and others. Faith is the one fruit that we give back to God, whereas faithfulness and the other fruits, virtues, and characters are from the Spirit working in us! Faithfulness is authenticity that is so absent today and so badly needed to show the power and motivation for Christian living. Because God is trustworthy with us, we can be faith-worthy in Him.

(Psalm 119: 89-90; Isaiah 25:1; Matthew 17:19; 25:21; Romans 1:17; 5:1-2; 1 Corinthians 12:9; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 3:16-17; Hebrews 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:24)

Doubt and distrust are the opposite, losing our trust and hope that God is in control! When we do this we will lose or miss out on God coming through with His promises.

Faithfulness is very difficult to have or hold on to, especially applying it to our work and relationships. We tend to lose our patience with God thinking He is just a blessing machine and when we do not get what we want we leave Him because of our uncertainty. Yet, Faithfulness is the fruit that we give to God so He can change us inside and out! It is the ability to take what Christ has done in us and be a blessing to others with loyalty and trust. Faithfulness goes against modern psychology and societies thinking, as it requires us to move beyond ourselves, whereas psychology tells us to be *Selfness*, putting the "me" first, rearranging the world to our needs, which creates self-destruction and broken relationships. We have to keep the goal of faithfulness in our minds always, as it will allow God to work deeper and us to respond to His call! God has bigger things at stake that He wants you for, much more than the petty complaints we give or things we ask of Him!

Take a look into the Bible Book of Ruth. It is set in the time of the Judges. (Some scholars say it was during the time of the prophet Samuel and Saul and the early reign of David (1 Samuel; Ruth 4:7) around 1050 BC. This may be plausible due to the portrayal of good relationships between the Moabites and the Israelites that was not there during the Judges. The term *during the Judges* in the first chapter possibly refers to the instability of the late period of Saul's reign. However, the main problem is that she is also the great grandma to King David.) History and textual criticism/debate aside, this book shows us the character of our God as the Redeemer.

This story follows the adventures of three principle characters, Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. Ruth has just lost her husband and is in a state of loss and confusion. She felt helpless and hopeless, but turned from her false gods to pursue the One True God. Even though she was not a Jew, she remained faithful to God. Naomi was Ruth's mother-in-law, a Jewess, who was led by family

remembrances to go back to her homeland, thereby exercising faith, too. Naomi trusted God even though she sinned against God by leaving her homeland in the first place and marrying a Gentile. God looked beyond her sin and worked it out for good as He does with us. God protected her and Ruth, who is an alien, through many harsh trials and tribulations. God blessed Ruth's faithfulness and brought to her a new and better husband, Boaz. God, even allowed her to be in the genealogy of Jesus. Naomi, at first, was bitter and did not want to take Ruth back with her, but learned about faith and received blessings for her faithfulness, too. Boaz was a relative of Naomi, and culturally, held the position to redeem her, which meant to take care of her, which he did. In the process, both he and Ruth remained faithful to God, and took their time to get to know one another before falling in love. This book shows us the importance of faith and commitment.

Boaz was a man of integrity who had the opportunity to take advantage of a young, pretty widow. Instead, he chose righteousness as he protected Ruth, and looked after her needs. He made an extremely difficult situation easier for her by not seeking his comfort or lust, and, eventually enjoyed a beautiful marriage. If he had chosen the way of the world, he could never have had a good, enduring relationship with Ruth. Ruth, who remained faithful, would also have missed out on the relationship (Ruth 2:20; 3:10-11).

Boaz was the *Kinsman-Redeemer* for Ruth's family. This meant he was a close relative whose call and obligation was to come to the aid of a family member in distress. According to Levitical Law, he could redeem the property, family members sold into slavery, assets such as farm animals, and he could care for a widow, or orphans, and such (Leviticus 25:25-34; 27:9-33). However, in practice, this rarely occurred, because greed usually took over and people took advantage of the weak and helpless. This is one of the main reasons God judged the Israelites and sent them into captivity, as found in the book of Jeremiah. In the New Testament, Christ is our ultimate *Kinsman-Redeemer*, as He represents humanity and our bloodline (Matthew 1:1-17; Galatians 4:4; Heb. 2:16-17). He represents our need (John 10: 15-18; 1 John 3:16), and He has the resources (1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Christ is our Redeemer, and He does not take advantage of us or let us rot, as we deserve. Thus, in our relationships we can and must be faithful, we should also look to Boaz's example, who was a righteous man. And, we can look at Ruth's example, who was a woman of faithfulness and patience. Ruth and Naomi were attracted to the kindness and integrity of Boaz as he treated them both well. Boaz was attracted to Ruth's humility and nobility. Thus, we are to be kind, listen, learn, not take advantage, care, share, and take care of one another! We need to see the importance of nobility and authenticity, as it will pay off much better and greater than the ways of the fast world would. We are to be attracted to goodness and integrity, not looks, power, wealth, or position.

When we learn and apply the fruit and attitude of Faithfulness, then Christ is glorified; moreover, quality relationships are built and are kept! This happens best when we realize that Christ paid our debt in full! Therefore, we can as Colossians 1:9-14 tells us, *live a life worthy* or as other translations state, *walk worthy of the Lord*. This means live in the manner of what we know and believe—and do it consistently. We do this when we are pursuing God and His righteousness, and believing His precepts, so He is more and we are less in our will. This is our “walk with God,” meaning living out the daily Christian life thinking as He has called, behaving as we believe, and thus doing in response to His Work in and for us. It is also being empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is never the walk in our own will and strength; such a thing is pride and disobedience to our loving Lord. So we behave as the One we represent, as the name *Christian* means to be like Christ in His character. Refers to being an “appropriate” or acceptable offering so we “deserve” our reward—but we do not earn it (Lev. 26:3; Ezek. 36:27; Mark 10:29-31; John 3:30; Gal. 2:20-21; 5:16; Eph. 4:1; 5:1; Phil. 3:10-14). Then we can be *Fully Pleasing Him*, to be a friend of God with gratitude; seeking Him first is to glorify Him. (Deut. 10:17-19; 2 Chron. 20:7; Psalm 69:30-31; Matt. 5:16; 6:33; Mark 12:29-30; 1 Thess. 2:4).

Reflection

Faithfulness means to live out our lives, centered upon Christ's glory, so our lives ooze Christ-like character and personal growth; striving for greater heights, good works, and personal growth is what is important. This is the result of our gratitude for being in a special spiritual union with Christ as Savior and Lord. So, our integrity is fueled by what He has done for us becomes intertwined with distinction for one another. It is not because we earn anything, but because we are filled with gratitude which translates into compassion and friendship with others (Eph 1:3).

- Here are positive examples from Scripture (II Kings 5:8-14; Matt. 15:21-28; 21:18-22; Luke 7:1-10; Acts 3:1-10; Heb.11: 1-40)
- Here are negative examples from Scripture (Matt. 6:25-34; 14:22-33; 17: 14-20; Mark 6:1-6; James 1:5-8)

Further Questions

1. How would you define Faithfulness?
2. What are the things that cause you to doubt or distrust God?
3. How does distrust counteract Faithfulness?
4. How can you give God more Faithfulness so you can fully realize that God is in control of your life and situation, so you can fully trust Him?
5. When have you been filled with Faithfulness the most?
6. In what situation did you fail to have Faithfulness in which you should have?
7. What issue is in your life that would improve with more Faithfulness?
8. Think through the steps you need to take to put Faithfulness into action in a specific instance. Will Christ find the kind of faith in you when He comes (Luke 18:1-8)? Such as having faith in spite of confusion and uncertainty or standing firm believing what is true even though you may not experience it or know what is going on or what Christ is doing in you?

Remember; God does not want our complaints, thus He will not give us an answer for them, rather He wants our obedience, so He can use us more and better!