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#7 Faithfulness - The Fruit Of The Spirit  
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Gal 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." KJV

Our foundation scripture lists all the fruit of the spirit and there are additional teachings that Paul gives in Ephesians and Peter also teaches the same in 1st Peter. Jesus has taught us in John 15 that He is the vine or trunk and we are the branches, the trunk bearing the branches and from the branches the fruit of the spirit is produced. It takes time for fruit to be produced and while we learn to abide in Him, the fruit will grow to maturity. Abiding in Jesus must be done on a regular basis, not just an occasional thing. The purpose of us having fruit in our lives is to take on the character that Jesus had, the gifts are for empowerment and will enable us to walk in a measure of holiness. Some fruit is easier for us to bear, but be patient and allow the other fruit to also grow; He wants us to bear each of the nine fruit of the spirit. As we begin to pursue the fruit, chapter 6 of Galatians tells us that we must become courageous.

The faith mentioned in this scripture does not refer to the faith exercised by the believer in receiving from God as mentioned in Romans 12. It refers to the faithfulness in the life of a believer. The measure of faith we all receive is different and we all develop this type of faith as we learn nothing is impossible to receive from God.

Rom 12:3 :For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." KJV

*Faith* or faithfulness also means commitment. What is being faithful, to the church, to others, our jobs? Faithfulness means being reliable, dependable or trustworthy. Paul wrote to the early believers telling them these principles. There are many different types or generations of people and believers that do not have any of these principles, but this does not exclude them from developing the fruit of the Spirit. Many people are in homes today because of situations in the homes with no fathers or parents to teach them, they have not been taught anything about being trustworthy, reliable, having integrity or character. These principles used to be taught by the parents and were reinforced by the schools and churches.

The fruit of faithfulness is always associated with faith. Unfaithfulness is always associated with not being worthy of trust and always with fear.

Daniel was taken captive around the age of 17 and served four different kings during his life, he was always considered to be faithful to all of them regardless of the situations that he faced. All of these kings sought Daniels wisdom, all placed him in authority and entrusted him to govern their kingdoms. Some of the kings own people tried to cause problems with Daniel and him being obedient to God, but when Daniel was faced with making a decision that would please them; he chose to please God and did not relent in his belief. Later after he was thrown into the lion's den and came out unharmed, those same people and their families were destroyed, his faithfulness to God had proved him to be trustworthy.

Dan 6:3-5 "Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in

him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. 4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. 5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." KJV

Pro 20:6 "Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" KJV

Proverbs 13 tells us that a man who is faithful is health to a relationship and is an ambassador who carries out another person's will. Ambassadors are usually sent to other countries on behalf of our country, providing an embassy, a place of safety. Proverbs 29 tells us that you cannot trust an unfaithful person.

Pro 28:20 "A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." KJV

God preserves the faithful, faithfulness is important in all areas of life. Faithfulness is a way that God proves us in everything we do and have.

Luke 16:10-11 "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. 11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" KJV

v. 11 - mammon is referring to money.

God is teaching us in this scripture what will either unlock the blessings coming to us or lock the door in which God wants those blessings to come to us. God is teaching us that we must be willing to take care of things belonging to others and if we cannot He will not commit to us the true riches. (Example - renting a house that belongs to someone else and you are not taking care of it, anything involving another person's property not being taken care of and are asking God to bless you, your prayers are being nullified).

There are sometimes smaller tasks which do not seem to be important, but God sees the small things as being large in the kingdom because of being faithful. From God's viewpoint, being dependable in the small things will put us in a position for the bigger things, in the kingdom a high premium is put on faithfulness.

While we are being mistreated in the midst of adversity, God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are faithful to us; they are all the fruit of the spirit.

God's name in the book of Revelation and Hebrews is faithful to forgive, cleanse us, He is trustworthy, sure and reliable.

God wouldn't ask us to do something we can't do if we don't have the ability to do it. The fruit is supernatural and maybe won't grow the first day, but as we grow or pursue Him, it will grow with us.

Faithfulness is not perfection, but is a way of growing and developing. Perfect means no mistakes or room for error, but coming to maturity, growing up. Chapter 3 of Hebrews refers to Moses and compares him to Jesus being faithful in all his house. Moses was judged as being faithful always made correction where it needed to be made. Moses made many mistakes, lost his temper on occasion, had marriage problems, but was a man that God could speak to him face to face. Paul speaks of judging Timothy as being faithful because God sees the end from the beginning.

The following scriptures show another kingdom principle in relationship to faithfulness. The

talents spoken of are money not the natural abilities that are sometimes considered to be talents. The man involved gave to his servants five, two and one talents and what they did with them showed to him their faithfulness in dealing with him. The man given five talents reinvested and received five more, he was considered a good and faithful servant as was the man given two talents, but the servant that only had received one talent instead of doing anything with the talent, buried it and when the owner came back he gave it to him with nothing extra and spoke of being afraid of him. His Lord spoke to him, telling him that he was wicked and lazy, the least he could have done was put it to work to draw some interest and then he gave to the servant with the five talents the one talent that the lazy man had done nothing with.

Matt 25:14-30 "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. 18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." KJV

This story is likened to the kingdom of heaven and Jesus being the way to heaven and that He has given all the things that we will need while on earth, His name and authority to be used and the word of God. God never gives us more than we have the ability to handle. The man in the scripture was requiring his servants to be faithful with the measure that was entrusted to them. The servant that was faithful with the five talents was told that he had done well and would receive the additional one talent. The servant with two talents was told the same thing, well done, good and faithful, they received the same reward based on their faithfulness, but the servant receiving one talent, what he had been given was taken away and he was cast into outer darkness, being called unprofitable, not faithful.

The kingdom of heaven works not by demanding, but by having accountability in our lives, being faithful in the small things as well as the large things. We cannot be in the body of Christ saying that we can't do anything, having no money or no talent. Wherever you are at, God has graced you with the ability, He has given you something that you can be faithful with, training your children or teaching others, He says that if we are faithful with little, God sees it as much. If we have been given gifts from God, no matter how small, do something with what He has given you, don't just bury them.

No matter what we may be in need of, God has provided it for us someplace. There must be a time of commitment, a time of proving and testing in our lives. Commitment will take over from convenience. Don't let the devil steal from you what you have received from God.

There is a pattern when unfaithfulness sets in becoming a part of our life style, we all experience it, but do not have to let it overcome us. We will begin to become luke warm, unable to hear from God, quit being faithful, we begin to depart from the things of God, from people who stand for righteousness, standing on the outside looking in, it will cause us to lose our sense of priorities, easily drawn away from the church and easily offended. Many people leave the church because of offense, unfaithful people never grow spiritually. Jesus tells us through Paul that it is time for us to start growing faithfulness in our lives.

Is it easy? Our attitudes play an important part, like the unprofitable servant in Matthew 25 who wanted to do things his way, regardless of what he had been told, he knew the will of his master but refused to do it. He wasn't ignorant, because there was not any fruit in him, all he had was excuses.

There are benefits for being faithful. God's eyes are on the faithful man.

Pro 28:20 "A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." KJV

Psa 31:32 "O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer." KJV

Psa 101:6 "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me." KJV

Paul is making a statement regarding what the Lord had done for him, because of him being faithful even though his past had been less than desirable. God put Paul into the ministry, giving him mercy, enabling him to reach the unsaved world. The same is true with us today, God has made all provision for us and when He gives us something to do, and He enables us to accomplish what He has called us to do. He is judging us faithful; He sees the end from the beginning.

1 Tim 1:12-16 "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." KJV

Jesus is an enabler for us, God sees us as faithful, and in the meantime, as we begin to develop and grow in His character and likeness, the practical aspect of Christianity, we begin to grow the fruit of faithfulness, in simplicity, being trustworthy, reliable, dependable and sure.