



## **“AM I REALLY FAITHFUL?”**

### **Introduction:**

#### **A. Ask Yourself The Question Seriously!**

1. Are you really faithful to God?
2. Are you a faithful Christian?

#### **B. (Slide #2) Observations From Our Scripture Readings Today:**

1. (►) Ps. 12:1 “Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.”
  - a. This passage begins a Psalm that talks about the “sons of men” mistreating the godly and there seem to be less and less godly people.
  - b. Sometimes the faithful disappear because evil rears its ugly head so strongly; sometimes the faithful disappear because of their own lack of devotion to God!
2. (►) Pr. 20:6 “Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, But who can find a faithful man?”
  - a. ESV “Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?”
  - b. Many profess their steadfast love to their marriage; does your mate find you faithful?
  - c. Many profess their steadfast love to their friends; do your friends find you faithful?
  - c. Many profess their steadfast love to God; does GOD find you faithful?
3. (Slide #3) Our challenge: II Thess. 2:15 “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.”
  - a. “Stand fast!” -- Persevere!
  - b. “Hold” -- Take hold of and retain!
  - c. “Traditions” -- the Truth that the Apostle Paul had, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, taught them both in preaching when in their presence and by epistle when he had written them!
  - d. Christians are to HOLD ON to Christianity with a determined tenacity!

#### **C. (Slide #4) So, Do YOU See Yourself As A “Faithful Christian?”**

- D. (Slide #5) A Must Deeper And More Important Question, “Does GOD See You As A Faithful Christian?”

**I. (Slide #6) Traits Of The Faithful!**

**A. (►) Their Hearts Are Filled With Love!**

1. I Jn. 3:18,19 “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. <sup>19</sup>And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.”
2. They cannot but help to respond to the love of God seen in its most vivid way by sending Christ to provide redemption for sinners!
3. Observe how Jesus CHASTISED the unbelieving Jews for a lack of love in their hearts! “But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.” Jn. 5:42
  - a. They did not love Christ.
  - b. They did not respect Him.
  - c. They did not honor and obey Him!
  - d. Why? They did not have faithful hearts!

**B. (►) They Genuinely Love To Be Obedient!**

1. They are eager to follow!
2. This attitude is evoked from a heart of remorse, humility, and awe-inspired respect and reverence!
3. Peter and Andrew exude this attitude -- Mk. 1:19-21 “And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup>Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’ <sup>18</sup>They **immediately** left their nets and followed Him.”
4. Jesus showed HOW SERIOUS LOVING OBEDIENCE IS!
  - a. Jn. 14:15 “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”
  - b. Jn. 14:21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”
  - c. I Jn. 2:3-5 “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup>He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. <sup>5</sup>But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”
  - d. I Jn. 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”

C. (Slide #7) **They Want To Go Above And Beyond To Show Their Appreciation And Devotion!**

1. Christianity is an “ABOVE AND BEYOND” life!
  - a. It is NOT just external submission to requirements -- it is HEART and obedience!
  - b. I Jn. 3:18,19 “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. <sup>19</sup>And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.”
  - c. Jesus emphasized this in the Sermon On The Mount!
    1. The Pharisees do the externals and seek praise from men -- Christians love the Lord and obey from the heart! 5:20
    2. It is not just “Don’t Kill;” it is “Don’t Be Angry Without A Cause!” 21,22
    3. It is not just “Don’t Commit Adultery;” it is “Don’t Let Lust Reside In Your Mind!” 27,28
    4. It is not just “Worship God;” it is “Come to worship with a pure heart; therefore if you are ‘out of sorts’ with a brother, go make it right, THEN come and worship God.” 22-24
    5. It is not just “Obey the demands of civil law;” it is, “Obey them even if they are absurd and even go beyond the demands!” 39-42
2. Faithful Christians ABOUND in actions that show their heart and gratitude!
  - a. I Cor. 15:58 pretty well sums up faithfulness: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, **always abounding in the work of the Lord**, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”
  - b. Good works are vital to faithfulness!
    1. Eph. 2:10 “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”
    2. If good works do not abound, our faith is dead! Js. 2:14-26
  - c. Two amazing examples of this attitude!
    1. The Macedonian Christians:
      - a. II Cor. 8:1-5 “Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: <sup>2</sup>that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. <sup>3</sup>For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, <sup>4</sup>imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. <sup>5</sup>And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the will of God.”
      - b. They had lots of troubles and deep poverty; yet, they gave to help the Judea brethren who were facing famine!
      - c. What motivated them? They first gave themselves to the Lord!

2. Epaphroditus -- this Philippian Christian was so concerned that Paul would receive supplies while in prison that he risked his health, yes, his life, to take necessities from the brethren there to Paul! Phil. 2:25-27
3. Dependable people in life will be deeply concerned about being dependable with the things of God!
  - a. Lk. 16:10-12 "He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much. <sup>11</sup>Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*? <sup>12</sup>And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?"
  - b. Jesus taught this concept in the Parable Of The Talents:
    1. He emphasized that if you are faithful in little, you will be faithful in much!
    2. Mt. 25:21 To the five talent man, his master said, "Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."
    3. Mt. 25:23 Likewise to the two talent man, his master, "Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."

**D. (►) They Will Endure To The End!**

1. They will be faithful if dear loved ones are not Christians and if they try to dissuade them and discourage them from serving the Lord.
  - a. This is not an easy situation!
  - b. And Jesus is aware of their faithfulness! Mt. 19:29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life."
2. They will be faithful if others who were beside them have died or have left the faith.
  - a. Many a widow or widower has remained faithful to God after their beloved mate and spiritual companion has died -- many of you in the worship service today are doing that!
  - b. Many Christians remain faithful to God when dear friends or family members leave the Lord and go back into the world or into denominational error.
  - c. They are like Naomi.

3. They will endure through persecution until the light of a day of respite arrives!
  - a. Mt. 10:22 “And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.”
  - b. II Tim. 3:12 “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”
  - c. I Pet. 4:16 “Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.”
  
4. They will be faithful as long as they live!
  - a. Rev. 2:10 “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”  
They will be faithful “unto” death -- even to the point of dying for Him! If threatened with death, they will be martyrs for Him!
  - c. If they live peaceable lives, they will be faithful until they die!
  - d. The old Apostle, John:
    1. Rev. 1:9 “I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”
    2. John was faithful to Jesus as he lived alone on Patmos. Tradition says he lived in a cave. In fact, there is a grotto on Patmos called the Cave of the Apocalypse that supposedly is on the very spot where John received his visions.
    3. The Bible does not reveal details about his death.
    4. Many think he died of natural causes as an old man in Ephesus about A.D. 98.
    5. One interesting prophecy by Jesus might give us pause: “Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, ‘Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.’ <sup>36</sup>And He said to them, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ <sup>37</sup>They said to Him, ‘Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.’ <sup>38</sup>But Jesus said to them, ‘You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?’ <sup>39</sup>They said to Him, ‘We are able.’ So Jesus said to them, ‘You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized;’” Mk. 10:35-39
    6. Some extra-Biblical sources claim that the Roman Emperor, Domitian Caesar, sentenced John to be thrown into a vat of boiling oil and he was scaled. Other traditions claim that he came out of that vat of oil unscathed and unharmed!

**E. (►) They Are Faithful NO MATTER WHAT!**

1. LOOK AT HEBREWS 11!
  - a. Abel -- killed by his envious and angry brother for doing right! 4
  - b. Noah -- when he had NO IDEA how God was going to keep His promises! 7

- c. Abraham -- when he was called to leave his familiar comfort zone -- his homeland and his family. 8
- d. Abraham -- when he was commanded to offer his son! 17-19
- e. Moses' parents -- they put themselves and the baby boy at risk when commanded to kill their son. 23
- f. Moses -- when he could have had it all in a pagan Pharaoh's palace! 24-27
- g. Moses and Israel -- when they faced seeming death at the hand of angry Pharaoh as they approached the Red Sea! 29
- h. Rahab -- when, because of her past immoral and pagan life, coming to faith in God seemed SO unlikely. 31
- i. The unnamed heroes who faced daunting and seemingly impossible situations and endured indescribable and horrific treatment to serve God! 33-39

“who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup>quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. <sup>35</sup>Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. <sup>36</sup>Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup>They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-- <sup>38</sup>of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in* dens and caves of the earth. <sup>39</sup>And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith,”

- 2. WHAT EXAMPLES those Christians are to help us understand true faithfulness!!!

## II. (Slide #8) Are You Really Faithful?

- A. Examine Yourself -- Do So In Light Of God's Standard; Do So Objectively.
- B. Be Careful That You Do Not Rationalize And Paint Yourself In A Better Light That God Does!
- C. (Slide #9) What About These Statements?
  - 1. (►) **I Am Faithful; I Just Don't Attend!**
    - a. Some may not be able to ever attend now! [incapacitated, in nursing home residents, the incarcerated]
      - 1. Many of them agonize because they cannot attend!
        - a. Their heart is with their Christian family.

- b. They feel terrible that they cannot attend!
      - c. You just hurt for them!
    - 2. On the other hand, I see people in nursing homes, people with cancer, people with SERIOUS eye-sight problems who still attend every service!
    - 3. Be sure you are not making an excuse!
    - 4. Maybe you have eyesight problems and cannot drive at night -- you watch the services on Live Stream at night.
    - 5. If I can get up and go to the grocery, to McDonald's, to the Drug Store, etc., what about me going to worship?
    - 6. I hope that I will be able to attend worship and Bible Classes until the day I die even if it means I am in a wheel chair!
  - b. Some are hindered because of work: nurses, doctors, et.al.
    - 1. Those works require constant care for patients.
    - 2. Firemen, policemen, military and others are expected to work!
    - 3. But a CAUTION: Some of these use their work as an excuse.
    - 4. Have you ASKED to be able to be at all worship services?
    - 5. Does it bother you that you miss?
    - 6. Through the years I have watched some brethren use work as an excuse; I have seen them wither and die spiritually!
  - c. Some are upset at a member -- elder, preacher, et. al. They profess their loyalty to Christ but will not attend worship because of hurt feels or hate in their heart for that member.
  - d. Some have just gotten out of the habit; they just have no motivation to attend.
  - e. If you loved Jesus, attendance is going to be super important to you!
  - f. If you loved Jesus and longed to be like Him, you would LONG for more of His Word, His People, and His strength!
  - g. Worship is a command by God!
  - h. Faithful attendance and involvement are a part of your faithfulness to God.
  - i. Attendance in worship is a thermometer of our faith!
2. (►) **I Am Faithful; I Just Don't Think I Have To Attend Anything Except The Sunday AM Worship!**
- a. This is becoming a more and more common argument and practiced axiom!
  - b. Most congregations will not have 50% of Sunday morning's attendance on Sunday PM.
  - c. Compare the above statement to the First Century Christians: Ac. 2:42, 46, 47 <sup>42</sup>“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.....<sup>46</sup>So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people.”

- d. An argument -- “God just said, ‘Don’t forsake the assembly; He didn’t say anything about twice on Sunday, anything about Bible Class on Sunday, or anything about Wednesday night Bible Class!’”
- e. An observation:
  - 1. You see those who make these arguments become less engaged with the congregation and less strong spiritually.
  - 2. Opportunities to serve, opportunities to cultivate faith, and opportunities to learn are continually neglected and missed.
- f. Is this the attitude of faithfulness? Consider the “Above and Beyond” attitude above!

3. **(Slide #10) I Am Faithful; I Pray And Read The Bible!**

- a. You may pat yourself on the back for doing those things personally.
- b. However, in reality you are a selective obeyer; you are NOT faithful!
- c. You do what YOU like; you do what YOU choose; you do not have a heart to obey Him in everything!
- d. “Whatsoever” He asks!
  - 1. We should have the attitude that Mary told the servants at the wedding feast to have about Jesus’ commands: “His mother said to the servants, ‘Whatever He says to you, do *it*.’” Jn. 2:5
  - 2. Hear Moses’ prophecy about the coming Messiah and the attitude believers in Him must have: “For Moses truly said to the fathers, *‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.’*” Ac. 3:22
- e. Hear Jesus! Jn. 15:14 “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.”

4. **(►) I Am Faithful; But I Don’t Attend; I Need My Weekends To Recover!**

- a. This again is an excuse to do what WE want to do.
- b. We use being tired as a justification to disobey God!
- c. Relaxation and family becomes more important than faith!

5. **(►) I Am Faithful; I Just Stay Home And Watch Church On TV Or On The Internet.**

- a. I am SO GRATEFUL for technology and for the internet!
- b. Live-streaming is a blessing! We have members who cannot be here watching; there are people in other countries watching.
- c. Some of you are watching now because you cannot be here otherwise.
- d. Just make sure you are not using an excuse to not be in worship and are instead using the internet as a crutch!

D. R.C. Sproul Issued This Dire Warning To Christians Who Convince Themselves That Non-Attendance Is Acceptable: “You May, In Fact, Be Deluding Yourself About The State Of Your Soul.”



- E. If You Had The Same Mindset About Your Marriage That You Do About Your Attendance, Would Your Mate Say That You Are Faithful?
1. If you rarely came home after work, would he/she be accepting of such behavior?
  2. If you rarely came home to be with your family, would they say you are a faithful family member?
  3. If you were only at home for one hour of the week, would you mate say that you are a faithful mate and companion?

**Conclusion:**

- A. Examine Your Life And Ask, “Am I Really Faithful?”
- B. **(Slide #11)** Our Challenge: Heb. 10:23-27 “Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. <sup>26</sup>For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup>but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.”
- C. **(Slide #12)** A SERIOUS Question: “So What Is It? SUPERFICIAL Or SUPER Faith?”
- D. An Important Reminder -- Faithfulness Is NOT Perfection; But Oh What It Demands!
- E. How REAL Is Your Faith?
- F. Would God Say, “You Are Faithful!”?