

On The Frontier

“For the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

The Rewards Of Faithfulness

by Linus A. Mathis III

When it comes to pleasing God there are few qualities as critical as faithfulness. We understand that to be faithful is to be steadfast, consistent and reliable. Though this is true, it builds the notion that faithfulness requires perfection. However, faithfulness and perfection are two entirely different things. Thank God they are! If my being faithful were dependent upon being perfect I'd be in BIG trouble. Especially since faithfulness is so vital.

I Corinthians 4:1&2

Let a man so account [think] of us, as of the ministers [servants] of Christ, and stewards [caretakers, managers, overseers] of the mysteries of God.

I want to be thought of as a minister of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God. I don't much care what else folks think or say. Even if they think of me as some kind of religious fanatic or "Jesus freak." That's okay, as long as they identify me with God and the Bible. You can call me names and mock what I'm doing, it doesn't matter. It's of little consequence to me that the world holds ministers and stewards in low regard. What is important is that it remains evident to all that I am just that, a minister of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God.

From God's perspective this means, I MUST be found faithful.

Verse 2:

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

When men think of you, with what do they associate you? If being thought of as a servant of Christ is appealing, you're going to have to be faithful.

Before we go on about us, let's consider how faithful God and His Word are.

Deuteronomy 7:9

Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he *is* God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

God is THE faithful God. He keeps His covenant and mercy with those that love Him (if you really love Him you WILL keep His Word) to a thousand generations. Man that's a long, long time! How many generations of your ancestors can you recall? Two, three, four, maybe five? A thousand! None of us recall that many. This is figurative, meaning forever and ever. He simply uses language that we can identify with to emphasize the longevity of His faithfulness. His faithfulness is peerless. There is none like unto our God.

Since God is perfect His faithfulness is also without flaw. He is reliable

and steadfast beyond all comprehension of reliability and steadfastness. But that's true for all of His qualities and works.

Psalms 145:17

The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

He is righteous and holy in everything! His love is perfect. His mercy, kindness, grace and judgement are impeccable. His Son, His gift of holy spirit and of course His Word, all PERFECT. So, when you're talking about God Almighty, all that's associated with Him is perfect, even His perfection is perfect. This cannot be said for man as man is imperfect. But, man can be faithful because faithfulness on the part of man does not require perfection.

I Corinthians 1:9

God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

I Thessalonians 5:23,24

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*.

His calling is perfect thus our eternity is certain!

Psalms 119:138

Thy testimonies *that* thou hast

commanded *are* righteous and very faithful.

His Word is VERY faithful!

The New Testament records five occurrences of the following phrase: "this (it) is a faithful (true) saying." Each would be better understood as: "the Word is faithful." Pause as you read and give each consideration.

I Timothy 1:15

This *is* a faithful saying [the Word is faithful], and worthy of all acceptation [and totally acceptable], that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

I Timothy 3:1

This *is* a true saying [the Word is faithful], If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

I Timothy 4:9

This *is* a faithful saying [the Word is faithful] and worthy of all acceptation [and totally acceptable].

II Timothy 2:11

It is a faithful saying [the Word is faithful]: For if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him*:

Titus 3:8

This is a faithful saying [the Word is faithful], and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

The Word is faithful because God is faithful. This is why we can trust His Word implicitly and why we never

let anyone talk us out of it.

Titus 1:9

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

In the Old Testament the English word faithful is translated from the Hebrew word *aman*. The first occurrence is in reference to Abraham, father of all those who believe.

Genesis 15:6

And he [Abraham] believed [*aman*] in the LORD; and he [the Lord] counted it to him [Abraham] for righteousness.

This word literally means to be firm, fixed, stable, sure. Further connotations are; to be true or faithful. When used of persons it means to have confidence in with respect to words as motive for confidence, i.e., Abraham had confidence that the Word of God was faithful. In a deeper sense (as noted above) Abraham was true to God, he was faithful in his allegiance and devotion. What a great man he was. No wonder he was called the friend of God.

The second occurrence of this word is enlightening.

Genesis 42:20

But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified [*aman*], and ye shall not die. And they did so.

Here we see the sons of Israel endeavoring to get sustenance from Egypt. They're forced to do business with their brother Joseph who is

accusing them of being spies. However, they don't recognize him as their brother while all along he knows who they are.

As a youngster he received revelation foretelling of his brethren's impending subjection to him. This infuriated them. In their rage they sold him to the slave traders. Years later they would be found pleading with an "Egyptian" man for help. Since the men of Egypt wore eye make-up and were clean shaven (the children of Israel had beards) they failed to recognize him. The betrayal of a boy had brought them in subjection to a man.

Because of his faithful walk with God Joseph rose above slavery and incarceration to become second in command in all of Egypt. A great famine had devastated all the land save Egypt which, under the guidance of God as ministered by Joseph, had become THE world power. But, before Joseph would give his brothers food or reveal himself to them, he demanded that his younger brother Benjamin be brought to him. His bond to his brothers was that the act of doing so would verify (prove true and faithful) their words. If they did what he required it would confirm the certainty and fidelity of their words. What a magnificent usage of this word *aman*. When our actions agree with our words, our words are established. You can readily see why God's Word is faithful, His actions always agree with what He says. His Word is true because He is true.

John 14:1-3

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

How marvelous these truths are! We believe in God as we believe what He has revealed to us in His Word. In like manner we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ because of what God has told us regarding him. Jesus Christ is faithful and true, he will come again and receive us that we may be where he is. WOW!

Revelation 19:11

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

That's our Lord! He, Jesus Christ is called Faithful and True!!!

Verses 12-16:

His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of

iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

It's also interesting to note that the word AMEN is derived from this Hebrew word *aman*. Amen, truly, so be it.

This truth of fidelity and solidarity is further corroborated when set forth in the negative sense. Consider the end of this message that Isaiah was commissioned to deliver to Ahaz.

Isaiah 7:9b

... If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

The margin of the KJV reads, "Do ye not believe? It is because ye are not stable." This sentence is a figure of speech known as *Paronomasia* and according to Dr. Bullinger in his Companion Bible may also be "Englished" as "If you will not trust, ye shall not be trusted." Or, have no *belief* ... find no relief; or, will not *understand* ... shall not *surely stand*; or, no *confiding* ... *no abiding*. This figure is used with the purpose in mind of bringing attention to the importance of this phrase. What a splendid use of language!

The following is certainly in agreement:

James 1:6

But let him ask in faith [regarding a request for wisdom], nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

This is a wonderful principle, one which can be applied in so many ways. However, God is not as concerned about the stability of your requests as you might think. The real question is, are we true to Him? He's interested in the fidelity of our hearts. Are we devoted to Him and Him alone? Is He the One to whom we are dedicated and faithful? The allegiance of our hearts must be pledged to Him.

Exodus 20:3

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Exodus 34:14

For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God:

No other gods, ONE GOD!

Deuteronomy 6:4-6

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:

And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

Mark 12:30

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: *this is* the first commandment.

One God, one true love! Just like in a marriage, one husband, one wife, one love.

I Corinthians 7:2

Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

To avoid fornication a man must be faithful to his wife, a woman to her husband. A spouse who is not true in their love will become unfaithful. The same holds true spiritually. We must remain true in our love for the Father. Anything less will lead to unfaithfulness. Fidelity, devotion and allegiance to God are primary.

The figure of marriage is used throughout God's Word to emphasize the importance of being faithful to Him. He represents this figuratively to us so that we may grasp the significance of faithfulness to Him. We expect this from our spouses even as they expect this from us. In like manner God expects us to remain unswerving in our devotion to Him.

Isaiah 61:10

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.

Isaiah 62:5

For *as* a young man marrieth a virgin, *so* shall thy sons marry thee: and *as* the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, *so* shall thy God rejoice over thee.

II Corinthians 11:2

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.

Revelation 19:7-10

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

God likens the relationship He desires with His people to a marriage. The reason is, He wants to emphasize how important it is to remain faithful to Him. It is vital that nothing ever take His place in our hearts. God forbid that any of us should be found as were the children of Israel.

Jeremiah 2:29-37

Wherefore will ye plead with me? ye all have transgressed against me, saith the LORD.

In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion.

O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I been a

wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?

Can a maid forget her ornaments, *or* a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.

Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways.

Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.

Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned.

Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria.

Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the LORD hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.

That certainly is a powerful passage. Isn't it? If we have ears to hear this provides a dire warning. We should not become unfaithful as Israel did. On the contrary, we should prove to be the most faithful of all God's children. It's the least we can do considering what He has done for us.

Furthermore, God is so good that He gives incentive even beyond Himself to those souls who are found to be faithful.

Psalms 31:23

O love the LORD, all ye his saints: *for* the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

Psalms 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.

Proverbs 28:20

A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.

Truly, salvation is by grace but reward is based upon faithfulness. May we be found in His eyes as declared in the following passage:

Matthew 25:23

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.

Without question, faithfulness is rewarded generously. Both now and forever. God is magnificent, He does not judge us on our perfection for He knows our frames that we are but dust. He makes life sing and rewards us when we choose Him as our love. We should dedicate all that we are or ever will be to Him. And when our frailties and imperfections cause us to stumble, it is love that calls us back.

II Corinthians 5:14,15

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

The love of Christ constrains us. The culture of the lands and times of the Bible was such that if you asked me to come home with you I'd be bound to refuse your first offer. Of course I would have to give you an acceptable excuse which would prompt you to ask me again. You might say, "We certainly love you and want so much for you to have dinner with us this evening." I would reply, "I would love to, but I must be on my way and run some errands." Again you ask, "Oh please, come home and have dinner. I've already prepared it and it shouldn't go to waste." My answer again, "Really, I should watch what I eat, I'm a bit plump these days, sorry." A third time you say, "If you don't join us this evening it will truly break our hearts, we so love you." At which I might reply, "Okay. Thank you for inviting me, I would love to spend the evening at your home." This was called constraining. It would be done at least three times and often as many as seven. Imagine! Love keeps calling us back. "Please come home, stay with Me. I love you so much." We are to judge that since Christ died for us, we are no longer our own. We are to live for him who died and rose again. We are to be faithful to our God, His Son and the Word which has been given to us. Faithful not perfect. True in our love for Him as well as steadfast in our words and deeds. But above all, devoted to love God.

He has made this so simple that any one of us may be found faithful. You see, it doesn't begin with the big things. Oh no! It begins with the

small things.

Luke 16:10-12

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.

If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?

And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

When all is said and done, may He say to each of us as we read earlier:

" ... 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."

But above all, let's be faithful and true in our love for our wonderful Father and His Son.

The Counselor's Corner

With Rev. Linus A. Mathis III

Not Old Fashioned Just Enlightened

Well, the unthinkable has finally happened! My 13 year old has suggested that I'm old fashioned. Perhaps this has happened to you too. If it hasn't yet, it someday will.

At first I was perplexed, stunned, shocked. I thought surely I was every bit as hip as ever. I still ride a Harley

and even occasionally listen to rock & roll. Why, I can probably name more current musicians than most teenagers. Yet, I was confronted with the idea of being, you know, "out of it." That is, un-cool maybe even (dare I say it) square. Unbelievable!

As I pondered this concept (one I NEVER dreamed would challenge me) the eyes of my heart were enlightened.

I realized that most everything I require of my offspring has its origin in the Bible. And we all know that the Bible is timeless. No, I'm not old fashioned just enlightened. The reason?

Proverbs 6:23

For the commandment *is* a lamp; and the law *is* light; and reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life:

All of us grow older but not all of us gain insight. Only through the "eyes of God" (His Word) can we see things as they really are.

So, here's my "sage" advice to all you young hipsters out there.

Psalms 119:99,100

I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies *are* my meditation.

I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

There's never anything new to a man outside the will of God, he only thinks it to be new. Really, man without God's Word is very easily deceived into thinking that what he's experiencing is new. It isn't. Man still needs God if he is to be "with

it." Otherwise, he's just kidding himself.

Ecclesiastes 1:9,10

The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is that* which shall be done: and *there is* no new thing under the sun.

Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

No, I'm not one bit old fashioned. But I am enlightened and you can be too.
