

FAITHFULNESS

The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness & self control. Against such things there is no law.
-Galatians 5:22-23

What is faithfulness (pistis)?

Faithfulness. Maintaining faith or allegiance; showing a strong sense of duty or conscientiousness. In biblical Hebrew, “faith” and “faithfulness” are grammatically related. Although both concepts are important in the OT, there is no English word exactly equivalent to the Hebrew terms. The most relevant Hebrew verbal root (related to our word “amen”) carries such meanings as “strengthen,” “support,” or “hold up.” In a physical sense it is used of pillars that provide support for doors. Moses used the word when he disclaimed any role as supporter of the Israelites (Nm 11:12). God, however, is an eternally firm support for his people (Dt 7:9; Is 49:7).

With that notion of firm support as the bedrock for faith, words such as “firmness,” “constancy,” or “trustworthiness” best convey the related concept of faithfulness.

Faith and faithfulness are logically and linguistically one in the OT and NT. That is, the major words for faith in both Testaments also connote the concept of “faithfulness.” This indicates that faith is more than momentary assent to the truth of God. It is commitment to that truth, and it manifests itself in continued obedience.¹

Faithfulness in Action

Faithfulness must not be viewed as an isolated act. Rather it is an attitude that should characterize the entire life of those who say they have faith in God.¹

Abraham’s life in this regard is instructive. He assented to, relied upon, and acted in conformity to the revealed Word of God. He received God’s revelation as true (i.e., demonstrating faith), and his subsequent actions proved his faithfulness.¹

***Hebrews 11:1-3** Now faith (pistis) is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. (ESV)*

Hebrews 11 is the known as the ‘Heroes of Faith’ chapter. Here, Paul lists many Biblical figures that demonstrated great faith. We will look at what this chapter has to say about faithfulness & the actions of the people who were known for great faith.

1. Seek God

***Hebrews 11:6** And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (ESV)*

2. Obedience to God

***Hebrews 11:7-8** By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. (ESV)*

3. We bless others

***Hebrews 11:20** By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau (ESV)*

¹ Sacks, Stuart D. 1988. [“Faithfulness.”](#) In *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 1:765. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

4. We protect others

Hebrews 11:23 *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. (ESV)*

5. We don't take pleasure in sin

Hebrews 11:24-25 *By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. (ESV)*

6. Kindness to God's people

Hebrews 11:31 *By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. (ESV)*

The chapter here explains that time cannot tell all the actions that accompany faithfulness.

Hebrews 11:32-34 *And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.*

Results of Faithfulness

1. Promises from God

Hebrews 11:11 *By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. (ESV)*

I love this example, because when Sarah first heard the promise from God, she laughed. And yet, she is still considered an example of faith because she considered God faithful in his promise. This proves to me that even in momentary disbelief, God can still consider us faithful to him.

2. We may not see promises come to pass

Hebrews 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the things promised (ESV)*

Even if we do not see our promises come to pass, are we still faithful? If our faithfulness depends on receiving, maybe we reevaluate our motives. In fact, our faithfulness does not make the enemy happy and he will do whatever he can to deter us from faithfulness to God.

Hebrews 11:35-39 *Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

You may not see some of God's promises come to pass. Don't lose confidence in being faithful to God. Your faithfulness surpasses your own life and comfort. Take heart that even if you don't see what you are waiting for, stay faithful, because if God has promised it, it will come to pass. Stay faithful for future generations!

Deuteronomy 7:9 *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations (ESV)*

Psalms 100:5 *For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. (ESV)*