



Faith Aflame: 360 Degrees What is Faithfulness?

Opening Prayer

Introduction

Would you consider a paperboy faithful who delivered your newspaper 5 out of 7 days?

Would you consider your car faithful if it started 9 out of every 10 times you turned the key?

Would you consider a friend faithful if she only shared with others half of the confidential things you told her?

What does it mean to be “faithful”?

What do the following passages say about faithfulness?

- 1 Corinthians 4:1-4
- Matthew 24:45-46
- John 8:31-32

Marcus Manthey makes the following points in his paper “Christian Stewardship: Our Part in God’s Plan.”

“What then is faithfulness?” he asks.

1. **Faithfulness is God-first-ness** – It makes God and His will for our lives our pre-eminent concern. (Exodus 20:3)
2. **Faithfulness is grace-awareness** – It recognizes that all we have comes from God because of His love, not our merit. Above all, it sees God’s saving love in Christ Jesus and seeks to reflect that love in living. (1 John 4:19)
3. **Faithfulness is honesty, especially self-honesty** – It acknowledges every gift that God has given and seeks to employ each fully and righteously. (James 1:17)



A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

Oh Lord, giver of life
and source of our freedom,
we are reminded by the Psalmist
that Yours is “the earth and
its fullness; the world
and those who dwell in it.”

We know that it is from
Your hand that
we have received all we have, and
are, and will be.

Gracious and loving God,
we understand that You call us to be
faithful stewards of Your abundance,
the managers of all You have
entrusted to us.

Equip us always to use Your
gifts wisely and teach us
to share them generously.

May our faithful stewardship bear
witness to the love of Christ in our
lives. We pray with grateful hearts, in
Jesus’ name.

Amen.

4. **Faithfulness is consistency** – It does not involve a succession of special efforts but rather is committed to a continuous, day-by-day pattern of using God’s blessings to serve God’s plan.
5. **Faithfulness is desire** – It is, first and foremost, the attitude of the faith-filled heart that is directed by God’s word to follow God’s will. (2 Corinthians 8:12)
6. **Faithfulness is fruitfulness** – It is impossible for faithful Christian stewardship not to be fruitful. It will always be so; not always by human standards but always in God’s eyes, and not because of the effort put forth by the steward but because of the blessing promised by God upon all who employ His gifts according to His will. (John 15:5)
 - Evaluate each of the above statements in the light of the master’s words in the parable Jesus told – Matthew 25:21 and 23.

Manthey continues, “God’s requirement of faithfulness, then, is both very comforting and very challenging for the Christian steward. It is comforting because it assures the steward that God does not compare him with anyone else or expect him to match anyone else’s level of performance. As God has given each steward his own individual and personal part in His plan, so God views each steward individually and personally....” (2 Corinthians 8:12)

- What comfort do you find in God’s requirement of faithfulness?

“Faithfulness is also very challenging, however, because it calls upon the steward to employ every blessing God gives in a God-pleasing and God-serving way.” (1 Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1)

- What is the most challenging aspect of faithfulness for you?

How does 2 Corinthians 1:18-22 help in this whole area of faithfulness as God’s stewards?

Action Item: What are some specific ways I can be more faithful as God’s steward?

Action Item: What are some ways members of our congregation can be encouraged to be more faithful?

Closing Prayer Provide time at the end of each session for questions, comments and group prayer. The prayer can take one of the following forms or be done in a way the group decides.

Adoration...
 Confession...
 Thanksgiving...
 Supplication....

Praise...
 Remember...
 Ask...
 Yield...

