



## October 16 & 17: Ongoing Faithfulness Leader's Guide

### Series Overview

We are in this world to make an impact and love others. If we are going to truly impact our world, we must display the life of Christ in our own lives. *Galatians 5:22-23* says, <sup>22</sup>*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.* This kind of life will make a difference in our world and in the lives of the people around us.



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### Sermon Highlights

Faithfulness is a rare trait. You struggle in a class ... you drop out. You don't like your college ... you transfer. You get mad at your boss ... you quit. You aren't happy in a marriage ... you get a divorce. One of the reasons we celebrate a 20-year ministry in church or a 50-year marriage is because faithfulness is rare. It's the exception.

Faithfulness is reflecting a lifestyle that has accepted God's grace.

Joseph is a man in the Old Testament who was faithful in spite of four challenging situations.

1. **He was faithful when no one was *watching*.**
2. **He was faithful under *pressure*.**
3. **He was faithful when *accused*.**
4. **He was faithful when *treated unfairly*.**

### Lessons on faithfulness:

**Lesson 1: God's standards are *absolute*. They do not *change*.**

**Lesson 2: Temptation is *normal*, even for the *Christian*.**

**Lesson 3: Victory is *possible* through *escape*.**

**Lesson 4: The rewards of purity are *eternal*, but they aren't always *immediate*.**

God will remain faithful even when you are faithless.

*Hebrews 10:23, Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

*1 John 1:9, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Jesus is the perfect example of faithfulness. He hung from a cross and was faithful to His mission so that our sins could be forgiven.

### On faithfulness...

- The reward of being faithful over a few things is just the same as being faithful over many things, for the emphasis falls upon the same word. It is the faithful who will enter into the joy of their Lord. –Charles S. Robinson
- *Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.* –Psalm 36:5
- Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter; whoever finds one has found a treasure. –Apocrypha



### Take it home ... Practical Applications

Are there areas or relationships in your life where you would like to quit or give up? What can you do to remain faithful before God? Ask God to help you to stick with that situation or that person for the long-term and see what He can do.



## Take it to the source ... Bible Study

**Introductory question:** How would you describe the faithfulness of God? How important is God's faithfulness in your own understanding of your spiritual life with Him?

### Opening Thought

Faithfulness is one of the primary attributes of God's nature. The fact that God never changes, that He never stops loving and pursuing us, is a great source of comfort and security. The fact that we can rest in His faithfulness means that we can trust that He has our best at heart, even in the most difficult of situations. Use this time to have your group start thinking about the faithfulness of God and what it means to them.

### Read *Genesis 39:2-6* and *Matthew 25:14-30*.

1. Joseph has been kidnapped and sold into slavery by his own brothers. If you were in his situation, what would be your initial reaction? Would you be inclined to stay faithful to God and His ways?
2. Scripture says five times that the Lord was with Joseph and blessed everything he did—while Joseph was a slave and seemingly hopeless. What does this say to you about the way God works in our lives?
3. How easy is it for you to be faithful in the small, even seemingly insignificant, things when no one is watching you or noticing you? How can faithfulness in the small things positively affect your spiritual life?
4. What are some things in your life that you believe are talents given to you by God? What are some practical things you can do to more faithfully use those talents for God and His work on the earth?
5. What are some ways that your small group can display the faithfulness of God to others who may be hurting and in need of a sign of God's love toward them?

### Key Point

The unique thing about faithfulness is that it is best displayed when no one is watching. It means being willing to do the small, unnoticed things just because you know they need to be done and you want to do them well. Faithfulness also means using the gifts you have been given to the best of your ability. When you use your gifts and talents for God's work and for His glory, He blesses you and even increases the gifts you have already been given. His faithfulness brings new dimensions to your life as you live faithfully for Him.

### Read *Genesis 39:6-18*.

1. It is obvious that Joseph was a man of strong self-discipline. What kind of spiritual disciplines are you cultivating in your life that can help you in times of temptation or unusual distress?
2. Joseph said he would not sin with Potiphar's wife because of his loyalty to his boss and because he would not sin against God. Do you live your life as though every action somehow involves God? Do you consider times when you are unfaithful to others as sins against God? Why or why not?
3. How could the idea that your unfaithfulness is actually sinning against God affect the decisions you make on a daily basis?
4. What things can you do in your daily time with God to be sure your response to difficult temptations is a godly and right response?

### Key Point

A key part of facing temptation is to know what your response is going to be before you face the situation. If we wait until we are in the heat of the moment, we are going to fail almost every time. It is valuable to work at developing spiritual discipline in your life so those moments of surprise don't become moments of defeat. Learning to keep God and His presence in your life at the front of all your thoughts will help prepare you for the trials and temptations that every single one of us face.

**Read Genesis 39:19-23 and Galatians 6:7-9.**

1. Do you believe that God always blesses obedience? What is your response to the way things went in Joseph's life after his faithful acts of obedience to God?
2. Would you say that your perspective on life focuses on the immediate or on the eternal? What's the difference and why does it matter?
3. These verses repeat that, in spite of all the injustice, God was with Joseph and was blessing his life. Does this alter the way you would describe the faithfulness of God? Why or why not?
4. How do you respond when you feel like nothing is going your way and you get tired of always trying to do the right thing? What practical things can you do to stay faithful to the Spirit of God in every area of your life?

**Key Point**

Things don't always go the way you planned. And God doesn't always take care of all your problems the second you start to walk according to His ways in any given situation. Sometimes obedience is met with more injustice. But faithfulness means that you decide to stick with it and keep doing what you know is right, regardless of the results. It means living with eternity in view. It means trusting God enough to know that He will eventually make all things right in your life and in the lives of those you may touch here on earth.

**Notes...**



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*All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.*

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