

Deut. 7:9 “Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His loving-kindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments”

When you hear or read the word “faithfulness” what comes to mind? Or, better yet, who comes to mind? I may be the only one here, but I tend to more tangibly grasp the idea of being more loving, showing more patience, and demonstrating acts of kindness than I do faithfulness. I would describe myself as a faithful and loyal person, but what does it really look like in the life of a Christian? What are the aspects of faithfulness as a fruit of the Spirit? If I am doubting God or His character, will I struggle with faithfulness?

We begin this week as we have all the others by defining faithfulness and by examining the faithfulness of God. We will then turn to our own faithfulness and examine the role of faith in our lives. We will borrow a great example of the shield of faith from Beth Moore’s study, *Believing God*. Finally, we will look at ways we can show faithfulness to those around us.

FRUIT OF THE WEEK: Kiwi, Granny Smith Apples, pears with green skin. I always correlate green with evergreen—always green. This can represent God’s faithfulness.

DAY ONE: What is Faithfulness?

Verse of the Day: Heb. 11:1

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” NASB

“Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see” NLT

- Begin your time together with prayer
- In order to understand faithfulness, we need to study the root word: faith.
- **What is faith?** Read or have your child read Hebrews 11:1
 - Talk about this verse and discuss/define faith based on this verse.
 - Faith is defined as: to believe, to confirm, to have assurance; reliable, trustworthy, steadfast
 - Ask your kids: *What are you confident will happen today? What are the things you are sure of?* (If any of their answers relate to God and His creation, bring that out. i.e. Your child says, “The sun will rise in the morning.” You say, “Yes because God established that pattern and is faithful to keep the sun rising each morning.”
 - *Who do you trust and why?*
 - Talk about what it means to be confident in God. (These are moments when your younger kids can truly demonstrate their child-like faith. Cherish these moments and re-enforce them throughout this week).
- **What is faith in action?**
 - This week, you will be reinforcing the truth that actions always accompany faith. What we truly believe is shown by our choices, behaviors, and attitudes.
 - Ask your kids: *What are some things you do each day that require faith or confidence?*
 - (For little ones, you could demonstrate the old favorite of sitting in a chair and talking about how you trust that it will hold you up and keep you from falling). “I believe that this chair is going to hold me up.”

- For older kids, you could talk about the fact that everyone believes something. Our actions and emotions usually stem from what we believe. Later in the week, you can explore this more with your older kids by talking about lies they might be believing, or truths about God that they are doubting.
- **What does it mean to be faithful?**
 - **ACTIVITY:** An Exercise in Trust: Believe it or not (pun intended), your kids will love the classic trust test of falling backward into your arms. Do they trust you to catch them? Emphasize the fact that you will be faithful to catch them.
 - Have each of your kids talk about their fear of falling to the ground. At some point they had to trust your ability to catch them MORE than their fear of falling.
 - Draw a correlation to how God is faithful, and how He has proven faithful in your life journey. Talk about the moments that you chose not to give into fear, but stepped out in faith instead. If you have teenagers, ask them to talk to younger siblings about how God has shown His faithfulness.
 - *Ask each child how he/she can show faithfulness to others.* (We will really explore this on day five)
 - Finish with prayer.

DAY TWO: His name is Faithful and True

Verse of the Day: Psa. 100:5

For the LORD is good;
His loving-kindness is everlasting
And His **faithfulness** to all generations.

- Begin your time together with prayer. Use the verse of the day and have each of your children praise God for his goodness, loving-kindness, and faithfulness.
- Look up Revelation 19:11: “And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called **Faithful and True.**” This passage is referring to Jesus. One of His names is “Faithful and True.”
 - Talk about how names are used to define a person’s character. Give examples from scripture about how God has many different names that describe who He is.
 - GOD IS FAITHFUL! God can’t be anything but faithful. Faithfulness is a part of who He is. He will never leave you, and will love you unconditionally. The problem comes with our lack of faithfulness—not God’s.
 - **ACTIVITY #1:** Introducing the “Shield of Faith”.
 - Say to your kids: “God is who He says He is.” and “God can do what He says He can do.” (These statements are taken from Beth Moore’s wonderful Bible study entitled *Believing God*. They are 2 of 5 statements you and your kids will memorize this week to demonstrate the shield of faith.)
 - Now say them again and when you make the first statement hold up your forefinger as you say it. Have your kids repeat after you.
 - Then, say the second statement and put up your forefinger with your middle finger—forming the sign for 2. (By the time you talk through all 5 statements of faith, you will be holding up your hand like a shield).
 - **ACTIVITY # 2:** Who does God say that He is? He says that He is faithful. (Look up the following verses about God’s faithfulness and talk about/discuss each one, or focus on 2-3 of them to discuss)
 - Psa. 33:4 “For the word of the LORD is upright, And all His work is done in faithfulness.” (Note that it says ALL of His work, not just some of it!)
 - Psa. 36:5 “Your loving-kindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies. (Help your kids get a visual picture of

this. If you've flown in an airplane, comment on how high up you were. The Psalmist is saying that God's faithfulness reaches way up there. That is BIG!

- Lamentations 3:22-23 The LORD'S loving-kindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness."
- 2Tim. 2:13 "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself." (What a wonderful truth! Make sure your kids really understand this!)
- 1John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (*What does this verse say God is faithful to do?* When we confess our sin, we are agreeing with God about the sin in our life. God is faithful to forgive the humble of heart.)
- 2Th. 3:3 "But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one." (If God is for us, who can be against us? He is faithful to His children).

DAY THREE: The shield of faith: You believe in God, but do you believe God?

Verse of the Day: Hebrews 11:6 "Without faith, it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

I am always struck when I read the passage in James 2:19 "*You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror.*" Satan and his forces believe in God. God has complete sovereignty over Satan. But Satan's heart does not submit to God's plan. He doesn't believe that God's way is best. Instead, he wanted his own way and rebelled. Our children need to understand that faith is a heart issue. It isn't just believing that there is a God. It is "to love mercy, act justly, and walk humbly **with** your God." Saving faith always translates into action. It is living a daily life of trust and obedience—motivated and changed by His love.

- Today we will continue learning the five statements that form our shield of faith.
- Begin with prayer
- Read Ephesians 6: 10-17 (Remember the picture of the soldier that we used to portray the armor of God? You can pull that out again. This time, however, we are going to focus on the shield of faith.)
- Read verse 16 again. *What does the shield of faith do? How does it help us in the battle against Satan?*
- LET'S LEARN OUR SHIELD OF FAITH STATEMENTS: (Taken from *Believing God* by Beth Moore)
 - **GOD IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS**
 - **GOD CAN DO WHAT HE SAYS HE CAN DO**
 - **I AM WHO GOD SAYS I AM**
 - **I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST**
 - **GOD'S WORD IS ALIVE AND ACTIVE IN ME**
- Repeat these statements several times with your kids. With each statement hold up a finger until your entire hand is raised in a shield formation.
- In the Bible, God says of Himself that He is:
 - good, faithful, loving, peace, the Mighty One, our banner, our shield, our defender, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Alpha and Omega... (add more to this list if you wish!)
- In the Bible, God says that He is able and can do anything:
 - all things are possible with God, He saves, He delivers, He gives faith, He gives power, He is all powerful, He created the heavens and the earth, He can raise the dead to life
- In the Bible, God says that I am:

- chosen, adopted, a royal priesthood, loved unconditionally, blessed in the heavenly realms, free from the power of sin, justified
- In the Bible, God says that:
 - Through Christ, I can do all things
 - His divine power is in me and has given me all I need for this life (2 Peter 1:3)
 - When I pray according to His Will, it will be accomplished (1John 5:15)
- In the Bible God says that:
 - His Word is alive and active, sharper than any double edged sword (Heb. 4:12)
 - His word is useful for correcting, teaching, rebuking, and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16)
 - His word is breathed by Him
 - His word is Truth (John 17:17)
 - I am the temple of the Holy Spirit, so He is alive and active in me!
- Finish the lesson by giving examples of when you haven't believed God in one of these areas. You can keep it simple with younger kids and go into detail with older kids. For instance, I might share about the fact that when I fear the future, I am not trusting that God is good and in control. When I feel like I'm not good enough to do what God has called me to do, I am not believing that I can do all things through Christ.
- **When you finish, have your kids share. You'd be surprised at what a 5 yr old might say! Don't skip over this. You can use prompts like: fear, worry, and anger. "When you are afraid, what aspect of God's character are you doubting?"**
- Repeat the shield of faith one more time and then close in prayer. Thank God for His faithfulness and ask Him to help you and your family overcome areas of unbelief.

DAY FOUR: It All Boils Down to Faith

Verse of the Day Heb. 10:23

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."

FOR TODDLERS AND YOUNGER CHILDREN

- Begin today with prayer and practice your shield of faith statements several times together. Ask and see if one of your kids would like to try it by themselves. (Make sure you practice it several times throughout the remainder of the week).
- Read the story of Daniel and the Lion's Den found in Daniel Chapter 6. Talk about Daniel's strong faith in God. What actions of Daniel proved that he truly believed? How did God demonstrate His power?

AND/OR

- Read the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednigo in Daniel Chapter 3. Talk about their strong faith in God and the actions that demonstrated that faith. Talk about how God demonstrated His power and proved His faithfulness.
- *What did these men believe about God? What actions proved their belief?*
- *Are there times at school or with your friends that you have had to stand up for what you believe?*

If you want to, watch one of the Veggie Tale versions of these stories.

Rom. 1:17 says: "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will **live** by **faith**."

- Make the point to your kids that the choices they make, the things they say, and their attitudes show what they believe in their heart. As followers of Christ, we live our lives by trusting God.
- Finish with prayer. Ask God to help you overcome any area of unbelief.

FOR OLDER KIDS AND TEENS

- Today's verse encourages us to hold fast to what we confess about God and Christ. It encourages us not to waver but stand firm in our faith. Why? Because HE WHO PROMISED IS FAITHFUL!
- On Day One we talked about the truth that all of our choices, emotions, and actions are proofs of what we truly believe.
- Here are some questions to consider and discuss:
 - *Are those around us seeing the fruit of faithfulness in our lives? Do our lives show that we truly believe the 5 statements of faith?*
 - *When times are tough, do we truly believe that God is faithful and good?*
 - *What are the circumstances that test our faith? Ask any willing children to share with the family the circumstances that test them. If they can't think of one, you might have them talk about their worst fear and relate that to doubting who God is.*
- **Rom. 1:17** says: "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."
 - *What conclusions about the Christian life can be drawn from this verse?*
- **1Pet. 4:19** says: "Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right."
 - *What is this verse saying about suffering? What does it mean to entrust your soul? What kind of Creator do we have? When we trust God and rely upon His faithfulness, what is the result?*
- **A Biblical portrait of steadfast faith put into action:** Read the story of Joseph beginning in Genesis 37. (Use your own discretion when talking through the section with Potiphar's wife). If it is best for your family, you could take two days for this lesson and save the reading and discussion of Joseph for another day (or you could do it over the weekend after you have finished all five days).
 - *Talk about Joseph's suffering and injustice*
 - *Was he treated as he deserved by his brothers? How about his treatment by Potiphar?*
 - *What does this passage show about God's character and purposes?*
 - *What actions prove Joseph's steadfast faith in God?*
 - *What truths about faith and action can you glean from this passage and apply to your own life?*
 - **Read Acts 7:8b-16.** Notice that Stephen mentions that despite the evil circumstances in which Joseph found himself: "God was with him."
- Finish with prayer. Pray that God would help you overcome any area of unbelief in your life and the lives of your children. Ask God to show you what you truly believe about Him. Pray that He will shine His light of truth into the hearts of your kids too.

*Psa. 119:75 I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are righteous,
And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.*

DAY FIVE: Being a Faithful Friend

Verse of the Day: Psa. 37:3

"Trust in the LORD and do good;
Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness." NASB

- Begin today with prayer
- Have your children identify the verbs or action words in today's verse.
 - Trust
 - Do
 - Dwell
 - Cultivate (keep company with, associate with)
- Talk about each word and define it. Use "trust" and "do" to remind your family that true faith results in action.
- Take a moment to review the 5 statements of your shield of faith.
- Now, take some time to discuss what it means to dwell in the land and keep company with faithfulness.

How can we show others our faithfulness to God?

- **ACKNOWLEDGE HIM AND TELL OF HIS FAITHFULNESS**
- Psalm 40:10: I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Your **faithfulness** and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your loving-kindness and Your truth from the great congregation.
- Psalm 89:1: I will sing of the loving-kindness of the LORD forever; To all generations I will make known Your **faithfulness** with my mouth.

How can we show faithfulness to each other?

- *What does it mean to be loyal and faithful to your family?*
- Moms and dads can talk about your marriage vows and how you pledged to be faithful.
- *How can brothers and sisters show faithfulness?*
 - *What are ways we betray our siblings rather than show that we are trustworthy?*
 - *What about tattling?* This would be great to address with younger siblings.
- *When is it hard to show faithfulness to one another?*
- Faithfulness means persevering, forgiving, not giving up, correcting, teaching, encouraging, standing up for your family, etc.

How can we show faithfulness to our friends?

- *What are ways you show faithfulness to your friends?*
 - Prove yourself trustworthy
 - No gossiping
 - When to keep a secret and when to get help for a friend
- *Have you ever stood up for a friend when he/she was being mistreated?*
- *Has anyone shown faithfulness to you in hard times?*
- *If your friend is caught in a sin, what would be the action that shows your faithfulness to them?*
 - Prov. 27:6 "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy."
 - Sometimes faithfulness means speaking the truth that might hurt.
 - Doing what is right may make your friend mad, but you are showing that you are a faithful friend who truly cares about his/her welfare.
 - Remember, God is faithful in this way. He is faithful to show us our sin and sometimes discipline us for our sin so that we can break free from it.
- Finish by asking your children what they have learned about faithfulness. Lead them in a prayer that follows the pattern of ACTS:
 - ADORATION: Praise God for His faithfulness

- CONFESSION: Confess areas of unbelief, or times when you/they haven't proven faithful to family members or friends
- THANKSGIVING: Thank God for His faithful mercies, grace, and discipline. Thank Him for faithful family and friends
- SUPPLICATION: Pray and ask God to help you overcome areas of unbelief. Pray for relationships that need faithfulness. Pray that your children stand up for what is right and don't give into peer pressure. Pray for steadfastness and trustworthiness.

**Is. 25:1 O LORD, You are my God;
I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name;
For You have worked wonders,
Plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness.**