

Faithfulness: A True Virtue

Tim Conway | *illbehonest.com*

I would like you to turn to Ephesians 1:1. For a number of years, I have been working on memorizing the entire book of Ephesians. And when I go out and I walk and I pray, oftentimes, I will just rehearse chunks of Ephesians. And as I was walking the paths of Brackenridge Park on Monday, I began in Ephesians 1:1. And I thought I might just go through the first chapter. What's interesting is when you memorize Scripture like that and you go back and you rehearse, it's amazing how the Lord can make different portions of that come alive. And that's what happened. I actually started, "Paul an Apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus." And I was stopped in my tracks. I was stopped by the word "faithful." And I just thought out of all the things that an inspired apostle could have said, undoubtedly, when you have faithful Christians, there's a lot of different things that could be said about them. Of all the terms, of all the descriptions Paul might have chosen to describe these people at Ephesus, he chose that word: faithful. Faithful. I couldn't get past that. What a thing to have said of you! You know what? That is something to have that said of you by a parent, by an employer, by somebody who is an officer over you, the leadership in the church says that about you. That's something to have said about you. But what a thing to have said about you by an apostle of God under the divine inspiration of God. And what a thing to have said about you in light of the fact that many other things could have been said about you. To have this quality stand out more than all other qualities. And you understand, Ephesus has been forever labeled as faithful. As long as the Bible stands. There it is, preserved for us in holy Scripture.

And I got to thinking, oh, brethren, this is not detached from us. How you will long - how all men will long to bear that label in the final day. Because you remember what Jesus says. Jesus paints us this picture of Judgment Day where the Master comes to his servants and to some he says, "Well done, good and faithful..." Faithful servant. Oh, what sweetness. I'll tell you, you want to hear that said about you.

You want that, but brethren, let me tell you this. Jesus doesn't invent that word for anybody just because. Paul doesn't attach that title to the Ephesians just because. There's truth behind it. You understand? There's truth behind the title. Jesus doesn't come along and indiscriminately call people, "Well done, good and faithful servant," on the final day, unless indeed, they were faithful. You have to be faithful to be called faithful by Him who is the true Witness. He bears witness to the truth. Have you ever read on Judgment Day, the books are open. What's there? Our works. Jesus is not going to come to the conclusion that you were faithful, unless when those books were opened, you were faithful. Paul doesn't make this up and just say, well, just because they're Christians, I'm going to give them this title whether it applies to them or not. It does apply to them. It does describe them. It is not an artificial title. It has reality. It has truth behind it.

Brethren, I'll tell you this, every one of you in this room right now - every one of you - there is a reality about your faithfulness. I want you to think about that this morning.

Faithfulness. Faithful. I desire to flood our minds right now with the beauty of this virtue and the ways in which faithfulness is demonstrated.

The title of my sermon: "Faithfulness: A True Virtue." So, let's think about this. Faithful. Okay, the word faithful in the Greek is the word *pistos*. It can have one of two meanings in Ephesians 1:1. This word is used in our New Testament - I'll give you an example. You remember when Thomas, he said, "I won't believe unless..." Right? "Unless I'm able to put my fingers in there, I'm not going to believe." And then when Jesus shows up and he does put his fingers in there, he calls Him, "My Lord and My God," and he does believe. And Jesus responds by saying to Thomas, "Put your fingers here. See My hands. See My side." He says to Thomas, "Don't be unbelieving, but be believing." Right there is our word *pistos*. It's a word that can mean not just faithful like we understand it, but full of faith. It can mean a believing one. It can mean somebody who is full of faith - they're believing. But, on the other hand, like when Jesus says, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little..." There it does mean what we typically think of it having that meaning of loyalty. Trustworthiness. That idea that you stand for something worth standing for. That idea of being loyal to somebody to whom you owe loyalty. That's the idea. Now the word here can mean either one of those. Or perhaps, Paul doesn't mean for us to just choose one or the other. It may be that he very much has both in mind, because I can tell you this, if you're loyal to Christ, you're going to trust Him; you're going to believe what He said. And I don't think we want to separate these.

But brethren, today, I am not so interested in talking about the Christian as a believer. What I want to talk about today is our loyalty to Christ and just what a true virtue that is. Faithfulness to Christ. Loyalty to Christ is a massive virtue in the Christian life. Brethren, I'll tell you this, don't discount this. Don't treat this lightly. The Lord is watching you, and this is something that is very desirable and very precious in the sight of the Lord. Listen to Scripture. Proverbs 12:22 "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are His delight." When you are loyal to Him - brethren, this is life! This is where the rubber meets the road. What He's talking about is this: when you walk out these doors, and you go off into this world, and you're living your life before your family, before the watching world, in your workplace, in your school, wherever life takes you, are you living in a way that reflects loyalty to Christ? Because He finds it very desirable. Very precious. That is not a small matter to Him. Judgment Day bears that out: "Well done." What is it to live a life well? It is to live a life faithful. That's what He says: "Well done, good and faithful servant." You want to live a life well? Not well in the sight of the world; not well in the sight of the news, the media, the politicians. You want to live a life really well in the sight of God? Be faithful. Faithful. Faithful to Christ. Faithful to Him. That's the idea. The Ephesians - they were faithful in Christ Jesus. Faithful.

Brethren, let me tell you something else about this. Faithfulness is a rarity. It is not common. Unfaithfulness is common. In marriage, in the workplace, in the military, among professing Christians - unfaithfulness is the norm. You know what? We could all go around and we could take from our experiences and prove that. But Scripture itself bears witness. Proverbs 20:6 "Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?" Did you hear what was said there? It's common to find people who will boast about themselves. It's very uncommon to find someone faithful. Who can find? The author of the Proverbs is saying, "who can find it?" It doesn't mean it's impossible to find, but it means it's a scarce thing. And did you

catch the flavor of that? What's true about a man who wants to tell you about himself? Oh, you get around people, they talk about themselves, talk about themselves. They'll boast. They're not faithful to somebody else. They're faithful to their own reputation. You know, we're all faithful to something. What we're talking about right now is faithfulness and loyalty to Christ.

So, what I want to do is I want to consider various examples of faithfulness just because I want to flood our minds with this idea here. The first one is this: A faithful wife. Think of a woman who enters into marriage. Now, brethren, here's the thing. The church is the true wife. We've got a lot of husbands and wives here, but that's the shadow. That's not the reality. The reality of the faithful wife is the church.

Think about a woman who enters into marriage. Think about what characterizes a really faithful wife. You know what the proverb says? Think about an excellent wife, a faithful wife. The proverb says that the heart of her husband trusts her. Why? What is it that happens in a marriage that causes the husband to trust her? She does him good and not harm all the days of her life. That's what characterizes a trustworthy wife. Why does her husband trust her? Well, because, he's the kind of husband that can come home early from work when his wife doesn't expect him; he can come back early from a trip when he's supposed to be gone longer, and he can walk in and he doesn't find his wife doing something she wouldn't do if she knew he was watching. He finds her faithful. He finds her doing him good and not evil. That's the sign of faithfulness. Brethren, we're talking not about the shadow here, we're talking about our faithfulness to Christ. That's what we're talking about. You know what? A husband that can trust his wife; a husband whose heart is confident in her faithfulness - you know what? He's the kind of husband - he can go outside and walk in the yard and he can come up to a window and he can look in there when his wife doesn't know that he's watching, and he can see her doing the things that please him. Or he can overhear a phone call when she does not know he's listening, and he can hear her talk about him and he recognizes right away, she honors me. In fact, she just was talking to somebody about something that if the truth were known, I'm not the greatest example of, and yet, my wife protected me right there rather than gossiping about me, complaining about me, tearing me down in front of whoever she was talking to, she protected my reputation. And she didn't even know I was listening.

Listen, if you come home and find out - you've got certain standards for the children - and you find out when you're not at home, your wife does not uphold that standard. She only does it when she knows you're watching, but when you're not watching, she tells the kids, oh yeah, you can do that, even though dad says you can't do that. You see, the heart of a husband who trusts a faithful wife - he's one that he sees his wife is seeking to honor him. He can suddenly come around the corner. He can suddenly show up at home. He can suddenly walk in, and his wife is not a hypocrite who does one thing at one time and another at another. Says one thing and does another thing. She's not that. He can come home early from work or that trip, and you know what? He finds his beloved about his business. We're talking about the church. We're talking about Christians in their faithfulness to Christ.

Here's the second thing, not just that she's trustworthy - we're talking about a wife here - but, she's always doing him good. You see, it's one thing to walk in unexpectedly upon your wife and find her neutral. It's a whole other thing when you walk in and you find she is specifically

seeking to be your help. She is specifically seeking to do you good and not harm. She is doing the very things she is doing because they please you and honor you.

You know what? I've come home from a long trip away, and I've found my wife had remodeled the bathroom. And you know while I was gone, I heard the stories later about how she was working in that bathroom and had all the children in there, and they were talking about when daddy gets home, when daddy gets home. You know, they're doing this for me; to surprise me. Here I am far away. She's not just sitting at Starbucks talking to another man. She's at home. And she's doing the very thing that she anticipates is going to please me when I walk through the door. That's faithful. It's not just the wife who doesn't do the evil, it's the wife who does the good. That's what the proverb says about this wife.

But we're talking about saints who are being faithful to Christ Jesus. Brethren, let us never forget that we are in the truest sense the wife. We're talking about the beauty of faithfulness in my life and your life. Faithfulness to Christ. We sang, "When it's all been said and done..." Do you ever stop and think about that song? When it's all been said and done... what? When everything you're going to say in this lifetime has been said. When all the things you're going to do, the final period has been put there. When you scan all of it, does it speak of faithfulness to Christ?

I'll tell you something else we think about when we think about a faithful woman. We think about purity. She is true to her marriage vows. Her heart is for one man and one man only. Her intimacies are reserved for one. She doesn't share herself. She guards herself; guards her heart from other lovers. Brethren, hear me. Those who are faithful in Christ Jesus are faithful to Christ Jesus. That is faithfulness. Faithful, brethren. Faithful. Shunning the advance of other lovers. But this is speaking about us. And this world is full of many other lovers who would seek to take our affections away. Are you faithful, brethren, to shun the advances of those other lovers? A faithful wife. Faithful. She is a wife who is pure.

Brethren, I remember back when we were going through Hebrews, that drift that was warned about. The drifting. That which causes us to drift from Christ. Why do people drift from Christ? Other lovers. Always. The faithfulness, the loyalty begins to break down and the drift... Brethren, let me tell you something. Have you ever read about how the high priest - God said to Aaron and to all the high priests who would come from his lineage after him, this was said, "He shall take a wife in her virginity." You know what a high priest could never do? He could never marry a divorced woman, or a woman who had been defiled - raped, abused, anything like that. Never. He could never take a prostitute. "These he shall not marry, but he shall take as his wife a virgin of his own people." I want you to remember, we are talking about Christ. Christ is the high priest. We are the bride.

Brethren, do you hear Paul? Do you hear Paul when he comes along to the Corinthians and he says, "Look, I have a divine jealousy, since I have betrothed you to one Husband." I have betrothed you to one Husband. "...That you would be a pure virgin for Christ." Pure devotion to Christ. Pure allegiance to Christ. Pure faithfulness to Christ.

Brethren, the psalmist says, "The king will desire your beauty." Do you know what the beauty is that the King desires in you? Listen to this - that's part of the verse in Psalm 45. But right before it it says this: "Hear, O daughter, and consider and incline your ear. Forget your people. Forget your father's house and the king will desire your beauty." Do you see what it

says? Where is the beauty? Where is the position you need to be in that Christ would desire you? It's forsaking your other allegiances. Let them go. The beauty He desires in you is not a physical beauty. It is a beauty of devotion. It is a beauty of faithfulness. You want to be attractive in the greatest sense possible? Faithfulness. Faithful. That is the attraction. That is the beauty. It is the beauty of forsaking all else and bowing to Him.

Brethren, do you know in 1973, many of the prisoners of war who had been held in North Vietnamese prison camps, came home. The Vietnam War was long. Some of those men who came out of what they called the Hanoi Hilton, some of them that came home in 1973, they'd been there since 1965. They'd been 8 years in a North Vietnamese prison. Starved. Tortured. Beaten. And they came home in 1973. Do you know sadly, numbers of them, their wives did not wait for them? Some of those men got off those airplanes and their wives were not there to meet them. Their wives had divorced them. Some of those wives had been unfaithful. But there were others who had stood by their man for all 8 years. Can you imagine a woman - she would not let the children move the things on the bed stand. She wanted them left exactly as dad had left them the last time he was there in that room. Can you imagine that wife who she did not wash the pillow case on her husband's pillow for 8 years because each night she leaned over and she tried to smell what he smelled like if there was anything left there. And when he got off that airplane, he looked a lot older; he was broken; he had been tortured; he limped; but her heart lit up because that was her man. She had stayed faithful. Brethren, we're talking about faithfulness here.

Faithfulness. I would ask you this. When you can't see the face of your Beloved, when He's hidden from you, you can't smell His aroma anymore, He's withdrawn, He's distant, things are hard, things are dark, do you chase after other lovers and give yourselves to those affections? You know what is so easy for the Christian to do? It is easy for the Christian to get in a place where suddenly, they can't find the Lord anymore, he doesn't know the Lord's blessings like he used to, or she doesn't - things seem dark, you start thinking things are unfair. How come I don't have what other people have? Well, if God is going to treat me like this, and I can't find Him, I can't be blessed, I can't enjoy what I used to enjoy, and have the fullness of this, well, then I guess I'm just going to chase after television, or chase after sports, or chase after money, or chase after this, or chase after that, and I feel justified. That is not being faithful. Being faithful is when it's hard, you say, "the Lord is my Beloved. He is my Husband. And I'm committed, no matter what may come. I'm committed."

Brethren, let's think of this. A faithful servant. Let's think about a faithful servant. What would be one of the things that would jump right out at you as far as a faithful servant? I would say undoubtedly, the mark of a faithful servant is obedience to the master's will. Scripture's clear on this. Listen to just a few verses. Deuteronomy 28:1 "If you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth." Carefulness in obedience is the mark of faithfulness. That's what that text says. Faithful to obey, to do. Careful to do all that He has said. Or how about this? 1 Samuel 2:35 "I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest." What does that look like? "...Who will do according to what is in My heart and in My mind."

Brethren, this is what I want to ask you. Does that mark your life? Are you faithful? Are you getting on the computer and doing things you ought not to do? That is not being faithful. Are

you using your money in ways that honor Christ? And are being faithful to Him? Are you using your time, your home, your vehicle, your mind, your hands, your feet in ways that speak of faithfulness to Christ? Or are you being faithful to you? Faithful to another beloved? How about this? Psalm 101:6, "I will look with favor on the faithful in the land." Who are they? "That they may dwell with Me; he who walks in the way that is blameless." That's the one. That's what it is to be faithful. And here's the thing, it's not momentary or sporadic. We've got lots of people who will for a little season seek to do what's right, but the faithfulness is not just a momentary faithfulness. You know what the Lord says? The Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager?" Let me ask you this. Who is the faithful and wise manager? Do you know what Jesus' answer is? The one who when I return I find doing what I told him to do. Guess what? You know what the only way to be ready? To be faithful when the Master may arrive unexpectedly at any time? Brethren, I'll tell you this, the person who is not faithful but has an idea: "well, I'm going to be faithful when He comes," they will never be faithful when He comes. The only one who will be faithful when He comes - because He's coming at an hour we don't think; He's coming unexpectedly; He's coming like a thief - you know what? You know who is going to be the only one who is going to be faithful when He comes unexpectedly? It's the one who's faithful all the time. That's it. He's not looking for sporadic faithfulness. He's looking for a constancy.

Brethren, let me ask you something. Imagine you're entering a company. Tomorrow, Monday, you drive to some company somewhere. You walk through the front doors. And there's the offices, you know, full of a bunch of cubicles. And you were to walk in and you were to look over and you see like 5 of the employees of that company, and they're all over there, and you see them standing at the opening of one of the cubicles, and you can see they're laughing and they're hooting it up. They're frittering the time away with a bunch of useless gossip. And suddenly, you're standing there and you're watching this, and suddenly, some guy walks through the doors and he walks right past you, and you just see the people scatter. Who do you think that was that just walked by you? The boss. Have you ever seen that? I've seen that happen. Have you ever been one of the people in the group? You know what that speaks of? You're not being faithful. Because you're doing something you would not do if you knew the boss was watching. And the thing is the Boss is watching. When we get negligent, we start to think He's not, and we get careless. Brethren, you know who you want to be? You want to be the one that says I'm loyal. I'm loyal to this company. I want to be trustworthy. I want to be honest. While I'm on the clock, I'm going to give my employer 110%. And you know what? That's a faithful employee. That's faithful.

Let me tell you, the idea of a faithful servant... do you know the term deacon? It's basically a fancy expression for the term servant. In one sense, we're all to be deacons. We understand the distinction when somebody holds the office. Brethren, let me tell you something. I know a deacon in this church who made some kind of banking mistake. Maybe he didn't make deposits as soon as they should have been made or something happened, and fees were incurred, that would not have happened if he would have done what he should have done timely. And he knew it was his fault. And he didn't lay that burden on you. He paid for it out of his own pocket. That's a faithful servant.

I know a deacon of this church - (incomplete thought). I saw today when I put mail that comes in in there first thing in the morning, and I looked in there and somebody had just emptied their pocket full of change in there. And I can remember back in the early days, sometimes some of the kids would go up and they would stick two pennies in. And you know, when you're dealing with bills and checks, and then you have to keep track of these two pennies... but I know that our deacons have been sensitive in their consciences to not just throw those in the garbage or put them in their pocket or hand them to a child going by. They have made certain they got all the way to being deposited in the bank. Why? Brethren, I'll tell you this. If you're faithful in little, you'll be faithful in much. That is the kind of man you want to handle your finances. Because that's somebody who is faithful.

That's what we're talking about, brethren. You have been given even little things. The little things in life are not trivial. Because how you deal faithfully or not faithfully with the little things God has given to you will show what you will do if He gives you more. Bank on it. That is a spiritual principle. Faith in little - faithful in much. If you are faithful with what God has given to you, you will be faithful if He gives you ten times as much. Brethren, are you faithful? Because everybody in this room has been entrusted with something. Are you faithful in Christ Jesus? Are you faithful with your time? Brethren, there is something said in Scripture; there is something said about the person who does not give, and it only ends up to his own poverty. He withholds what he should give. What do you with your money? Do you just use it for yourself? Again, are you faithful to you? Or are you faithful to Christ? Think about that. Jesus comes along and He says, "Sell your possessions and give to the poor." Jesus says, "Don't store up treasure here." Jesus says, "Give..." Jesus would have us to be aware of the needs of others. Let me ask you something. If we took your money and we looked at how you used it just from January 1st to right now, would it declare that you're faithful to Christ? Or faithful to your own pleasures? To your own self? To your own agenda and to your own desires? Brethren, you are not going to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant," unless you've been good and faithful to Christ.

How about a faithful son? Let's think about that for a second. A faithful son. Three things jumped out at me as I thought about a faithful son. Brethren, you know why I'm hitting on all these? Because what God did so beautifully is He created a wife, and He created servants, and He created sons, all as a shadow. We are the wife. We are the servant. We are the sons. And do you know what is the hallmark of beauty among all of these? Faithfulness. And we are the truest expression of these things.

Think of a son. You know the thing that jumps out at me concerning a son is this: He honors the family name. You think of this - Revelation 2:13, "I know where you dwell..." This is said to Pergamum, the church, by Jesus Christ. "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is, yet you hold fast My name." You hold fast My name. He said this in Revelation 3:8 to the church at Philadelphia. He says, "I know you have but little power, yet you have kept My Word and have not denied My name." Brothers and sisters, are you faithful to the family name? I would ask you this. When you go out these doors in the sight of this world, do you compose yourself and carry yourselves as sons of the King? Because here's what Jesus said, when you go out these doors, the world is going to know you and the family you belong to by the way you live. That's what He said. He said if that world out there looks at you and sees you loving one another, by that they're going to know you belong to Him. There's a way to live to be known that

you're attached to Christ. Brethren, for you to call yourselves a Christian and to go out here and live like mere men - do you remember the message we heard from Ryan at the conference this year? Living like mere men? This is what Paul told the Corinthians. He said, "you're living like mere men." And you know what? That was not a compliment. When you who call yourselves Christians live like mere men; when you live like the people in this world, that is no compliment. When you live a life that does not rise above what you used to be; when you live a life that does not distinguish itself from the life of everybody else out here, you are living like mere men and that is not a compliment for the Christian. That is not a compliment. That is a rebuke. Do you carry yourselves in the way you speak that proves you faithful? The world may not like what you are, but they cannot deny it that you look like Christ. They may hate you because you look like Him, and they will hate you, and you have the promise that they will hate you, but do you bear the family name well? Do you hold fast to that name? Do you honor that name? Do you not deny that name? Do you know what He said to Philadelphia? "You have little power." You may be weak; you may be insignificant, but you know what? That doesn't mean you can't honor His name. You most definitely can. Are you being faithful?

Here's another thing about a faithful son. He honors his father's friends. Proverbs 27:10 says, "Do not forsake your friend or your father's friend." Now let me just tell you something here. Do you know when you go into the Proverbs and you find sons being talked about? Again, I'm telling you, it's a shadow. The author of Hebrews says when you find sons being written about in Proverbs, guess who that is? He says, "Don't despise the discipline of God." Doesn't the Proverb say concerning sons - doesn't it say, "you've forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons"? Really? That's addressing me as a son of God? It sounds like it's addressing the son of a man. When you go back and you read in the Proverbs, and it's speaking about a father and a son, it sounds like a physical father and a physical son in this world. And undoubtedly, it did mean that. But what the author of Hebrews says is you've got to look beyond that. There's a spiritual reality beyond that. You are the sons. And you know when it talks about sons - honor, they respect, they don't forsake the friends of their father. I'll just ask you this. When you come across somebody that is a friend of your Father in Heaven, will you embrace that person even though it would cause you to be despised by some of the highest in this world in rank? in authority? I mean this, you're in a situation where the wealthy, the famous, the important people in this world, where they're watching you, will you defend one of Christ's little ones? Even though it will cause you to be despised by them? Would you stand up in defense of a Christian in the sight of the important people in this world? In front of your boss? In front of your family? (Incomplete thought)

I've said this before. You think of the cartoon the Voice of the Martyrs created concerning Perpetua when her father is ready to strike the slave girl. And Perpetua stands in the way and says to her father - he says, "What are you doing? She's a slave!" She says, "She is my sister." Will you stand up for your Father's friends? That is to be faithful. Faithful. To be a faithful son is to be faithful to my Father's friends.

Or a faithful son here - he honors his Father's instruction. Proverbs 1:8, "Hear, my son, your father's instruction." You know what a faithful son does? He's got the voice of his father ringing in his ears. Brethren, are you hearing Scripture when you live your life? Are you constantly thinking about the things you do, the things you do with your money, the things you

do with your life, the things you do with your time, the things you do with your home, the things you do with your vehicles, the things that you do with what God has given to you, the things you do with your giftedness, your abilities? Are you constantly thinking what does God's Word say? How should I be living my life? Is this squaring up with Scripture? Brethren, I'm asking myself that all the time. You know what? A faithful son has the instruction of his father ringing in his ears all the time. That is to be faithful. That doesn't mean we live a perfect life.

Listen, I can tell you this. I think of Carlos sometimes when he addresses his sons. He says, "my boy." Can you imagine him saying to his youngest son, "my boy, bring me a glass of ice water." And he watches Nathan and he goes over and I don't know if he's got an ice maker, but I watch James sometimes - he goes over and he pushes the ice maker and that thing just blasts out ice and it overflows and goes on the floor. You can imagine Nathan doing that. Boom! And the ice goes on the floor and then he fills it up and he's walking over. He's small and he's bringing that to his dad and he sloshes water on the floor. And you know, what does a daddy think when he's got a small son? The daddy can look at his son and knows that son is trying to please me. Yes, he got ice all over the floor. Yes, he sloshed water all over the floor. But you can see in the son, there's a delight in doing his father's will. Brethren, is that not how our Father is? It's not a matter of whether we live our life perfectly, but it's looking to see are we faithful to Him because we want to do what pleases Him? You know what? There's no father on earth that's going to look at that son and say, "you were unfaithful! You little wretch!" The father's going to smile upon that. Why? Because that is faithfulness. Why? Because you know the son is trying to do what he believes will please his father. That is faithfulness. Brethren, that is faithfulness. You know what? We don't always remember everything God has said, but when we're living our life and we're thinking about what we can remember that God has said, and we think I'm doing this because I know my God has said this - now somebody that's wiser may come along and say but you know, God also says this over here. And we look at this and we say, well, yes. But I'll tell you this, if you do the wrong thing in this life, but you're doing it because you're thinking about something that God has said, and you're wanting to please Him, and as best as you know this is what's going to please Him, brethren, is that not the spirit of Romans 14? Whatever you do, you do unto the Lord. And that pleases the Lord. That doesn't mean we can't do wrong things sometimes. But brethren, you know what I'm talking about.

Or think about this. Think about a faithful soldier. A faithful soldier doesn't vacate in the battle. Or think about a faithful ambassador. I can remember times when I'm using interpreters in other countries, and they don't say what I say. That is not a faithful interpreter. We are to be ambassadors of Christ, which means we are to take the message to them and speak to them what God says in His Word. That is being faithful.

And again, I just want to remind you all, brethren, all these things - we are ambassadors. We are soldiers. We are sons. We are servants. We are wives. And all of these, a good one in every one of these categories is characterized by faithfulness. Those Ephesians - faithful in Christ Jesus. Brethren, I just want you to think, does that represent your life? Are you faithful? Are you faithful? You know what? Let me ask you something. A faithful servant, a faithful ambassador, you can depend on them. Faithful son? I can depend on him. Why? Because he's going to go and he's going to represent me well. He's going to do what I've asked him. He's going to be concerned about my honor. I want to ask you this. Can the Lord depend on you?

Don't say yes or no just because you want yes to be the answer. But I mean by your life. Does your life speak of one who the Lord can depend upon? Can He trust you to protect His reputation? Are you reliable? Are you faithful to one Husband? Devoted? Can you be depended on to stand firm and not waver, not flinch, in your devotion to Christ? Does your life exude faithfulness? That's the question, brethren, that I ask. This is a virtue highly to be sought. A faithful man who can find? This is rare. But I hope that it will not be rare among those who meet within these walls.

Father, we pray for the reality of this. I pray for it in Christ's name. Amen.