

FRUIT of the Spirit

FAITHFULNESS

Prayer for the Fruits of the Spirit

O Bounteous Spirit, we ask you to bring forth in our lives your fruits: the fruit of love, so we may love you above all things and all others for your sake; the fruit of joy, that we may find our delight in your service; the fruit of peace, that we may be pardoned through your mercy and find our rest in your love; the fruit of long-suffering, so that we may bear with patience all afflictions; the fruit of gentleness, that we may subdue all anger and take calmly and sweetly all trials and provocations; the fruit of meekness, that we may forgive freely all who hurt us and endure with patience all burdens that are laid upon us; the fruit of temperance, that we may restrain all desires and bring them into the subjugation of your holy will. Amen.

Insights into FAITHFULNESS

- 1) *God's Faithfulness*—**"Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments"** Deuteronomy 7:9
 - The Bible has approximately 277 instances of covenants between God and His people.
 - Noah--covenant to save his family Genesis 6:17-18; 9:9-17
 - Moses--covenant to spare the Israelites if they obey Exodus 19:5
 - Ishmael—covenant to bless Ishmael and his descendants. Genesis 17:18-20
- 2) *The Core of Faithfulness*
 - **Loyalty**
 - **Trustworthiness**
 - **Steadfastness**
 - **Reliability**
- 3) *Marks of Faithfulness*
 - **Follow through on whatever there is to do.**
 - **Deliver the goods—whether a message or a meal**
 - **Keep your word & commitments**
 - **Discharge your official duties in church**
 - **Be devoted**
- 4) *Opposites of Faithfulness*
 - **Fickleness**—uncommitted, changing loyalties & standards
 - **Unreliableness**—cannot be depended upon—cannot be trusted with responsibility
- 5) *Essence of Faithfulness*—**Just Do It!!**

The goal of FAITHFULNESS is not that we will do work for God, but that we live so that God can do His work through us.

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The Struggle to be Faithful

Faithfulness hinges on what we value as important, combined with commitment. We have a tendency to be faithful to what we think is important—family, spouse, friendship, job, finances, etc. Through the Fruit of Faithfulness, we place God at the top of our list of important things.

Barriers to Faithfulness	God's WORD
Tiredness—"I can't do it."	"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13
Laziness—"I don't want to do it."	"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" Colossians 3:23
Hopelessness—"It doesn't matter if I do it."	Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you." Deuteronomy 31
Procrastination—"I'll do it later."	"Whatever you do, do well. For when you go to the grave, there will be no work or planning or knowledge or wisdom." Ecclesiastes 9:10
Rationalization—"Someone else will do it."	Pray for the desire to grow in faithfulness, look to God's Spirit to supply His faithfulness when we are weak, follow God's call.
Apathy—"I don't care if I do it."	Follow in Jesus steps who lived "not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" Mark 10:45
Rebellion—"I won't do it."	"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23-24

3-Step Process to FAITHFULNESS

- 1) **Desire**—to live a godly life.
- 2) **Look**—to God for guidance and strength.
- 3) **Follow**—God's WORD.