

Faithfulness

By Peggy Lively

Core Verse: “Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.” **Proverbs 3:3-4**

Creed: I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

As I thought about faithfulness and what it means, I kept trying to think of an example of a life that exemplifies faithfulness. I believe the best way to really understand faithfulness is to look at a life that maintains faithfulness to God and to others over time and through difficult circumstances. One life in the Bible kept coming to my mind; it was David’s. David’s faithful life earned him the title, “a man after God’s own heart.”(1 Samuel 13:14) As we take a look at David’s life, first we will look at his faithfulness in his relationships with others, and then we will look at his faithfulness to God.

Part One: David’s Faithfulness to Others

A. To King Saul

While Saul was still King of Israel, God directed Samuel to anoint David as Israel’s next King. “Then the Lord said, ‘Rise and anoint him; he is the one.’ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.” **1 Samuel 16:12-13**

Read **1 Samuel 16:14-23**.

1. How did David first come into Saul’s service?

Even though David knew he would soon replace Saul as King, he worked diligently for Saul in his service. “Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul’s officers as well.” **1 Samuel 18:5**

Read **1 Samuel 18:6-11**.

2. What happens that changes the way Saul feels about David?

3. How does Saul react toward David as a result of his jealousy?

4. What happens in **1 Samuel 19:9-15**?

On two different occasions Saul tried to kill David while he was playing the harp for him. As David's life progressed, he was given some opportunities to seek revenge on Saul, and even kill him. In both situations, Saul was pursuing David with three thousand men!

Read **1 Samuel 24:1-13**.

5. What did David do? How does he respond to his men's encouragement to kill Saul?

Read **1 Samuel 26:1-11**.

6. How does David respond to Abishai? What does he do instead?

When Saul is finally killed in battle, it would seem that David would be relieved and rejoice that the one trying to kill him was now dead. But in **2 Samuel 1:11-12**, we read how David tore his clothes, mourned, wept and fasted for Saul and Jonathan. David even had the man killed who was responsible for Saul's death, saying, "Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, 'I killed the Lord's anointed.'" (**2 Samuel 1:15-16**) So not only does David weep and mourn, but he also avenges Saul's death. He remains faithful to Saul until the end of his life and beyond, even when Saul was trying to kill him.

Bring it Home:

*Is there someone God is calling me to remain faithful to even when it is difficult?
(i.e. a parent, teacher, boss, sibling ...)

*What are some ways that I can begin to show faithfulness to this person?

B. To Jonathan

David had a very strong friendship with Saul's son, Jonathan. "After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself ... And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt." (**2 Samuel 18:1- 4**) They had taken an oath, and had sworn

friendship with each other. Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’”

2 Samuel 20:42

David remained faithful to Jonathan even when his father, Saul, was hunting him and trying to kill him. Not only was he faithful in Jonathan’s lifetime, but he also wanted to repay his kindness after Jonathan’s death. “David asked, ‘Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?’” **2 Samuel 9:1**

Read **2 Samuel 9:1-8**.

7. What is the answer to David’s question? Who is brought to David?

8. What was Mephibosheth’s response?

C. To Mephibosheth

Read **2 Samuel 9:9-13**.

9. What did David do for Mephibosheth? How did he treat him?

“Why? Why is David so loyal? And how? How is David so loyal? Mephibosheth brings nothing and takes much. From whence does David quarry such resolve? Were we able to ask David how he fulfilled his giant-of-a-promise, he would take us from his story to God’s story. God sets the standard for covenant keeping ... God makes and never breaks his promises.” Max Lucado, Facing Your Giants, p. 126

Bring it Home:

*Is there someone that I am responsible to care for? Am I ministering to them faithfully as David did?

Part Two: David’s Faithfulness to God

A. In His Battles

1. Against Goliath

“David said to the Philistine, ‘You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.’” **1 Samuel 17:45-4**

2. The Amalekites

“... David inquired of the Lord, ‘Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?’ ‘Pursue them,’ he answered. ‘You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.’” **1 Samuel 30:8**

3. The Philistines

“... so David inquired of the Lord, ‘Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?’ The Lord answered him, ‘Go, for I will surely hand the Philistines over to you.’” **2 Samuel 5:19**

Before David attacked, he asked. He asked God for guidance and direction in his battles. Then he obeyed, trusting God as he went.

Bring it Home:

*Am I asking God for his guidance in my “battles,” relying on His direction and power, or am I trying to fight them on my own?

B. In His Blunders

“Then David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’” **2 Samuel 12:13**

Read **2 Samuel 12:13-23**:

10. What did Nathan tell David would happen as a result of his sin?

11. What did David do once the child became ill?

12. Once the child died, how did David respond? Why?

David was faithful to keep coming to God even when he had sinned and knew that he was going to suffer the consequences of his sin:

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.” **Psalms 51:1-4, 7**

Bring it Home:

*Have I come to God and confessed my sins, asking for His forgiveness? If not, take some time to do that now. Write your prayer here.

C. In His Blessings

“Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign Lord, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever.” **2 Samuel 7:29**

Read 2 Samuel 7:5-17.

13. List some of the blessings that God promised to David.

14. How did David respond to the Lord in **2 Samuel 7:25-26**? He says, “Do as you promised, so that ...”

God promised David that he would make his name “great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth.” (**2 Samuel 7:9**) But David is not concerned that *his* name is great. Instead, he prays, “Do as you have promised, so that *your name* will be great forever.” (**2 Samuel 7:25-26**) In the midst of his blessing, David is quick to put the focus back on God. He is faithful to acknowledge that the blessings come from God, and gives the honor to His name.

Bring it Home:

*Do I praise God and give him the glory for the blessings in my life or do I take the credit, focusing on myself?

15. Read our core verse again (**Proverbs 3:3-4**). How will being faithful “win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man?”

We, like David, must choose and strive to be faithful in all circumstances in our lives: in our battles, blunders, and blessings. We must never quit coming to God, even when our

circumstances change. *He* will always stay the same. As we remain faithful to Him, He will enable us to be faithful to others. If our focus is on Him, we won't be consumed by those that pursue us.

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for your Word and the example of David, for his life of faithfulness to you and to so many others. I pray that I would learn from his life, even in his mistakes, to always come back to you no matter what the circumstances. I praise You for being the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8), the solid rock on which I stand (Psalm 40:2). May I turn to you always, acknowledging your power and your presence in my life. I pray that I would be a faithful follower and example of you. In Jesus' name, amen