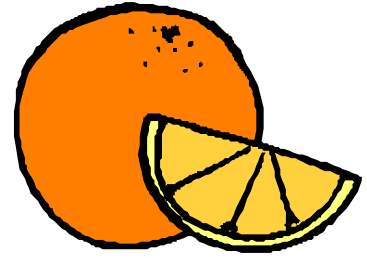


# Spirit Fruit

Galatians 5 v 22 - 23



1 fruit 9 segments

## 7. Faithfulness

- God is faithful –we know that well
- Here is the fruit of the spirit, in us, are we faithful?

### 1. **God's faithfulness to us**

It is good to remember the many ways in which God shows His faithfulness to us. Despite our disobedience and sinful natures, He will find a way to fulfil His promises.

#### 1. He is faithful in keeping His covenant

- Deuteronomy 7 v 7 – 9

#### 2. He is faithful in keeping His word

- Numbers 23 v 19
- Titus 1 v 1 – 3

#### 3. He is faithful in His consistency

- Lamentations 3 v 22 – 23 (also see Psalm 89 v 8)
- 2 Timothy 2 v 13

#### 4. He is faithful in His determination

- Psalm 89 v 20 – 33

#### 5. He is faithful in His measureless greatness

- Psalm 36 v 5

#### 6. He is faithful in His certainty

- Isaiah 54 v 10 (also see Psalm 89 v 1 – 2)

## 7. He is faithful in His everlasting nature

- Psalm 119 v 89 – 90

## 8. He is faithful in His promises

- Hebrews 10 v 23
- Isaiah 25 v 1
- Joshua 21 v 43

This chapter concludes with a satisfying reflection...

- Chapters 1 – 12 show how God had given the land promised to them
- Chapters 13 – 22 show how Israel had taken possession of them
- Chapters 22 – 24 show how they had rest in the land

## 9. He is faithful in dependency

- Romans 3 v 3 - 4

God's amazing faithfulness cannot be influenced by us. The idea, here is unbelief and the Greek translates Apisteo untrustworthy, or faithless and is the opposite to faithful. This makes Romans 3 v 3 – 4 an incredible statement from the Lord who says that even the faithlessness of His people will not stop Him being faithful to them. This great promise is repeated in 2 Timothy 2 v 13. Here, we read that He cannot disown himself, literally he cannot, therefore, will not deny, contradict or refuse all that He (himself) has personally committed to.

## 2. Faithfulness to God

We have seen that faithfulness is part of the inbuilt character of God – He is faithful, will always be faithful and can never fail in His faithfulness towards us, even when we fail in our faithfulness to Him. Faithfulness, however, is a segment of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, so what should faithfulness mean for our character?

The word used in Galatians 5 v 22 for the fruit of faithfulness is faith (Pistis) and speaks of persuasion, faith, belief and confidence (the same word is used in the gifts of the Spirit). It is primarily, our trust and confidence in His faithfulness to us and from that, our response of faithfulness to Him and each other. It is from Pistis that we get another word, Pistos which speaks of being faithful, worthy to be believed, just and trustworthy. The fruit of the spirit is faith which is then displayed in faithfulness. We have seen that the love of God which is shown TO us must be the love of God shown THROUGH us (1 John 4 v 11). In the same way, as God has been Faithful TO us, faithfulness must be seen THROUGH us.

What does scripture teach us about a life of faithfulness?

### 1. Habakkuk 2 v 1 – 4

‘the righteous will live by his faith’. The word faith here is Emuwnah which speaks of faithfulness, steadfastness, trust, honesty. The righteous will live by his faithfulness, being steadfast, trustworthy and honest.

Here is a good example of what our faithfulness towards God should look like...

- steadfast (unmovable, adamant, relentless and single minded)
- steadfastness is, in itself, a gift from God - 1 Pet 5 v 10  
(restoration in hardship)
- steadfastness is our commitment to the work of God 1 Corinthians 15 v 58

### 2. Luke 16 v 13

‘You cannot serve both God and Money’ Commitment to God is the epitome of faithfulness.

The word ‘money’ used here, fails to paint the full picture. The Greek here is mamonas, translated in the King James Version, mammon, which speaks of wealth and possessions of any kind, not just money. It speaks of anything that would take our reliance from God. Some suggest that a better phrase would be ‘worldly possessions’

In Matthew 19 v 16 – 22 we have the well known parable of the rich young man who went away disappointed because his reliance on the law was superseded by a demand from Christ that he part with some of his wealth. The problem that Jesus was highlighting was not his possessions but his dependence upon them.

An example of the exact opposite to this rich man is found in Acts 11 v 19 – 23. The encouragement to those who had suffered persecution and loss, was to keep going and remain true to the Lord. (the Greek for remain is Prosmeno from pros-to/with and meno-remain = to stay at a place)

### 3. Hosea 4 v 1

In this verse there is a charge against Israel, that they were not faithful. God expects nothing less of us than faithfulness

The word charge which is used in the N.I.V is translated in the King James Version as controversy. It embraces ideas such as a legal or personal contest, strife dispute and lawsuit. The dictionary defines controversy as a dispute, a discussion with opposing

views. God had a sharp discussion with His people because they had opposing ideas concerning what the Lord required of them – do we?

Perhaps they thought a measure of obedience was good enough, or being God's chosen people would get them through, but God saw beneath their thin veneer and discovered the truth of the matter in verse 2. Only true faithfulness, love and acknowledgment of God would do.

#### 4. Ephesians 1 v 1

It is very easy and tempting to pass by the opening introduction of the bible letters, but in verse 1, Paul addresses the saints, who are also referred to as the faithful in Christ Jesus. He also uses a similar phrase when addressing the church at Colosse in Colossians 1 v 2.

Paul immediately highlights their faithfulness to Christ. Not their hard work, their theology, sound teaching or even care for those in the church, many of whom were suffering persecution, but their faithfulness to Christ. It was because of their faithfulness TO Christ that they would then be effective in their work FOR Christ.

Faithfulness to the Lord is an essential starting point because it is only in and through him that we can be faithful in any other area because faithfulness towards Him comes from our faith in Him.

#### 5. Revelation 2 v 10

The Lord had one specific word for the church at Smyrna – faithfulness. They were heading towards times of difficulty, persecution and even death. They were not to be afraid of these things but to remain faithful to God who would ultimately reward them with the crown of life. It is the crown OF life and the word 'of' speaks of the content of the crown. So, to receive the crown of life means to receive life itself. The word for crown used here is Stephanos which speaks of a victor's crown. It is associated with joy and an achievement; it is the crown of victory, joy and achievement. But it comes only through continued faithfulness to Christ.

#### 6. Proverbs 3 v 3 – 4

Love and faithfulness brings favour from God and man. The context of these words is found in the first two verses, speaking of God's teaching and commands, so again this is showing our love for God by our obedience to Him. Our faithfulness to God is recognized by him, but interestingly, it appears that those around us will also see and honour our faithfulness to God.

#### 7. Hosea 2 v 20

Here, God speaks of Israel's punishment and restoration, picturing her as a wife. In verse 20 God promises to betroth her in faithfulness and like any marriage vow it is a two way commitment, God being faithful to Israel and Israel being faithful to God.

### **3. Faithfulness to others**

Being faithful to God can sometimes be difficult, but for a real challenge, we are required to be faithful to others around us. We have seen that faithfulness to God reaps rewards, but faithfulness to others can seem to turn out rather differently. Whatever the result, He will always bless us and true faithfulness will work whatever the response.

#### **1. Faithfulness to other believers**

##### **a. Proverbs 27 v 1 – 6**

Faithfulness includes all aspects of life, including rebuke and correction. That is not always easy, but faithfulness exists for both the good and difficult times. This is further encouraged in Ephesians chapter 4 in verses 15 and 25.

##### **b. Hebrews 10 v 33**

Faithfulness includes standing side by side with other believers, even in difficult and dangerous experiences. Faithfulness means that I can trust you to be with me at all times and to stand with me through difficulties and dangers.

##### **c. 3 John 5 - 6**

Here, the believers were commended for caring for their fellow believers, even though they were strangers. It is easy to be faithful towards those we really like, but what about those who we do not yet know, and maybe harder still, those we find hard to like? Perhaps the secret is found earlier in this chapter in verses 3 – 4 where they are commended for their faithfulness to the truth. As we walk in the truth of Gods word we will be spurred on to faithfulness, simply by obeying and following the truth regarding our relationships with others.

##### **d. 1 Timothy 6 v 2**

It is important to remember that familiarity must not breed contempt, rather our relationships with other believers should breed faithfulness and respect. Fellowship with other believers should be a natural outworking of faithfulness. We should treat other believers well, not because we are 'keeping it in the family', because that attitude can reap the opposite affect, but, rather that they belong to the Lord, and as one of the Lord's people we should treat them in the best way possible. It should also be the breeding ground for our fellowship before the Lord and our worship to Him (Hebrews 10 v 25 / Hebrews 13 v 7 / 1 Thessalonians 5 v 12 – 13 - 24).

### **4. Faithfulness in families**

#### **a. wives to husbands      Ephesians 5 v 22**

- b. husbands to wives      Ephesians 5 v 25
- c. children to parents      Ephesians 6 v 1
- d. parents to children      Proverbs 22 v 6

## 5. Faithfulness in employment

- a. Employees to Employers      Ephesians 6 v 5 - 8
- b. Employers to Employees      Ephesians 6 v 9

## 6. Faithfulness in ministry

- a. Only faithful workers need apply!      2 Timothy 2 v 2
- b. Faithful service means God focused service      Joshua 24 v 14 - 27

- These were Joshua's parting words to the leaders
- These were covenant words
- These were self-imposed commitment words
- These were self-denying words
- These were self-incriminating words
- These were life words

What would we say to Joshua today and what repercussions and commitments would be imposed on us if we gave a similar answer?

- c. Faithful servants are obedient servants      Matthew 24 v 36 – 51

What does this passage say to us in the twentieth century?

- d. Faithful servants are single minded

Luke 16 v 13

- e. Faithful servants are entrusted servants      1 Corinthians 4 v 1 - 2

Servant-hood carries responsibility with it

- f. Faithful servants are faithful to the message      Jeremiah 23 v 28

In what way do we carry the message?

what does 2 Corinthians 2 v 17 say about carrying the message?

what is the challenge in Romans 10 v 11 - 15?

what example is shown in the following scriptures?

- 2 Corinthians 2 v 17
- 2 Tim 2 v 15
- 2 Timothy 4 v 2

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| g. | Faithfulness is shown by commitment   | 2 Timothy 4 v 7<br>Jude v3 (contend=to strive/fight) |
| h. | Faithfulness must be applied to all   | 3 John v 5   |
| i. | Faithfulness is a measure   | Luke 16 v 11   |
| j. | Faithfulness comes through recognizing who God is and what He has done for us | 2 Chronicles 29 v 14                                 |