

THE CORRECT BIBLE USE OF 'FAITH' & 'FAITHFULNESS'

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1. HOW MANY TIMES IS FAITHFULNESS USED IN THE OLD VS THE NEW TESTAMENT?

Faithfulness – Used **38** times in the Hebrew Old Testament & only **2** or **3** times in the Greek New Testament (depending on which translation you search in).

Why would God **not need to emphasize faithfulness** in the New Testament as He did in the Old Testament?

Probably because He moved from being **with** Israel to permanently dwelling **within** His born again family.

2 Cor 6:16b (NAU) For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

2. WHAT IS THE SINGLE GREEK WORD USED FOR FAITH & FAITHFULNESS AND WHAT ARE ITS MULTIPLE MEANINGS?

Faith – Used **243** times in the New Testament.

Faithfulness – Used **2** or **3** times in the New Testament.

It's the **same Greek word**...

Strong's – Faith - 4102 pistis (pis'-tis); from 3982; persuasion (*Rom 4:17-21 – Abraham was fully persuaded*), i.e. credence (*belief in the truth*); moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher {Jesus}), especially **reliance upon Christ** for salvation; abstractly, **constancy in such (a verbal) profession**; by extension, the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself: KJV translated-- assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity (*interesting word – see below*).

Thayer's Lexicon – Faith - 4102 pistis-

i) conviction of the **truth** of anything, belief; in the New Testament of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it

– a) relating to **God**: the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ

– b) relating to **Christ**: a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God

– c) the religious beliefs of Christians

– d) belief with the predominate idea of trust (or confidence) whether in God or in Christ, springing from faith in the same

ii) (a) **fidelity** (*dictionary = conjugal faithfulness {pertaining to the relation between marriage partners} – which must also include the marriage between Christ & the church – Eph 5:31-32*), **faithfulness**; (b) **the character of one who can be relied on.**

OBSERVATION: We have **one English word for LOVE** where the Greek has 3 words: Agape, Phileo & Eros – their meanings are very different. Well here the reverse is true – there is **one Greek word PISTIS** for our 2 English words: Faith & Faithfulness – Thayer's Lexicon – points (i) & (ii) above.

Conjugal faithfulness of marriage partners...

Eph 5:31-32 (NAU) FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND **SHALL** (assuredly) **BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL** (assuredly) **BECOME ONE FLESH.**

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church (love, adoration, passion, intimacy, oneness – **sex in marriage** is a directive from God (1Cor 7:3-5) because it's an important part of the glue that keeps the relationship strongly connected {likewise the intimacy of **prayer** [communicating], **worship**

[thanking, praising & adoring] & **meditation in the Word of God** [listening, hearing] is the glue that keeps our relationship with Jesus vibrant, dynamic & intimate}).

3. WHAT ARE THE 3 NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES THAT USE FAITHFULNESS OVER FAITH?

Matt 23:23 (NAU) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

Matt 23:23 (KJV) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Faith is used **243** times in the New Testament & **4** times in the Old Testament, and **only once** in relation to faith in God – that's in **Hab 2:4c ...the righteous will live by his faith** – prophetically fulfilled in *Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11 & Heb 10:38*. The word **faith** in **Hab 2:4c** is Strong's # 530 and is used **51** times in the Old Testament & almost always translated as **faithfulness** or **truth** in the KJV – so clearly **faith** was not a weightier matter of the law, but faithfulness & truth were.

In the following 2 scriptures the **NKJ translators** believed they needed to correct the translation of the KJV...

Rom 3:3 (NAU) What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

Rom 3:3 (KJV) For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

Rom 3:3 (NKJ) For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?

Gal 5:22 (NAU) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Gal 5:22 (KJV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Gal 5:22 (NKJ) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

4. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF FRUIT IN A CHRISTIANS LIFE?

Fruit grows & develops on branches (the born again spirits of Christians) through the process of continually receiving life-giving sap from the vine (Jesus)...

John 15:4-5 (NAU) "Abide in Me, and I in you. **As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither {can} you unless you abide in Me.**

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears **much** fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing (as it should be done – in the *Spirit of Christ* – *Rom 8:9*).

It is evident some Christians bear **much** fruit & others far less.

Your fruit is not for your benefit – **it's for others to pick & enjoy** – no tree eats its own fruit.

Healthy fruit indicates a healthy tree >> a Christian who is daily connecting with Jesus through prayer, worship & meditation in the Word of God – daily renewing his mind for the *Spirit of Christ* to shine through.

EXAMPLE: Delicious red **Cape apples** in South Africa vs deceptive American red apples (they look good on the outside but have miniscule juice on the inside) – there is no comparison – its 'day & night' (or as South African's say, 'chalk & cheese').

QUESTION: Do I have **desirable fruit** that others are regularly picking & enjoying off my branches?

5. WHAT ARE THE DEFINITIONS OF THE 9 BIBLE FRUITS OTHERS SHOULD BE REAPING FROM OUR LIVES?

Gal 5:22-23 (NAU) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

As defined by Strong's & Thayer's Lexicon – consistently indicating that **ALL** these are Christian **character traits**.

- i) **Love** – affection or benevolence
- ii) **Joy** – cheerfulness, gladness
- iii) **Peace** – tranquility, harmony, a state of blessing, prosperity
- iv) **Patience** – forbearance, longsuffering, slowness to avenge wrongs, endurance, constancy, steadfastness
- v) **Kindness** – usefulness (*a hard, harsh person is not very useful or helpful in a relationship*), moral excellence, integrity (*nor is a loose, untrustworthy person in a marriage or business partnership. I believe 'kindness' has a linking to be 'of the same kind as God':- loving, willing, available, able, helpful, etc., which combined = useful*).
- vi) **Goodness** – virtue, uprightness of heart
- vii-a) **Faithfulness** – (from Greek in **2,ii,b** above) **the character of one who can be relied on** (*a desirable fruit that would cause others to trust, choose & use me – even set me up for promotion – a reward for good fruit*).
- vii-b) **Faith** – **trust & confidence in Christ** – **reliance upon Christ** (*our relationship with God – different from a fruit – the odd one out – inconsistent with the other 8 Christian character traits*).
- viii) **Gentleness** – mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness (*is not weakness – it's a godly desirable fruit – Jesus said the 'meek {humble [reliant upon God]} – TEV; gentle - NAU} shall inherit the earth' – Matt 5:5*).
- ix) **Self-control** – the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites (*fruit a wife would appreciate to pick from her husband & visa versa*).

6. WHAT IS THE LESSON I NEED TO TAKE AWAY FROM THIS BIBLE STUDY?

This is not so much about a **differing point of view** on the use of faith or faithfulness.

Rather this is about **focusing** on becoming a more fruitful Christian and being more conscious that people we live with and daily meet have their lives enriched by the fruit they're able to consistently pick & enjoy off our branches – God has challenged my heart in this truth to produce *much* more delicious *fruit*.

Hopefully people will say of meeting me “I really like that person – he has something special that I'd like to also have” and for this to open the door to share the Good News of the Gospel with them.

PRAYER: Father, help me to become a *much more* fruitful Christian by daily being filled with the sap of Jesus, to reveal more of Your nature & character to all those I interact with today & everyday in Jesus name!