

Be Faithful  
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Colossians 3:23-4:18

How can you tell if someone is a DIE HARD FAN? What's the most extreme thing you've ever seen a DIE HARD FAN do? Or YOU have done?

Die hard fans are FAITHFUL to their team.

What does it mean to be FAITHFUL? Definition: loyal, reliable

What are some other words for FAITHFUL?

Synonyms: conscientious, constant, dependable, devoted, dutiful, dyed-in-the-wool, enduring, fast, firm, genuine, hard-core, honest, honorable, loving, obedient, on the level, patriotic, resolute, scrupulous, sincere, staunch, steadfast, steady, tried, tried and true, true, true-blue, trustworthy, unchanging, unswerving, unwavering, upright,

Faithful also means: authentic, accurate - We call a book or a painting or a statue a "faithful" representation of the subject.

If my life were a PAINTING entitled "A CHRISTIAN", would people say it was a FAITHFUL REPRESENTATION?

How can I be FAITHFUL THIS WEEK in any task I take on? In my prayer life? In my CONVERSATIONS with non-believers?

Paul tells us beginning in Colossians 3:23

Groups 1 and 2 studied...

Colossians 3:23-25

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

Group 1

- What does the first word in verse 23 tell you?
- Using other phrases, describe what "with all your heart" means.
- How will "working for the Lord, not for human masters" change our approach to any task?

Group 2

- If anyone has a "study Bible", what does the commentary say about verses 23-24?
- What positive outcomes would be realized by doing what verses 23-24 tell us to do?

Eric Liddell (In Chariots of Fire):

*"I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure."*

If God is our ULTIMATE AUDIENCE, we'll work with ALL OUR HEART and look forward to a HEAVENLY REWARD

- Why do you think Paul said what he did in verse 25 on the heels of 23-24? Just because you have a bad boss who is disobedient to God in managing you, it doesn't mean YOU get to be disobedient.

John MacArthur:

*The Lord ensures the believer that he will receive a just, eternal compensation for his efforts, even if his earthly boss does not compensate fairly. Christians are not to presume on their faith in order to justify disobedience to an authority or employer.*

Groups 3 and 4 were studying...

Colossians 4:2-6

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Group 3

- Why do we call a quiet time "devotions"? In some translations the word "devote" is "continue". Using the word studies sheet, someone read what that word "continue" means.
  - We need to CONTINUE in prayer...PERSIST in prayer.
- What does the group believe it means to be watchful?
- How can you be "watchful" in your prayer life?
  - First, BE ALERT...not DROWSY...don't let the devil "lull you" into prayerlessness
  - Second, BE ALERT for things and people to pray about
  - Finally we need to pray with THANKFUL HEARTS
- Verses 3 and 4: How could these verses apply to your prayer life this week? Think: both you and others.
  - Pray for those in full-time evangelism to have an "open door" and "clear message"
  - Pray the same for ourselves

Group 4

- Verse 5: Who are "outsiders"?
- Verse 6: In conversations what do you think these phrases mean:

- "full of grace"
- "seasoned with salt"
- If anyone has a "study Bible", what does the commentary say about verses 5 and 6?
- How do most unbelievers expect Christians to be in conversation?

The Life Application Commentary says:

*No Christian should have a dull, tiresome, know-it-all monologue of his faith. Instead, Christians, who have the most exciting news in the world to share, should be able to share that message with excitement, ability to invoke interest, an understanding of the basics, a willingness to listen and discuss, and a desire to answer everyone's questions graciously...we lose our effectiveness if we are not courteous. Just as we like to be respected, we must respect others if we want them to listen to what we have to say. (Barton, B. B., et al. Life Application Bible Commentary. Romans: Tyndale House Publishers or Logos)*

William Barclay adds that...

*The Christian must have charm and wit in his speech so that he may know how to give the right answer in every case. (1Pe 3:15-note) It is all too true that Christianity in the minds of many is connected with a kind of sanctimonious dullness and an outlook in which laughter is almost a heresy. (Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series. The Westminster Press or Logos)*

- In other words...BE COURTEOUS; BE GRACIOUS; and for Heaven's sake...have a sense of humor!
- We can LIGHTEN UP in our manner with people without WATERING DOWN the message.
- A word about TACT.

Chuck Swindoll said:

*The classic example of tactless humanity, I'm ashamed to declare, is the abrasive Christian (so-called) who feels it his or her calling to fight for the truth with little or no regard for the other fella's feelings. Of course, this is supposedly done in the name of the Lord – "to do anything less would be compromise and counterfeit." This individual plows through the feelings of people like a John Deere tractor, leaving them buried in the dirt and, worst of all, deeply offended.*

- We should always be TACTFUL and RESPECTFUL.
- By the way, it's not that hard to insert a little "salt" about your faith into conversation.
- What are some ways you can just "sprinkle in some salt"?
- I've almost totally replaced the word "lucky" in my vocabulary with "blessed".
- It's so easy to just say "God has been good to me and my family."

Colossians 4:7-13

Final Greetings

7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant[a] in the Lord. 8 I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our[b] circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. 9 He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

10 My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) 11 Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews[a] among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me.

12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. 13 I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.

- How does Paul describe these men? FAITHFUL
- Of Epaphras he says "he is always wrestling in prayer for you...that you may stand firm in the will of God."
- Bottom line...these men are FAITHFUL.

So, What's the TAKEAWAY?

- How can we be FAITHFUL this week as Christians?
- We can be FAITHFUL in any work we do whether on the job, at church, or at home
- Whatever we do we should do it with all our heart because we're working for the Lord and not for men
- We need to be FAITHFUL in prayer: DEVOTED/CONTINUING/WATCHING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO PRAY/THANKFUL when we pray
- We need to be FAITHFUL in our CONVERSATIONS with unbelievers
- They should be GRACIOUS in manner but seasoned with the right amount of SALT to ATTRACT people to what we've found in Christ.
- How will YOU and I use these verses this week to be FAITHFUL?