

Dependability v Inconsistency

Intro

Story of painter who was always thinning his paint to cut costs

I. Definition

“Dependability is fulfilling what I consented to do, even if it means unexpected sacrifice.”

Dependability is the greatest ability. Dependability is being trustworthy. It is saying, “You can count on me.” Or “My word is my bond.”

Two weeks ago we looked at punctuality. If you are late for an appointment you have not kept your word and you have stolen that person’s time. If you are late in making a payment you have not kept your word and you have been a thief for every day you were late.

Dependability is total commitment. Dependability is being faithful. A lack of commitment pervades our culture. It should never be justified! Don’t say, “Well, that’s our culture.” Or “That’s my generation!” Its like the fellow who called the pastor to see if he could audit the class on “Total Commitment.”

Too many people look at commitment as an elective rather than a required course.

II. Dependability of God

A. Seen in His attributes

1. His righteousness – Ps 33:4; 111:7; 119:138; 143:1; Hosea

(Psa 33:4 NIV) For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

(Psa 119:138 NIV) The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy.

(Psa 143:1 NIV) A psalm of David. O LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief.

2. His love – Ps 25:10; 40:10-12; 57:3, 10; 108:4; 36:5

(Psa 25:10 NIV) All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant.

(Psa 36:5 NIV) Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.

(Psa 40:10-11 NIV) I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and salvation. I do not conceal **your love and your truth** from the great assembly. *{11}* Do not withhold your mercy from me, O LORD; may **your love and your truth** always protect me.

(Psa 57:3 NIV) He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me; *Selah* God **sends his love and his faithfulness.**

(Psa 57:10 NIV) **For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.**

(Psa 108:4 NIV) For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

3. His faithfulness – Deut 7:9; 32:4; Ex 34:6; Ps 31:5

(Exo 34:6 NIV) And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,

(Deu 7:9 NIV) 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 commands.

(Deu 32:4 NIV) He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

(Psa 31:5 NIV) Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.

B. Seen in His covenant – Ps 33:4; 36:5; 57:10; 71:22; 92:2; 98:3; 100:5; 108:4; 117:2; 119:90; 138:2

(Psa 33:4 NIV) For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

(Psa 36:5 NIV) Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.

(Psa 57:10 NIV) For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

(Psa 71:22 NIV) I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel.

(Psa 92:2 NIV) to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night,

(Psa 98:3 NIV) He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

(Psa 100:5 NIV) For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

(Psa 108:4 NIV) For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

(Psa 117:2 NIV) For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD.

(Psa 119:90 NIV) Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures.

(Psa 138:2 NIV) I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

C. Seen in His works – Ps 111:7

(Psa 111:7 NIV) The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.

D. Seen in the cross – 2 Cor 5:21

(2 Cor 5:21 NIV) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

E. Seen in His forgiveness – 1 John 1:9

Because God is faithful and just and because He is loyal to His covenant, He forgives our sins when we ask for forgiveness.

(1 John 1:9 NIV) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

F. Seen in His deliverance – 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3; Heb 10:23; 11:11

(1 Cor 10:13 NIV) No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

(1 Th 5:24 NIV) The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

(2 Th 3:3 NIV) But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

(Heb 10:23 NIV) Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

(Heb 11:11 NIV) By faith Abraham, even though he was past age--and Sarah herself was barren--was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise.

God's investment in us is so great he could not possibly abandon us. Erwin W. Lutzer (1941-)

III. Dependability of God's People

God is faithful to His people and therefore His people are required to respond with obedience to His commands.

A. Dependability in actions

Joshua

When the Israelites were finally settled in the Promised Land, God renewed His covenant with them. Joshua challenged the people to serve the Lord in sincerity and faithfulness – Josh 24:14

(Josh 24:14 NIV) "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

Samuel

Samuel recounted God's faithfulness to Israel and then demanded that the people serve the Lord faithfully with all their heart – 1 Sam 12:24.

(1 Sam 12:24 NIV) But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.

God's faithfulness to us is a gracious act.

That is why it is often linked with steadfast love. However man's faithfulness to God is clearly not a gracious act but a duty. Man's dependability toward God is seen in terms of righteousness, sincerity and total devotion – Josh 24:14; 1 Sam 12:24; 1 Sam 26:23; 1 Kings 2:4; 3:6; 20:3; Ps 111:8; Isa 38:3

(Josh 24:14 NIV) "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

(1 Sam 12:24 NIV) But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.

(1 Sam 26:23 NIV) The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and faithfulness. The LORD delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the Lord's anointed.

(1 Ki 2:4 NIV) and that the LORD may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'

(1 Ki 3:6 NIV) Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

(1 Ki 20:3 NIV) 'Your silver and gold are mine, and the best of your wives and children are mine.'"

(Psa 111:8 NIV) They are steadfast for ever and ever, done in faithfulness and uprightness.

(Isa 38:3 NIV) "Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

People's faithfulness to fellow human beings is associated with steadfast love – Josh 2:14; Prov 3:3; 12:22; 14:22

(Josh 2:14 NIV) "Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land."

(Prov 3:3 NIV) Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

(Prov 12:22 NIV) The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.

(Prov 14:22 NIV) Do not those who plot evil go astray? But those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness.

God's faithfulness contrasted with our unfaithfulness – Neh 9:33; Ps 78:8; 2 Tim 2:13; Rom 3:3-5

(Neh 9:33 NIV) In all that has happened to us, you have been just; you have acted faithfully, while we did wrong.

(Psa 78:8 NIV) They would not be like their forefathers-- a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him.

(Rom 3:3-5 NIV) What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? {4} Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." {5} But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.)

(2 Tim 2:13 NIV) if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.
Faithfulness in little things is a big thing. Saint John Chrysostom (C. 347-407)

If we are correct and right in our Christian life at every point, but refuse to stand for the truth at a particular point where the battle rages-then we are traitors to Christ. Martin Luther (1483-1546)

B. Dependability in attitude – Matt 12:34

(Mat 12:34 NIV) You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

Negative neighbor

An old farmer once had a brilliant dog? He had a neighbor that was constantly negative, no matter what. If it was raining, the farmer would say to his neighbor, "Boy, look at it rain, God's washing the sky clean."

The negative neighbor would say, "Yeah, but if it keeps up it's gonna flood." Then the sun would come out and the negative neighbor would say, "If it keeps that up, it's gonna just scorch the crops."

The farmer thought, "What can I do to help him overcome his negative attitude?" So the farmer trained his dog to walk on water. He didn't tell his neighbor, he just took him duck hunting. Boom! Boom! They brought two ducks out of the sky, and said to his dog, "Go get 'em." The dog walked on top of the water, picked up the ducks, and hopped back in the boat, nothing wet -- just his paws. The farmer said to his neighbor, "What do you think of that?"

The negative neighbor said, "Can't swim, can he?"

C. Dependability in character

How dependable are you?

- In your personal walk with the Lord
- In your church attendance
- In you service
- In your giving
- In you family relationships
- In your commitments to family, friends, neighbors

On Sunday morning, October 23rd, 1983, a Mercedes truck driven by a suicide bomber, crashed into the aviation building at Beirut's International airport, detonating 12,000 pounds of TNT, and reducing the 4-story building to rubble. His target was the U.S. Eighth Marine Battalion, which used the building as its headquarters and barracks. 234 marines died and 112 were wounded, the highest U.S. casualties since Vietnam.

Two days later General Paul Kelly, Commandant of the Marine Corps, arrived at the Air Force hospital in Wiesbaden, Germany to visit the wounded. The air hung heavy with despair. The most poignant moment came when Kelly met Lance Corporal Jeffrey Nashton in intensive care. Nashton was in critical condition, unable to speak or see.

Kelly pulled near and identified himself to the corporal. Nashton wanted to say something but couldn't. He attempted to outline words on his bedsheet, but no one could understand, so they gave him a piece of paper and a pencil. His note brought the Commandant to tears. Brief but powerful, it bore but two words, "*Semper Fi.*" Always faithful.

Great is Thy Faithfulness

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father; There is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not; As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed Thy hand hath provided; Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, Sun, moon and stars in their courses above Join with all nature in manifold witness To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed Thy hand hath provided; Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide; Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed Thy hand hath provided; Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!