

## FAITHFULNESS

Scripture used: Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

### OVERVIEW

#### Big Idea:

Pastor Hurmon covered the seventh of nine chapters of our Fruits of the Spirit series. As we continue to peel the layers to discover “what’s under our skin”, we find new meaning in these wonderful attributes evoked and praised by the Apostle Paul. Faithfulness is one such key attribute, which can be loosely defined as being true to one’s word, even when it hurts. Faithfulness is made of loyalty, commitment, fidelity, and dependability. It applies to our occupation, friends, spouse, children, parents, and siblings. With a spouse, faithfulness goes way beyond sexual fidelity, and is about being conscientious, sacrificial, and focused on your spouse. It can be taking care of an elderly parent. In the workplace, it is about trying to bring your best to your job and co-workers every day. One extreme example: the female NYPD officer who was first inside the World Trade Center and calmly supervised an orderly evacuation. With loved ones, it is about resisting the urge to “run away” at times, but always forgive one another. God can empower us into these attributes, and help us endure every challenging circumstance.

### KEY POINTS

- 1) **Point #1 Life is not easy.** We face major difficulties, and our reflex is to “look for the exit” and try to return to an elusive undemanding “natural” state. Yet faithfulness is a fundamental ingredient to success. Pastor Hurmon used the example of Magic Johnson’s understated yet dogged persistence in both basketball and business.
- 2) **Point #2 Faithfulness is key to authentic friendship.** Proverbs 18 highlights “frenemies”: the people who pretend to be our friends because their lives are empty and they want to suck us into their vacuum. They are fair-weather, opportunistic friends who rely on artifice and games. Real friends are like brothers and sisters. When he was diagnosed with HIV, Magic Johnson’s “wheels had come off.” His friends scattered except for his wife who decided to “take this to God” and his NBA archrival Larry Bird who stood by him for weeks and months and subsequently became his best friend.
- 3) **Point #3 Faithfulness underlies the other Fruits of the Spirit.** It teaches us to start with little acts, be honest in little things, and finish what we start. It’s resisting small temptations, expecting pain at times, feeling the sting of perceived failure (“a failure in the narrative”), hostility and opposition -- to finally reach the reward & redemption of faithfulness.

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - What stood out of the message for you? Where are areas where you have shown faithfulness and other areas where you could improve?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - How is faithfulness a foundational attribute for the other Fruits of the Spirit, including self-control, gentleness, patience, and kindness? How is Jesus’ experience on the cross the ultimate instance of faithfulness?
- 3) **DO** - Assess your relationships, attitude to the many facets of your life (including work, education, and volunteering), and goals & direction - and come up with ways to be more forceful in your faithfulness.