

Session 5



God Is Faithful

THE POINT

God is faithful to His people and His promises.

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Semper Fi. Since 1883, it's been the official motto of the United States Marine Corps. It means "always faithful." As far as the Marines are concerned, there is no such thing as a former Marine. The ethos of *Semper Fi* is expected in every aspect of their personal and professional lives. Once a Marine, always a Marine. And pity the non-Marine who dares to sport a *Semper Fi* tattoo!

"Always faithful" is a noble aspiration. But it's impossible for any human being to always be faithful in every single area of his or her life. For example, it may surprise you that divorce rates among Marines are among the highest of any branch of the military.¹

We've all failed to keep a vow, pledge, or commitment. There's only one Being in the universe and through all recorded history who has never broken a promise. Never violated a covenant. Never left a commitment unfulfilled. His name is Yahweh, and He alone is always faithful.

Oorah.

QUESTION 1:

What are some good mottos to live by?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

DEUTERONOMY 7:6-8

⁶ For you are a holy people belonging to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be his own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷ “The LORD had his heart set on you and chose you, not because you were more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. ⁸ But because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors, he brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from the place of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Think back to the schoolyard playground. Everyone who wants to play kickball is standing around. Two captains are selected. A coin toss determines who gets the first pick. Then, players are selected, one by one. Anticipation runs high. No one wants to be picked last. And when your name is called, you look smugly at everyone who has not been chosen and you think to yourself, *I'm better than they are*.

How sweet verse 6 must have sounded! “The LORD your God has chosen you to be his own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth.” There must have been a new pep in their step as the children of Israel realized they hadn’t merely been picked by God—they were picked *first!*

But before they could strut with pride at their placement, God reminded them in verse 7 that He didn’t choose them because they were more numerous than other nations. Just the opposite. When God chose Abraham, he wasn’t a nation at all. He was one man, a childless septuagenarian whose wife Sarai had been unable to bear children (Gen. 12:1-4). So, even though by this

point the Israelites were “as numerous as the stars of the sky” (Deut. 1:10), it wasn’t because of their own merit.

There’s an old saying that “if you see a turtle on a fence post, you know it didn’t get there on its own.” The same is true of a successful CEO, a star athlete, or the president of the United States. None of us had anything to do with our own genetics, our family of origin, or the place of our birth. All those factors have a hand to play in whatever level of success we have achieved. The Israelites needed that reminder as they stood on the edge of the promised land.

At the same time, they needed to be reminded of God’s faithfulness to them. The Israelites had no idea what to expect on the other side of the Jordan. Those nations God mentioned in Deuteronomy 7:1—those seven nations “more numerous and powerful” than they were—were still there. Would God still be with them, or would He say, “Now you’re on your own”?

Moses gave the Israelites two great assurances in these verses. First, he told them, “God *has*

chosen you” (v. 6, emphasis added). This verb is in present perfect tense. God chose them in the past, but they were still chosen in the present. He continued to choose them! And it wasn’t an arbitrary, disinterested choice, either. God “had His heart set on” them (v. 7)!

Second, God chose them because He loved them and “kept the oath he swore to [their] ancestors” (v. 8). Hundreds of years before, God had promised Abram to make of him a great nation. He renewed the promise to Abraham’s son, Isaac. He renewed it to Isaac’s son, Jacob.

Throughout all generations, even the ones who had been in captivity in Egypt for four hundred years, God was faithful to His people.

QUESTION 2:

How can our lives reflect that we are holy and chosen?

DEUTERONOMY 7:9-11

⁹ Know that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps his gracious covenant loyalty for a thousand generations with those who love him and keep his commands. ¹⁰ But he directly pays back and destroys those who hate him. He will not hesitate to pay back directly the one who hates him. ¹¹ So keep the command—the statutes and ordinances—that I am giving you to follow today.

When Moses described God in verse 9, notice how he started. After stating that “the LORD your God is God,” there are any number of attributes or identifiers he could have followed up with. We’ve already covered four of them in this study. The holy God. The loving God. The just God. The omnipotent God. Any of those would be theologically correct statements. But Moses went with “the faithful God.”

Are there different aspects of God’s character that are especially meaningful to you in different seasons of your life? Sure, there are. That doesn’t mean that any one of them is more significant than any other. The beautiful truth of God’s multifaceted character is that He is everything all the time, while He is also specific things at specific times.

- When we need help making a decision, God is the wise God.
- When we are brought face to face with our sin, God is the forgiving God.
- When we are indignant about injustice in the world, God is the righteous God.
- When we are broken and wounded, God is the healing God.
- When we are facing death, God is the eternal God.

What about for you? Is there an attribute of God you are leaning on especially hard right now?

Maybe this was why Moses emphasized God’s faithfulness to the Israelites at this moment.

They needed to be reminded of His faithfulness as they prepared to enter the promised land. When facing an uncertain future, they needed to be reminded of God’s faithfulness in the past. No one English word can adequately capture the Hebrew word *chesed*. “Chesed” conveys the thought of love that has its foundation in an unbreakable vow. Think of marriage vows exchanged between a man and a woman who have already resolved that divorce is not an option. That’s *chesed*.

One chapter later, Moses will give the Israelites several practical examples of God’s covenant loyalty toward them. He fed them with manna (8:3). Their clothes did not wear out, and their “feet did not swell” (8:4). We know God led them with a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (Deut. 1:33). He provided them water from a rock—twice (Ex. 17; Num. 20). Because God had made a covenant with Abraham and renewed it to every successive generation, the Israelites could be assured He would be faithful to keep it with them as they entered the promised land.

God also promised He would keep His covenant to those who love Him and keep His commandments “to a thousand generations” (Deut. 5:10). A generation is reckoned as somewhere between twenty and forty years. So even a lowball estimate would give God’s promises a twenty-thousand-year warranty!

We love God’s faithfulness to His blessings. But we can’t forget God is faithful to all His promises, not just the good ones. Verse 10 is a somber reminder that God will also be faithful to destroy those who hate Him. God’s faithfulness cuts both ways. “So,” said Moses in verse 11, “keep the command—the statutes and ordinances” God was commanding them to do.

QUESTION 3:

What does it mean for our lives that God is a covenant-keeper?

DEUTERONOMY 7:12-16

¹² “If you listen to and are careful to keep these ordinances, the LORD your God will keep his covenant loyalty with you, as he swore to your ancestors. ¹³ He will love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will bless your offspring, and the produce of your land—your grain, new wine, and fresh oil—the young of your herds, and the newborn of your flocks, in the land he swore to your ancestors that he would give you. ¹⁴ You will be blessed above all peoples; there will be no infertile male or female among you or your livestock. ¹⁵ The LORD will remove all sickness from you; he will not put on you all the terrible diseases of Egypt that you know about, but he will inflict them on all who hate you. ¹⁶ You must destroy all the peoples the LORD your God is delivering over to you and not look on them with pity. Do not worship their gods, for that will be a snare to you.

Engage

GOD'S PROMISES

Use the acrostic below to list some of God's promises that you've seen Him be faithful to in your life. [An example is given.]

F - *athering me when I had no father*

A -

I -

T -

H -

F -

U -

L -

God is serious about His covenant and His love for His people. He isn't a distant deity who just expects us to figure things out on our own. Instead, He is involved in our lives. He initiates a relationship and makes promises that He will keep. And, in return, He requires our obedience—not because He's a tyrant, but because He knows what's best for us.

In these verses, Moses reminded the Israelites that a covenant is a two-way agreement. If they obeyed God's commandments, they would experience God's blessings. They were to keep the command and statutes that the Lord was giving them to follow "today." Bear in mind that the book of Deuteronomy is basically a restatement and summarization of God's commands given in Exodus and Leviticus ("Deuteronomy" means "second law"). So, verses 12-16 aren't meant to be everything Israel was to follow, but it encapsulates what Israel had to do as their part of the covenant. If Israel did their part, then God would do His part.

QUESTION 4:

What are some things that can hinder believers from walking in obedience?

When you compare the terms of the covenant, who does more? God does. Who gets more? The Israelites do. What God does on our behalf will always be infinitely more than we could ever do for Him. In fact, even the things we are called to do to honor our part of the covenant are ultimately for our benefit. We get the blessings, and He gets the glory.

Obedience keeps us on the path to a full, rich, and satisfying life. God's laws are like marked trails—guiding us toward the best life has to offer. Our obedience isn't about restrictions; it's about choosing the path to abundant life.

There was one obligation of obedience that is jarring to our modern sensibilities. Israel had to destroy all the people who were currently living in the land. God insisted that the native population be destroyed without pity. Why? Because they posed the greatest threat to all that God wanted to do for Israel. God didn't want their idolatry and wickedness to ensnare His people, so the only solution was eradication.

How do we respond to God's faithfulness? By being intentional in our daily choices. It might be as simple as setting aside time each day to read Scripture, pray, or reflect on how we can align our actions with His teachings. When we make those choices, we're actively participating in our relationship with God. We're also called to take a stand against anything that would lead us away from our relationship with God. This could mean letting go of habits, relationships, or influences that steer us away from His ways.

Obedience is intended to be lived out in community. Surrounding ourselves with fellow believers who encourage us in our faith can help us stay accountable. We're not meant to navigate this journey alone!

QUESTION 5:

Why is our obedience so important to God?

LIVE IT OUT

Deuteronomy 7:12-16 showcases a beautiful cycle. God's faithfulness leads to our obedience, and our obedience opens the door to His continued blessings. When we trust in Him and respond to His love by following His commands, we not only receive His blessings but also reflect His character to the world around us. Here are some ways we can strengthen that cycle this week:

- **Keep God's commands.** Commit to focusing on God's commands in your devotional time this week. Meditate on passages such as the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the Beatitudes (Matthew 5).
- **Destroy God's enemies.** Identify media choices, habits, hobbies, or relationships that may be taking you off God's path of obedience and take steps to eliminate them from your life.
- **Tear down idols.** Keep God first in your life by identifying any idol, anything in your life you have put before Him.



1. "Understanding the Military Divorce Rate: A Closer Look," *USMilitary.com*, accessed 13 Feb. 2025, <https://usmilitary.com/military-divorce-rate/#divorcerateamongdifferentbranches>