



Daily Devotionals: God Is Faithful | September 12, 2021

Day 1 – Devotional

There are few things more disorienting than driving through thick fog. Drivers slow down and are more cautious, relying intently on the lines on the road to keep them on their path. A familiar commute can feel stressful while an unfamiliar road can be downright harrowing. It can be even scarier when we aren't the ones behind the wheel. We have to completely trust the driver to get us where we need to go.

Many years ago, during a mission trip in Kashmir, our travel plans were interrupted by a dense fog that prevented us from flying from Jammu, Kashmir to Delhi, India. It was the first leg of a very long trip back to the States. We waited for a while to see if the fog would lift, but after a few hours, it became clear we needed to book alternate transportation.

Already weary from the weather delays, we hired a driver whose car looked reliable and set off. Our 90-minute journey by plane had turned into an 11-hour car ride that I would never forget.

The fog was thick throughout much of the journey, often obscuring the road ahead of us. This didn't cause much concern when we were on paved highways with multiple lanes. However, the curving mountain roads, barely wide enough for one vehicle, were another story. As night set in, my body screamed for rest, but I was too scared to sleep. For the first time I could remember, I honestly feared for my life.

At some point in the dark hours before dawn, it occurred to me that my vigilant supervision of our driver's skill behind the wheel was benefitting no one. I had to surrender and trust his experience. He made this drive several times a week. He knew these roads like the back of his hand. He had kept us alive for nearly 8 hours through sharp turns and minor collisions. I had to believe he would continue to keep us safe. With that, I relented and let myself fall asleep.

Those who stayed awake during the second half of the trip reported that it continued to be a bumpy and terrifying ride, but we eventually arrived at our destination. I promised I would never



make that drive again, but, if I HAD to do it again, I would want the same driver. Not because the ride was smooth, comfortable, or convenient, but because I trust he would take us where we needed to go.

Looking back on that journey, I can see now that climbing into the car, I had expectations about the trip. First off, I had planned to go by plane, and I carried resentment over that unmet expectation for hours into the ride. Furthermore, I had expectations about what the drive would be like. I expected it to be comfortable. I expected it to go by quickly. I expected it to feel like what an 11-hour drive on a US highway might feel like. My expectations were not rooted in promises made to me. The driver had only made one promise. He promised to get us to Delhi. He didn't promise comfort, roadside restrooms, or modern highways. He simply promised to get us where we needed to go. And he faithfully kept his promise.

Thomas Merton said that our idea of God tells us more about ourselves than about him. When it comes to God's faithfulness, this statement could not be truer. Our trust in God's faithfulness is influenced by our expectations, our victories, our disappointments, our celebrations, and our suffering. Throughout history, humans have struggled to believe that God is faithful, and the Scriptures are full of accounts where people struggle to trust in God's promises.

If you struggle to believe that God is faithful and trustworthy, you are not alone. Trusting God's faithfulness can be much like driving into fog with someone else behind the wheel. We can't see what's coming and we long to be in control. But over time, if we pay attention, we can see where God is faithful in our lives and our trust grows stronger. As humans, we long to be in control of our itinerary, but only God can see what is ahead. We are, and always will be, driving through the fog.

Just like building trust in relationships, God's character is revealed to us through time and experiences. Faithfulness is built by getting to know God. This week we are going to spend some time getting to know him, through his Word, through being in his presence, and through sharing your story and hearing the stories of others. Proving faithfulness takes time so give yourself time, and don't underestimate the value of the experience of others. Whether through Scripture or through stories from people in your daily life, it all contributes to our understanding that our God is faithful.



Reflection:

1. What situation in your life right now feels like you're driving into fog?
2. What would it look like to truly believe God is faithful?
3. How would it feel to be completely surrendered to the Father, knowing he will get you where you need to go?

The poem below, based on Lamentations 3:23, was composed in 1923 by Thomas O. Chisholm. Over the last century, it has remained a popular hymn and worship song. The QR code below will take you to a performance of this song by Carrie Underwood. As you listen, ask God to show you areas in your life where you can grow in your trust in his 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 wilt 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.



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.



Day 2- Look at the Book

The Lord passed in front of Moses, calling out, “Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.” – Exodus 34:6 (NLT)

We can really only speak to God’s faithfulness in the context of his steadfast love. Theologian Thomas Smail calls our relationship with God a “trusting response to a known love.” When we explored the ways in which God is love, we were introduced to the Hebrew word, *khesed* meaning loving-kindness, or faithfulness. It is necessary that we understand that God’s faithfulness is not contingent on our own faithfulness. Just like his love for us does not depend on what we do or don’t do. *Khesed* speaks of God’s commitment to us in spite of our unfaithfulness. Likewise, the word *emet*, which is used 127 times in the Hebrew Bible, relates to truth, stability, reliability, consistency, and trustworthiness. ¹

In Hebrew, the letters that make up *emet* are **aleph** א, **mem** מ, **tav** ט. It is in the characters of this word that a deeper meaning about the truth is revealed.

The first letter of the word *emet* is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The second letter of the word *emet* is the middle letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The third and last letter of the word *emet* is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. From this, we learn that any real truth is true from the beginning to the end.² God’s faithfulness is true from beginning to end.

To continue to grow in our understanding of God’s faithfulness, we are going to revisit our friends at The Bible Project. Their Character of God series helps us examine the depth of meaning behind the original Hebrew word for faithfulness, *emet*.

Use the QR code below or simply google “bible project video faithfulness.” Watch the video on this characteristic of God and note anything new you learn. You may want to experience the

¹ “H571 - 'Ĕmet - Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (Niv).” *Blue Letter Bible*, www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h571/niv/wlc/0-1/.

² Rabbi David Lyon. “The Whole Truth and Nothing but the Emes.” *Congregation Beth Israel*, Rabbi David Lyon, 6 Dec. 2019, www.beth-israel.org/rabbi-lyons-blog-12-6-2019/.



video twice. First while watching the video and then with your eyes closed, allowing the words to really sink in.



Reflection:

The video tells us that Abraham was the first human to trust in God's faithfulness:

Read Genesis 15-18:15.

- What did God promise to Abraham?
- How long did Abraham have to wait for God to fulfill his promise?
- Why is this example in Scripture so important in displaying God's faithfulness?
- How does Abraham and Sarah's experience encourage you to trust in God's faithfulness?

Here's another story of God's faithfulness:

Read Joshua 2 and 6

- What was promised to Rahab?
- What honor was Rahab given in spite of her life choices? If you need a reminder, read Matthew 1:1-17 and trace the genealogy of Jesus.
- How is Rahab remembered in other parts of Scripture? Take a look at Matthew 1:5, Hebrews 11:31, and James 2:25.
- How does Rahab's experience encourage you to trust in God's faithfulness?

To close read aloud Psalm 118 and offer the words of the psalmist as your prayer.



Day 3 – Scripture Survey

As we mentioned before, God’s faithfulness is mentioned throughout Scripture. Here is a sample of verses.

Take a few moments to slowly read through the passages below.

Isaiah 25:1

Lamentations 3:22-23

Psalms 31:5

2 Thessalonians 3:3

Psalms 36:5

Psalms 100:5

2 Timothy 2:13

Galatians 3:9

- What do the verses say about God’s faithfulness? Why do you think his faithfulness is mentioned so often?
- Choose one to commit to memory this week and read it aloud as your closing prayer.



Day 4 – Story Work

Again, we revisit the A.W. Tozer quote – “What comes to our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” Today we want to spend some time reflecting on God’s faithfulness and see where in our life God is inviting us to respond and grow.

Scripture reminds us of God’s faithfulness throughout time. It is through the telling of our stories and listening to the stories of others that strengthens our trust in God’s faithfulness. Building trust takes time and experience. We learn to trust in his faithfulness in the future by remembering his past faithfulness.

- Who is a person in your life you trust wholeheartedly?
- What has that person done over time to earn your trust?
- How would you describe your trust level when it comes to God?
- How have experiences in your life or in the life of others impacted that trust?

Think back over your life. When have you experienced the faithfulness of God? When have you felt like he was unfaithful? List the experiences in the columns below.

God is faithful

God is unfaithful



Reflection:

- Is there an experience where at the time you felt God was unfaithful, but you now can see his faithfulness?
- What role do expectations play into how you experience God's faithfulness? Are you expecting him to deliver on promises he never made?
- How would your life change if you were to fully trust in God's faithfulness?

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



Day 5 – Response

For this last day, let's slow down and pay attention to what God has been inviting us into as a result of our work this week. Find a quiet space. Silence any technology around you. Spend some time reviewing your devotions this week. Allow God to bring to mind the places where he's been showing you his character in his faithfulness.

Jot down your thoughts to the following reflection questions:

As you look over this week, what words, phrases, Scriptures, etc. have stood out to you? What was the most significant thing? Why?

How have you experienced God's faithfulness in your life this week?

What is God inviting you to DO as a response to this week's reflections?



Consider some of these suggestions as possible action steps as you step into living this week's truths:

- Share a story of God's faithfulness with a friend and ask a friend to share one of their experiences of faithfulness with you. Commit to praying for one another to grow to trust God as faithful
- Keep a prayer journal and revisit journal entries regularly to see how God has responded. Keep track of how God has shown himself to be faithful in your life.
- Lead your family or friends through a time of Communion, remembering Christ's sacrifice on the cross, God's fulfillment of his promise to all of us – the ultimate example of his faithfulness. Read Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26 or Luke 14:22-40.