**Fidelity Month**

Dr. Scott Markley 6.1.25 FBC, Lake Wales

**Intro.** Robert P. George & fidelitymonth.com

***fidelity* =** faithfulness to a person, cause or belief demonstrated by continuing loyalty & support.

* **The Lack of Faithfulness/Fidelity.** (Rom. 1:28-31; Proverbs 20:6)
* **God’s Faithfulness** (Deut. 7:9; Psalm 36:5; 57:10 & 108:4; Lam. 3:23)
* **Faithful to God** (Habakkuk 2:4; 3 John 3)

* **Faithful to Spouse & Family** (Gen. 2:24; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; 5:9; Prov. 5:18-23)

* **Faithful to Country & Community** (Luke 20:20-25; Rom. 13:1-7)

*“Let love & faithfulness never leave you….”* **–Proverbs 3:3-4**

*“A faithful person will be richly blessed….” –***Proverbs 28:20a**

**QUESTIONS FOR HOME DISCUSSION & APPLICATION:**

1. Does the lack of fidelity in America concern you? Why or why not?
2. What best motivates you toward fidelity/faithfulness? Why?
3. What hinders your fidelity to God, spouse/family, or country…?
4. How can your friends or family help you be more faithful?

**What is Fidelity Month?**

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**Have you ever heard of Fidelity Month?** I had not either until I was in a Zoom call with some other pastors and **Dr. Robert George**, a legal scholar, professor at Princeton U. & public intellectual. We shared in a conversation that spoke of a **Vibe Shift** seemingly going on now in America. Hopefully it is a shift away from the decline of patriotism, the family & the church in America. For the dire facts are in America fewer people marrying, we have severely plunging birthrates & there is an ever-increasing number of people who report no religious affiliation whatsoever. As our conversation turned to **responses to such negative cultural trends** Dr. George told us about ***Fidelity Month***. He explained how he was seeking to lead a grassroots effort to restore the priority of fidelity in our nation. He spoke of how he hoped pastors, rabbis, imams & other people of influence would spread the word about ***Fidelity Month***. So, after the call I went to the website & there I read this explanatory statement: *Every June Fidelity Month is a positive, grassroots movement to heal division & restore unity in our country by appealing to what is best and noble in us, through a return to living our lives in fidelity to God, our spouses & families, and our country & communities.*

So hopefully you perceive from that statement that this is not a political emphasis or a Christian movement. It is **more basic** than that. And it may not gain traction, but I appreciate that Dr. George is doing more than talking about problems or decrying the negative cultural trends in America. He is attempting to offer some partial solution. Therefore, I thought, **at least for this year in this church** I would make our church family aware of ***Fidelity Month*** & ask you to consider walking in fidelity & inviting others to, as well. Of course, **my appeal** for us to live in fidelity is **not rooted in** the words of a professor or a website but is **rooted in the call of God through the Bible for us to live lives of faithfulness.**

Now admittedly you won’t find the word ***fidelity*** in the Bible very much, but the concept is there. **FIDELITY** is defined as faithfulness to a person, cause or belief demonstrated by continuing loyalty & support.

* **The lack of faithfulness/fidelity.** (Rom. 1:28-31; Proverbs 20:6)

Ironically, one of the only usages of the word ***FIDELITY*** you will find in the Bible is in **Romans 1::31** where the Apostle Paul is talking about the lack of it. In the last half of the first chapter of this letter to the Christ-followers in Rome the Apostle Paul is talking about how humanity devolved into wickedness & sin after rejecting the truth of God. By the end of the chapter the Spirit leads Paul to present a descriptive list of how humanity’s sin is evident. Here is what he writes in **Romans 1:28-31.** **READ.**

Did you hear it there at the end? ***NO FIDELITY.***  ***No fidelity, no love, no mercy.*** Paul’s explaining that the lack of fidelity is a result of rejecting the knowledge of God & evidence of a depraved mind. **Our lack of faithfulness is proof we are sinful people.** ☹

Solomon lamented this fact centuries earlier when he asked this in **Proverbs 20:6: *“Many claim to have unfailing love, but a faithful person who can find?*** Solomon was dismayed at the lack of fidelity. Just **like we are when** we hear ofanother person breaking their loving vows through marital infidelity. Just **like we are when** we are when we see American citizens burning the American flag & chanting “*Death to America*”. **Just like we are when** we talk with someone who we used to worship Jesus with in church services, yet now they’re totally disinterested in the things of God. In those moments we may ask, ***“A faithful person who can find?”*** ☹

Yet **we inherently know faithfulness (or f*idelity*) is noble. Even if uncommon it is honorable in the sight of God and man.** We know it is **God-pleasing** because it **reflects the very character of God himself**. For throughout the Bible we read of **God’s *faithfulness****.* 😊

* **God’s Faithfulness** (Deut. 7:9; Psalm 36:5; 57:10 & 108:4; Lam. 3:23)

God had revealed himself to be *faithful* to Moses, so he wrote this of Yahweh: **READ Deuteronomy 7: 9**. Yes, as Moses wrote & history had revealed a primary attribute of God was his ***faithfulness.*** King David of Israel was so struck by the ***faithfulness*** of God he wrote of it in three different songs, expressing he believed the Lord’s ***faithfulness reached to the skies***. [Show PPT slide of **Psalm 36:5; 57:10 & 108:4**]

The **faithfulness of people** may only be ten feet high or ten yards high. But David saw **God’s faithfulness** as so ***great*** it **reached miles high into the sky**. Elsewhere in the Bible we read of how, despite terrible affliction, **Jeremiah found** ***hope*** because of the ***great faithfulness*** of God. By the Spirit he wrote this in **Lamentations 3:19-23. READ.**

So yes, **the ground of appeal for our faithfulness**, our fidelity to God, our spouses & families & our country & communities, **is found in the very character of God himself. As He is faithful, so he calls us to be faithful. First, he calls upon us to be faithful to Him.**

* **Faithful to God (Habakkuk 2:4; 3 John 3)**

The Hebrew prophet Habakkuk stated the truth succinctly when he wrote ***“the righteous person will live by his faithfulness.” (Hab. 2:4).*** The Spirit led the prophet to declare that the specific concrete evidence one was righteous before God and humanity was that they had faith & were faithful. **Faith in God & faithfulness to God was the fruit of righteousness that all could see**. And the Apostle Paul also saw this to be true, therefore, he quoted this phrase from Habakkuk 2:4 in **Romans 1:17** as he explained that the righteousness received from God will always be evident in the faith & faithfulness of one who believes the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle John believed the same thing but **used the metaphor of walking** to talk about the importance of living a life of ***faithfulness*** to God’s ***truth***. Listen to how John writes of ***faithfulness*** in **3 John 3-4. READ.**

Do you hear this? **Faithfulness to the truth of God** is NOT just hearing the truth or knowing the truth or believing the truth it is ***WALKING*** *in the Truth*—that is the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. John refers to ***walking in the truth*** to emphasize he is talking about **a way of life**. The *faithfulness to the truth* of his spiritual *children* is seen in their lifestyle. It is **NOT** just a matter of words or thoughts but **actions that manifest faithfulness to the truth.** This is what makes John **overjoyed** about the well-being of his spiritual ***children***.

One who **turned to the truth of the gospel & walked in it** is the mother of author Daniel Nayeri. In his memoir, *Everything Sad Is Untrue*, Daniel Nayeri recounts the gripping story about why his mother became a Christian.

*She* ***grew up in a devout & prestigious Muslim family****. She was a doctor & had wealth & esteem. But eventually she would forsake all of that to follow Jesus. She was* ***forced to flee for her life from Iran****, eventually settling in the U.S. as a refugee. When people ask her* ***why,*** *she looks them in the eye with the hope that they’ll hear her, and she says,* ***“Because it’s true.”***

*Why else would she believe it?* ***It’s true & it’s more valuable than*** *$7 million in gold coins, thousands of acres of Persian countryside, & 10 years of education to get a medical degree, & all your family, & a home. And maybe even your life.* ***My mom wouldn’t have made the trade otherwise.***

*If you believe it’s true, that there is a God, & HE wants you to believe in him, & He sent his Son to die for you—then it must take over your life. It must be worth more than everything else, because heaven’s waiting on the other side. That or my mother is insane. There’s no middle. You can’t say it’s a quirky thing she thinks, because she went all the way with it.* ***If it’s not true, she made a giant mistake. But she doesn’t think so.***

*She had all that wealth, the love of all those people she helped in her clinic. They treated her like a queen. She was a devout Muslim. And she’s poor now. She’s a refugee in places where people hate refugees.* ***And she’ll tell you––it’s worth it. Jesus is better. It’s true*** *… Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.* ***The whole story hinges on it.* Source:** *Daniel Nayeri, Everything Sad Is Untrue (Levine Quierido, 2020), pp. 196-197*

For you or me **being faithful to God may not include** forsaking a career, family, your home country or worldly wealth, **but it must include forsaking sin.** It **most likely will require sacrifice**—of some sort. ***Walking in the truth* is not easy in a world full of lies.** But our faithfulness to ***walk in the truth*** is what can bring joy to others, ourselves & the very heart of God. So, **will we be faithful to God?** Will we be faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ? Will we seek to imitate Him & grow in our faith? Will we read God’s Word & pray faithfully? Will we attend church services & Bible study regularly? **Will we prioritize fidelity to God?**

A 2nd area of fidelity we are challenged to is being…

* **Faithful to Spouse & Family** (Prov. 28:20; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; 5:9; Prov. 5:18-23)

At creation God established his design for marriage. We read of it in **Genesis 2:24** (Older NIV) **READ.** So, **God established marriage is to be between one man & one woman in a *one-flesh* monogamous union for life. Anything else departs from His design!!** And **the standard of marital fidelity** is clear when you read in 1 Timothy about what is expected of church leadership**.** In **1 Timothy 3:2** we read that an overseer (pastor) is to be ***“above reproach”*** & ***“faithful to his wife”….*** Then, in **1 Timothy** **3:12** we read, ***“A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well.”***  In fact, look what God leads Paul to write over in **1 Timothy 5:9.** There,as Paul gives instructions about which women can be on the list of widows to be cared for by the church, he writes this: **READ 1 Timothy 5:9**. *Wow!* We can see that **faithfulness to your spouse** was a priority of the 1st Century Church…and I pray it would be of the 21st Century Church also.

**Infidelity in marriage is no small matter.** Elizabeth Edwards, the former wife of vice-presidential candidate & U.S. Senator John Edwards, described the agony she experienced when she learned of her husband's infidelities:

*After I cried, and screamed, I went to the bathroom and threw up. And the next day John and I spoke. He wasn't coy, but it turned out he wasn't forthright either. I felt that the ground underneath me had been pulled away.*

*I spent months learning to live with a single incidence of infidelity. And I would like to say that a single incidence is easy to overcome, but it is not. I am who I am. I am imperfect in a million ways, but I always thought I was the kind of woman, the kind of wife to whom a husband would be faithful. I had asked for fidelity, begged for it, really, when we married. I never need flowers or jewelry. I don't care about vacations or a nice car. But I need you to be faithful. Leave me, if you must, but be faithful to me if you are with me*.

Those words are painful to hear & reveal the damage of infidelity. **This is why Solomon uses explicit language when he warns his sons against infidelity & adultery in Proverbs 5.** (writing to sons but it applies to girls/women also) Solomon writes: **READ Proverbs 5:15-23.**

Now **if** those words of warning don’t remind you of how **fidelity** in your marriage is important to God, **then maybe this thought will help you not only be faithful but** **also be more loving and caring.**

Author Gary Thomas reminds Christians that if you're married, **God is your "spiritual Father-*in-law*."** He writes: *“When I realized that I was married to God's daughter, everything changed in the way I viewed marriage. It was no longer about just me & one other person; it was very much a relationship with a passionately interested third partner. Most of us fail to grasp just how fully God loves the person to whom we are married.”*

Thomas continues, *God is fully aware of our spouse's limitations—and he is just as eager for us to be kind & generous with these faults as we are for our kids' future spouses to be kind to them.* ***By looking at my spouse through God's eyes, I invite God into my marriage.***[applies to husbands & wives]

*Source: Gary Thomas, Holy Available (Zondervan, 2009), pp. 63-64*

Yes, avoiding marital infidelity in thought or action is merely the starting point for what it means to show **fidelity to your spouse & family.** There needs to be **faithfulness shown in** tender nurturing, words of encouragement, humble service, wise decision-making, spiritual leadership, patient instruction, shepherding of the heart, shaping of character, & more. **Faithfulness in all these ways surely is more than we can do on our own** so the weight of this responsibility should drive us to prayer & reliance upon the Spirit of God. **May He enable us to be faithful to our spouses & to our families.**

Finally, we should show Fidelity or faithfulness to…

* **Faithful to Country & Community** (Rom. 13)

For sake of time, I will simply remind you that **Jesus affirmed our responsibility to be faithful,** within reason, to those who govern us when he said, ***“render unto Ceasar what is Ceasar’s & unto God what is God’s”*** (Lk. 20:25). And in **Romans 13:1-7** the text refers to government officials as ***God’s servants*** three separate times & Paul concludes writing this: **READ Romans 13:6-7.** Therefore, faithfulness in this domain looks like paying taxes, voting, being aware & engaged politically at some level, & maybe even supporting in some ways those you deem good candidates.

In the end, **I find it easy to join others in calling people & myself to Fidelity or faithfulness in June or all year long.** I do because faithfulness reflects the character of our faithful God & because it is frequently extolled in the Bible. As some closing examples of that, let’s read these proverbs. In **Proverbs 3:3-4** God tells us this…**READ.**

And then God simply reminds us through **Proverbs 28:20a** that--- “***A faithful person will be richly blessed.***”

***Red Tails*** was the nickname given to the ***Tuskegee Airman*** who belonged to a 332nd Fighter Group & the 477th Bombardment Group of the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. The nickname "Red Tails" was coined after the group painted the tails of their aircraft red.

**The *Red Tails* became famous for two reasons.** First, as Tuskegee Airmen they were the first African-American military aviators in the U.S. armed forces. But the ***Red Tails*** specifically were famous because of what they did militarily in the European air war. In that theatre the U**.S. bombers were getting shot down at increasingly alarming rates.** The problem came when Nazi aircraft attacked the bombers the U.S. fighter pilots, positioned to protect the bombers, would leave the bomber to engage enemy fighter planes. While that response seemed necessary it left the bombers vulnerable to attack.

Therefore, the ***Red Tails*** were **brought in & given a different assignment**: **Never leave the bombers. Never.** Regardless of what was happening around them. *When the enemy fighters attack, don’t chase them. Stay the course & defend the bombers.* **The result of their faithfulness to their task?** **Only 25 of the hundreds of bombers they protected during the war were lost.** Their stellar reputation became legend: If you flew a bomber, you wanted the Red Tails with you. And those pilots were celebrated, not just because they were excellent pilots, but because they never wavered from their duty; they never left their charge. **No matter what happened, they stayed faithful to their calling.** *Source: Wayne Drash, "A Midair Courtship: Tuskegee's Historic Love Story," CNN.com (1-22-12)*

**Like those *Red Tail* pilots, may we also be faithful to our calling!** May God enable us to be men & women of **fidelity**. Yes, **this day let us renew our commitment to be faithful to God, to our spouses & families, & to our country & communities.** May we know the blessings that come from faithfulness.