

## **Nehemiah (God is Faithful)**

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**Definition:** The faithfulness of God means God is unchanging in his nature, true to his Word, has promised salvation to his people, and will keep his promises forever. He is worthy of eternal trust no matter how unlikely his promises seem. Nothing in heaven or on earth can prevent God from accomplishing all that he has promised his people through Jesus Christ. This reliability of God should be a great source of comfort and strength for God's people as they repeatedly fail and go through trials and suffering.- Samuel Saldivar

### **Nehemiah 13: The Final Reforms**

**Cleansing the Temple :** <sup>6</sup> While this was taking place, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I went to the king. And after some time I asked leave of the king<sup>7</sup> and came to Jerusalem, and I then discovered the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, preparing for him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. <sup>8</sup> And I was very angry, and I threw all the household furniture of Tobiah out of the chamber. <sup>9</sup> Then I gave orders, and they cleansed the chambers, and I brought back there the vessels of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense. (13:6-9)

**The Temple Levites and Singers Supported:** <sup>10</sup> I also found out that the portions of the Levites had not been given to them, so that the Levites and the singers, who did the work, had fled each to his field. <sup>11</sup> So I confronted the officials and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gathered them together and set them in their stations. <sup>12</sup> Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain, wine, and oil into the storehouses. (13:10-12)

**The Sabbath kept Holy:** <sup>15</sup> In those days I saw in Judah people treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on donkeys, and also wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of loads, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned them on the day when they sold food... Then I confronted the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the Sabbath day? <sup>18</sup> Did not your fathers act in this way, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Now you are bringing more wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath." (13:15,17-18)

**Intermarriage Addressed:** <sup>25</sup> In those days also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab... And I made them take an oath in the name of God, saying, "You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. <sup>26</sup> Did not Solomon king of Israel sin on account of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless, foreign women made even him to sin. <sup>27</sup> Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women?" (13:25-27)

### **The Father's Reforms are Superior (God is Invested in our Faithfulness)**

- I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:33-34)
- <sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. <sup>28</sup> You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. (Ezekiel 36:25-28)
- Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:17)

## God's Faithful Investment

### ❖ The Son of God

(Isaiah 53, Romans 8:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21, John 3:16, Hebrews 3:1-6, Mark 10:45, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

- For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. (Roman 3:22-25)

### ❖ The Holy Spirit

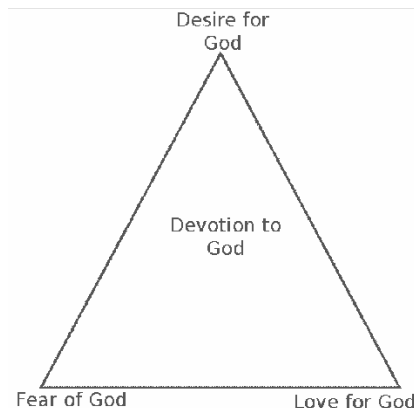
(Acts 20:17-38, 2 Timothy 2:1-13, Romans 8:7-8)

- <sup>7</sup>For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup>Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. <sup>9</sup>You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.
- <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:22-24)

## The Disciple's Faithful Investment

Mark 8:34-38, Galatians 5:16-17, 24-25, Luke 14:33, 2 Peter 1:3-11, Philippians 2:12, James 1:19-27; 2:14-26

- Train yourself in godliness. Exercise for the body is not useless, but godliness is useful in every respect, possessing, as it does, the promise of Life now and of the Life which is soon coming. (1 Timothy 4:8)
- And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Acts 2:42)



“I want you young men to bear in mind that it is the nature of a fire to go out; you must keep it stirred and fed and the ashes removed.”— General William Booth, founder of The Salvation Army

- Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is **faithful**. (Hebrews 10:23)
- Well done, good and **faithful** servant. You have been **faithful** over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master” (Matthew 25:23)

**Discipleship Homework:** The disciples in Acts 2:42 **devoted** themselves to **scripture, fellowship, communion, and prayer**. The word for devotion is proskartereō, pros-kar-ter-eh'-o : to be earnest towards, i.e. (to a thing) to persevere, be constantly diligent, or (in a place) to attend assiduously all the exercises, or (to a person) to adhere closely to (as a servant):—attend (give self) continually (upon), continue (in, instant in, with), wait on (continually).

How has your **devotion** to God in those specific areas impacted your **desire for God, fear of God, and love of God**? When devotion wanes, how have you rekindled the fire to continue in pursuit of God?