



Day 8

Faithfulness

Silence (2 minutes) Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

Scripture *"Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man."* Proverbs 3:3-4

Discussion Have you ever owned a golden retriever? Perhaps you've had one or known one. They say that golden retrievers are the most faithful of companions, loyal to their master throughout their lives. On difficult days they are quick to comfort by placing their head in your lap and looking at you with those big brown eyes or giving you dog kisses with their large, pink tongue. On good days, they are your biggest fan and want to hang out with you as much as possible, as if you were a rock star. And on every day, they'll likely be the first to greet you at the door when you come home because they've been sitting at the window all day waiting patiently for you to come home!

Golden retrievers are the picture of who we ought to be towards the people the God has entrusted to our care. It may be a spouse, a family member, a close friend, or a coworker who just can't seem to make good decisions. Through thick or thin, for better or for worse, we should be characterized as people who are loyal and committed with unconditional love. This kind of character is easy to spot and maybe some names come to mind. When we are faithful it opens up doors of opportunity and allows people to trust that we aren't going to abandon them when they mess up or aren't so lovable. We aren't to be fair-weather fans who only cheer when life is going well. Like a golden retriever, we should remain by their side, ready and willing to do whatever we can to remind them that there is someone who still believes that they have great value.

Obviously, faithfulness is only faithfulness when we stay at our post. When we give up on a relationship (not including situations of abuse), we are no longer faithful. Even when others are unfaithful to us we can choose to remain faithful. What a powerful witness it can be when we return love for evil. Of course, following this path of exceptional faithfulness will require healthy boundaries and a willingness to endure some potential hurt from those who are not faithful to us.

In the verse above, we are commended to never let faithfulness leave us. If we remain faithful, there is a reward that will benefit us both here and now and in the life to come. God has been faithful to us though we did not deserve it; might we do the same for those around us.

Application We can't always be available for everyone, but we can be available to support and encourage the people that God has placed in our lives. How can you be a better friend to the people in your circle of influence? Being faithful might mean looking beyond their sin, their decisions, and their lack of discipline. It might mean forgiving them again and again when they hurt you. Faithfulness is quick to remind people that they are valued and loved even when they feel unlovable.

Prayer Lord, there are days that I get tired of people and the things they do and honestly, sometimes I'd just rather move on and let them deal with their own messes that they've created. I know that I've made some messes of my own and You have stayed at my side despite my sin. Thank You for Your faithfulness. Your example helps me to believe that I can be patient with others and faithful to build them up, even when they don't deserve it. Help me to overcome my selfish desire to give up on any of the relationships that You have placed in my life and give me the strength to come along side of them with the steadfast loyalty of a golden retriever.

Silence (2 minutes) Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

Scripture memory for the week: *"Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope. Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."* Lamentations 3:21-23