

The Faithfulness of God

Today's passage challenges us to think about how God's faithfulness relates to our unfaithfulness. This is relevant because at one time or another we all have a deep sense of being unfaithful to God. Sometimes there's habitual sin that dominates our lives. At other times it's more of a general apathy toward God. We find ourselves lukewarm towards God. If we find ourselves unfaithful to God in any way, how should we think about the faithfulness of God? Does it mean that God hasn't really been very faithful to us? Maybe if He had been more faithful, we would be more obedient and more zealous for Him? And does our unfaithfulness really even matter? Maybe His faithfulness is so overwhelming that we really shouldn't even notice our unfaithfulness; we are saved and all is well. In Romans 3:1-8 Paul gives us a perspective that allows us to think carefully about God's faithfulness as it relates to our unfaithfulness.

Read Romans 3:1-8

1. What sticks out to you from this passage?
2. In verses 1-2 Paul responds to any of his readers who wanted to conclude from what he had just said in chapter 2 (i.e. the Jews failed to live out their calling) that there was no advantage to being a Jew. How does he respond to such thinking?
3. The questions in verse 3 point to an apparent accusation against God, which seems to be that the unfaithfulness of the Jews reveals unfaithfulness on God's part. Why might some be tempted to think that the unfaithfulness of the Jews actually reveals unfaithfulness on God's part?
4. Have you ever felt this way towards God . . . that your unfaithfulness really is a sign that God hasn't been faithful to you? If so, explain.

Steve said:

Think of a way in which you either have been or are unfaithful to God. Perhaps you've been cheating on God in some way. . . or perhaps you've just been apathetic. Maybe you've even accused God of being less than faithful to You: "God, I've cried out to you to remove my sinful desires and You haven't answered my prayers. . . I'm not seeing your faithfulness." It may be that you need to look for God's faithfulness in new ways. Perhaps you need to see how God has been faithful to discipline you as a son/daughter of His. It may be that God is faithfully doing something in your heart that is much deeper than you imagined.

5. What are some of the ways that God continues to demonstrate His faithfulness to us even when we are unfaithful to Him?

6. What seems to be the twisted logic that Paul is refuting in verses 5-8?

Steve said:

Have you ever thought, "This is a great set-up: God is good at forgiving people, and I'm good at sinning. We're a great match." I hope it's clear that God's faithfulness in no way enables our unfaithfulness.

7. How would you answer the person who says that since God is so forgiving, it really doesn't matter if he or she continues to sin or not?

8. What is the main take-away for you from this week's study?