

# Bible Studies for Life for August

## 10: A faithful life

August 4, 2008

• *Hebrews 2:14-3:1, 5-14*

Theodore Roosevelt said, “It is better to be faithful than famous.” While success and fame are more valuable than faithfulness in the present culture around us, faithfulness is the quiet hallmark to which Christians are called. It is by remaining faithful—even when all other signs indicate we should not—that we are most counter-cultural.

When faithfulness to one’s commitments takes a back seat to indulgence in one’s wants, we find a recipe for a stew that is flavored with personal discontent, feelings of inadequacy, covetousness and unfulfilled lives. But when we are faithful to God rather than to our indulgences, we find a rich way of living that offers peace beyond all understanding.

While God expects believers to be faithful, God also provides resources and tools to keep the faith. Our spiritual resources for remaining faithful are rich and plenty, and this week’s lesson is about discovering those precious gifts for keeping the faith. God will not call us to faithfulness without giving us a way to accomplish this goal!

What can help me stay faithful to God? Our tools are Jesus our helper, our calling, our Bible and our church family.

### **My Helper (Hebrews 2:14-18)**

Perhaps one of the most comforting and reassuring passages in all the Bible, Hebrews 2:14-18 paints a portrait of the human side of Jesus who endured testing and suffering in order to provide salvation for the world.

His humanity is evidenced as a reminder that you and I, though human, have a helper in Jesus. Jesus is able to provide a resource to us in the times of testing and temptation—times when our faithfulness is being stretched to the max.

The great beauty in this passage is that it acknowledges the fully human nature of Jesus. It clarifies that his temptations and tests were as real as ours, and as our model of faithfulness, Jesus' help to us can help us endure.

### **Application idea**

- We can be confident that when we trust in Christ and what he has done for us, we are released from sin's domination. Ask your class to privately consider a time when they were tempted and needed to trust in Christ's power to help them through the temptation. How might they encourage others going through similar tests and temptations?

### **My calling (Hebrews 3:1, 5-6)**

Moses stood firm, we are told in verse 5, to watch over God's "house" as a servant. That is to say, he was faithful in guiding the children of Israel out of Egypt and to the very edge of the Promised Land. It was this holy calling that took priority in his life, and the genuineness of his work guided his life.

The same faithfulness was seen in Christ as God's Son, and he faithfully followed his calling. Like Moses, Jesus was a servant in God's house, and in fact, we can say he was a servant to all. That was his calling.

As believers today, we are equally subject to a heavenly calling to put our faith in Jesus and give him priority in our lives. We are the house of God if we "hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope" (Hebrews 3:6).

## **Application ideas**

- Because Christ lives in us as believers, we can remain faithful to God's calling upon our lives. Ask your learners to share or consider a time when they sensed God was calling them to do something. Tell them about a time you did what you thought God was asking you to do and how that turned out. Or perhaps share about a time when you did not follow God's calling. What were the consequences?

## **My Bible (Hebrews 3:7-11)**

In this passage, the writer is recounting the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness as a consequence of their lack of faithfulness to God. It is important for us to know the voice of God so that we, too, can be faithful in our walk. While God speaks in many ways and in many times, the Scriptures can be affirmed as one of the best ways God speaks to us.

It is important, then, if we are to remain faithful in hearing God's voice, that we would be diligent students of Scripture. Memorizing texts, understanding the context of Scripture and praying for the Holy Spirit to guide us in reading the Bible are all ways we can be faithful to God. The writer of Hebrews began his quotation from Psalm 95 by noting the psalmist's words were the words of the Holy Spirit (3:7).

Ultimately, believers are called to read the Bible through the "lens" of Jesus as savior. Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection must necessarily "flavor" or influence how we read all of the Bible. To be faithful to Christ, it is imperative to read Scripture in this way.

## **My church (Hebrews 3:12-14)**

The fourth tool God gives us to help us remain faithful is the church. We are to be on guard that we do not have unfaithful hearts as the Israelites did (vv. 7-11). The church at her best offers believers encouragement to

help Christians maintain a higher level of commitment and faithfulness to God.

Verse 13 says we should exhort one another so we might not be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. The encouragement of fellow believers helps us avoid the snares of sin, and it keeps us closely connected to one another. In this sense, the church—the body of Jesus Christ—serves to keep us strong and help us be faithful.

### **Application ideas**

- Ask your learners to tell about a time when the church helped them remain faithful to God.
- Ask your learners to consider the people in their church that are hurting or suffering and brainstorm how your group might “be the body of Christ” to those people—and thereby encourage them in their faithfulness to God.