

# faithful \ˈfāth-fəl\

adj.

## faithful .....

We use the word faith a lot. And we use it in lots of different ways. We can have faith, lose faith, be of the faith, need faith, be born into the faith, grow in our faith, discover faith, and be blessed because of our faith. As Christians, faith comprises an integral part of our beliefs. But how does faith become apart of who we are? A part of our actions? How do we become faithful? In the following weeks we will look at what it means to have faith, what it means to be faithful. We will look at examples from scripture at those who were and were not faithful, and discover how we can begin to live lives that truly are faithful.

## week 1: *steadfast* .....

Have you ever known someone courageously faithful? Someone who never backs down from challenge? No matter the odds, no matter the opposition, they always stand their ground. When circumstances are uncertain, when there is risk or doubt, how are they able to be more faithful to their cause or beliefs than so many others? Can this type of faithfulness be learned? This week we will look at a story of three people who were this kind of faithful and discover how we too can be faithful. Faithful even in the midst of peer pressure, ridicule, loneliness, uncertainty, pain, doubt and fear.

## scripture .....

All of Daniel 3

Hebrews 11:1

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

## questions .....

1. Do you ever struggle with faith?
2. What does faithful mean to you?
3. What is most difficult about being faithful?
4. Can you think of a time in your life that was in some way similar to the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?
5. What can you do to become more faithful this week?

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## week 2: *full of faith* .....

We like being comfortable. We like safe and simple. We like convenient. But what happens if to be faithful we have to move beyond those things? What if faithful means, uncomfortable, exposed, difficult and inconvenient? How do we respond when we are asked to offer up more than we have planned or prepared? This happened to someone a lot like most of us. He was smart, from a good home, and doing his best to live a life of faith, but it wasn't enough. This week we will look at our heart, our lives and the areas where our faith has room to grow.

## scripture .....

1 Corinthians 13:2

*If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

Mark 10:17-22

*As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.*

Hebrews 11:1

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

## questions .....

1. Can you relate to the story of the rich young ruler?
2. What would be most difficult for you to give up? Money, possessions, popularity, friends, family, looks, health?
3. Why do you think you value that so much?
4. Does Jesus ever ask us to sacrifice more than we want to, more than we are capable of?
5. Who do you have the hardest time sacrificing for?
6. If we loved like Jesus would there be any limit to our willingness to sacrifice?

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## week 3: *worthy of trust* .....

Have you ever trusted someone to keep a secret or a promise and they let you down? They told, or didn't come through, or ended up going back on what they said. That's a really crummy feeling, yet one many of us experience over and over. How often do we place our faith in someone or something that just can't deliver? Why do we set ourselves up like that? Imagine what would happen if we began to place our faith on the one thing we can always count on, God. How would our lives change? This week, we'll look at a story of a woman who was let down and failed by everyone and everything for 12 solid years! But once she made a decision to place her faith in God it was never the same.

## scripture .....

Mark 5:21-34

*When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."*

Matthew 5:13-16

*"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot. "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*

John 14:12

*Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*

## questions .....

1. Do you ever struggle with your faith?
2. What things or people do you put most of your faith in?
3. How often do these things let you down?
4. Can you think of a time where your life looked similar in some way to the story of the woman with the blood disease? What did you do?
5. Do you trust God? Is it completely? On a scale of 1 -10, how much faith do you have in God?
6. How would your actions change if you placed all your faith in God? Would your life look different?