

Group discussion Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”

Read II Timothy 2:11-13 aloud.

1. What does this text say about the character of God? What do we mean we say “God is faithful”?

How much does God’s faithfulness depend on us?

The two negative phrases (“If we disown... If we are faithless...”) state that God keeps his word, even if we choose to skip the blessings.

How did Jesus reflect the faithfulness of God in his John 17 prayer?

2. Many scholars believe this text was an early Christian hymn.
What songs do we sing that proclaim similar truths about God?
Great is thy Faithfulness, Faithful Love, O How He Loves you and me, Follow Me, In Christ Alone, How Firm a Foundation, A Mighty Fortress
Bring books or song sheets and sing some of them.

3. How do you feel when someone betrays your trust?

How might our feelings about betrayal reflect the image of God within us?

4. Read Hosea 1 aloud.
Skip this section if you do the marriage discussion below.

Why do you think God had Hosea marry the prostitute Gomer?

What does this story say about the faithfulness of God?

Special topic: Faithfulness and Marriage

If most people are married, use these questions to encourage strong marriages. Even with singles, this could be a valuable discussion.

What does it mean to be faithful to marriage vows?

- Does it mean you are never attracted to another person?
- Does it mean always acting in loving ways?

Philip Kenneson writes, “For Christians who have been called to embody in their own relationships a reflection of God’s other-directedness, faithfulness and unfaithfulness cannot be reduced to matters of sexuality. When I stood before God and the church and made my vows, I promised to do a great deal more than not sleep around. For starters, I pledged to love and cherish her.”

How does Kenneson’s definition of faithfulness in marriage go further than the common view? What do you think of this quote?

How do feelings of romance or closeness relate to faithfulness in marriage?

If faithfulness depended on warm feelings, no marriage would last.

How do warm feelings grow when we choose to remain with and love our spouse, even when he or she disappoints us?

What behaviors can we do on a daily basis to faithfully love and cherish our spouse?

In what ways can biblical teaching on faithfulness guide singles?

† **The million-dollar question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It’s okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

Make a list of 5 commitments affecting you this week.
Marriage, showing up for work, paying mortgage/rent, parenting, etc.

Which commitments are easier to honor, and which ones are more challenging?

As you compare the promises that are easy to keep to the ones that are more difficult, what is the difference?

Possibility: “I go to work and pay my bills because there are immediate consequences, but it won’t show for years if I neglect my kids.”

Other Resources

The point—God faithfully binds himself to people. Our faithfulness to God is shown when we faithfully and selflessly honor others. Our love for God motivates faithfulness to people he loves.

Prayer

- ✓ Ask God to bless married couples in your network (members, families, friends, etc.) with love and courage to selflessly honor and cherish their spouses on a daily basis.
- ✓ Pray for all of us to be faithful, just as God is faithful.
- ✓ Pray 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24:
May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Kid-friendly activity

An activity designed to help kids and adults connect the scripture to their lives. Works best when adults participate in the activity with the kids.

Read II Timothy 2:11-13 aloud

How would you re-state this passage in your own words?

Bring blank seven-day calendars, or ask each person to write the days of the week on a page.

Invite group members to commit to one simple task that they can do every day this week and write it on their page.

Examples: prayers, memorize a scripture or read the Bible, work on a personal goal, say thank you, do a household chore, etc.

Give each person 7 stickers to place on the chart as they complete the task each day.

You can find stickers in the teachers' workroom at church.

Offer a reward for people who bring back their completed chart to the next meeting (and make sure you follow through on the reward!).

Alternate activity: The "trust fall." Have the children stand on a table and fall backwards into the arms of the adults.



March 21, 2010

LIFE Group Guide

II Timothy 2 – Faithfulness

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Theme: Our faithfulness to God and to one another demonstrates the faithfulness of God to the world.

Psalm 100: 5 proclaims, "For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations." Philip Kenneson writes in *Life on the Vine*, "The Spirit's fruit of faithfulness has its roots in the very character of God. When we allow the Spirit to do its work in our lives, we do not simply become more human; we also become more like God, in whose image we were created. That image is slowly but most assuredly being restored by the work of Christ through his Spirit."

This discussion guide will invite participants to consider how the fruit of faithfulness functions in our lives.

Leadership tip: There are three segments of the meeting when you need to wear your "leader's hat."

- The gathering - begins the minute the first person arrives. Greet each person warmly and check how they are doing.
- The meeting, where you facilitate a discussion.
- The "meeting-after-the-meeting" may be the most important because people are relaxed and chatty. Snacks make this segment better.

All three parts are important opportunities to encourage spiritual growth.

I. Relate *Use a few of these to introduce the theme and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage individuals through these questions.*

- ❖ Who has a marriage that you admire? Why? How do they show their faithfulness to one another?
- ❖ Describe the most trustworthy person you have known in your life. Give an example that illustrates their trustworthiness.
- ❖ What does the movie *Liar, Liar* teach us about faithfulness?