

Mom2Mom 2.21.24
The Fruit of the Spirit
Faithfulness & Gentleness APPLICATION
TEACHER Notes

((Teacher, please prepare for this class by rereading Chapters 9-10 of the book *The Fruitful Life* by Jerry Bridges. This will allow you to elaborate on points of the lesson below as you are led by the Holy Spirit.))

((Last week's notes are here in grey for your reference. Teaching notes for this week are at the end of each fruit of the spirit section).))

I. Faithfulness (I & II - 10 minutes)

A. The Meaning of Faithfulness –

The virtue of faithfulness is so important, because it reflects such a vital part of God's character. In a world where very few people make promises to love and care for others more than themselves, God not only promises that but carries it out *without fail*.

Faithfulness is very expensive. Many people promise to be faithful, but few will be able to carry it out, especially when it gets costly. God's faithfulness cost him his only Son, Jesus Christ.

Faithfulness means "that which is firm and can be counted on."

Some of the words that are closely related to faithfulness are dependable, reliable, trustworthy, and loyal.

The word faithfulness often means absolute honesty and integrity. "The faithful person is one who is dependable, trustworthy, and loyal; who can be depended upon in all of his relationships; and who is absolutely honest and ethical in all of his affairs."¹

Webster's Dictionary defines faithfulness:

- as "having or showing true or constant support or loyalty;
- deserving trust;
- keeping your promises or
- doing what you are supposed to do."²

Often the words "corrupt" and "negligent" are contrasted with "faithfulness."³

B. Faithfulness – How It is Manifested in Our Lives

1. Absolute Honesty – Someone who is faithful will be known for always telling the truth. God is known for especially hating lying and dishonesty, and God's people are known for not only not lying, but also being free from deception in any form.

Prov 12:22 Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal faithfully are His delight.

Lev 19:11 'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.

¹ The Fruitful Life, by Jerry Bridges, page 130

² <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/faithfulness>

³ The Fruitful Life, by Jerry Bridges, page 131

“Lying has been defined as ‘any deceit: in word, act, attitude, or silence; in deliberate exaggerations, in distortions of the truth, or in creating false impressions.’⁴ Absolute honesty is often hardest in the smallest details of life. When we pay attention to telling the truth and being absolutely honest in even the smallest parts of life, we will have lots of practice telling the truth in even the great areas. Absolute honesty in all situations is so rare, especially in situations where honesty could cost a price.

Luke 16:10 “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

2. Utter Dependability –A big component of faithfulness is being reliable and dependable. Scripture tells us that an undependable person is lazy and causes exasperation and strong negative reaction. In our modern culture someone being dependable seems like a novelty, especially if following through on their commitment cost them personally.

Prov 10:26 Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy one to those who send him.

God views unfaithfulness as closely associated with disobedience. God wants us to be willing to keep our word and honor our commitments even when it hurts. God values those with integrity and those who live righteously *all* the time.

*Psalms 15:1-4 O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on our holy hill?
2He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart.
3He does not slander [with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend; 4In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the Lord; He swears to his own hurt and does not change;*

As we live faithfully, we are representing God’s dependability and absolute commitment to following through on all of his promises. The more we understand how much God follows through upon his promises *even to his hurt*, the more we will be willing to do the same.

3. Unswerving Loyalty – People who are loyal are known for being committed to sticking with their friends no matter what. True friendships in the Bible are known for their loyalty.

Prov 17:17 A friend loves at all times,

The Bible says that truly faithful and loyal friends are very hard to find. That is what makes finding a loyal, dependable friend so special.

Prov 20:6 Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?

Truly loyal friends will be faithful to the relationship even when problems need to be addressed and conflict needs to be solved. When you have a high view of

⁴ The Fruitful Life, by Jerry Bridges, quote from page 131

relationships, you will be willing to solve problems even if it means saying some hard things. Remember, however, they are always solved lovingly.

Prov 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

Eph 4:15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

II. **(click)** Biblical Faithfulness

A. **(click)** God's Faithfulness

1. We are utterly dependent on God's faithfulness:

- For our salvation (I Cor. 1:8-9)
- For deliverance from temptation (I Cor. 10:13)
- For ultimate sanctification (I Thess. 5:23)
- For the forgiveness of sins (I John 1:9)
- For deliverance through time of suffering (I Peter 4:19)
- For the fulfillment of our ultimate hope of eternal life (Heb. 10:23)

Indeed, the entire Bible provides examples of God's faithfulness in every book as an underlying theme.

Psalms 36:5 Your unfailing love, O Lord, is as vast as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds. (NLT)

2. Jesus' entire life is a testimony of perfect faithfulness. When Jesus was participating in his public ministry, he encouraged his enemies to investigate him to see if he found any sin in Him. If he had even distorted the truth once or told a fib, his enemies would have been able to accuse him of sin. As we grow in Christ-likeness, we will grow in faithfulness to such an extent that someone would not be able to find any deceit in us.

John 8:46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

B. **(click)** Examples of Faithfulness in Bible Narratives

1. **(click)** Daniel – developed convictions from the Scripture and was willing to do what was right and obedient to God even when it cost him position and safety. Daniel did not stop being loyal to God in order to be loyal to the King. He chose loyalty to God over loyalty to the King even though it meant a death sentence.

2. **(click)** Joseph – was loyal to his boss even when the boss's wife was trying to seduce Him. He was willing to obey God even though it cost him his career and could have cost him his life. He was also loyal to the Pharaoh even with enormous power allocated to him. He could have taken the power that Pharaoh gave him and used it to advance himself. However, he wielded his influence in a way that advanced the causes of his authorities and promoted the safety of the Egyptians during the famine.

((Click)) How do you apply this in your life?

- I can be the kind of person my friends can count on. If I say I will do something I will be faithful to do it.
- I can be committed to always telling the truth in all occasions.
- On occasions where the truth might be hard for someone to hear, I will temper my message with kindness and gentleness.
- I can show up on time for appointments because I am dependable.
- I can do what I commit to doing.
- I can be committed to not being negligent.
- I can grow in everyday faithfulness:
 - [Ordinary Faithfulness | Faith Ministries Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](#) JJP episode
 - [Everyday Faithfulness - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](#) book
 - [Faithfulness - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](#) booklet

((Click)) How do you help your family apply this?

- When our family needs to make decisions I will think through them carefully before saying yes to something to evaluate whether we can actually follow through to do the thing we are committing to.
- When we do commit to something we will carry it out, even to our own hurt.
- We can teach our children to be faithful friends.
 - [Browse by Topic - Children's Resources - Page 1 - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](#)
- We will never lie to the children, allow the children to lie, or in any way be a family that blurs the lines between truth and lies.
 - [Gwen Tells Tales - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](#)
- We can help our children think through decisions and then faithfully carry them out until the end of the commitment even if it is hard for them and they are tired of doing that thing.
- We can help our children to not be quitters.
- Our children can see our faithfulness by our commitment to our marriage.

((Click)) How does the way you apply this change across ages and stages of life?

Examples of possible applications:

- **Baby** - I can faithfully provide for my baby's needs and raise him/her to be able to depend on me.
- **Toddler** – I can expect my toddler to learn to be trustworthy and to tell the truth. When he/she lies I can discipline him/her biblically.

- **Early Elementary** – I can teach and expect my children to be dependable to their sports team, music teachers, coaches, and friends. If they sign up for an activity, I can expect them to finish it out.
- **Upper Elementary** – I can teach my children to not be quitters, especially when it gets hard or they face adversity.
- **Junior High School** – I can help my junior highers to be loyal to God through their friendships in youth group and expect them to be faithful to all of their friends by caring about what is righteous. I can expect that they will not choose friendships to one group over friendships to another group in ways that are cliquish and excluding.
- **High School** – I can expect my high schoolers to never cheat in school and to faithfully do all of their own classwork without using online tools to do it for or instead of them.
- **College** – I can celebrate when my college age kids are faithful in their dating relationships, and I can be available to help them think through dating difficulties and handle breakups in a way that demonstrates faithfulness, loyalty, and kindness even if it's clear that the relationship must end or change.
- **Adult children** – I can celebrate my adult children's faithfulness in their marriage by celebrating every one of their wedding anniversaries with excitement.

III. **10/10/11** Gentleness (III & IV 10 minutes)

A. **10/10/11** Meaning of Gentleness –

George Bethune, famous theologian from the 1800's said "Perhaps no grace is less prayed for, or less cultivated than gentleness. Indeed, it is considered rather as belonging to natural disposition or external manners, than as a Christian virtue; and seldom do we reflect that not to be gentle is sin."

Gentleness is an attribute of power, not timidity or cowardliness. Gentleness is an active trait where we seek to:

- deal sensitively and mildly with others,
- especially considering *their* feelings and reactions to our actions.

The dictionary defines gentleness as:

- "having a mild or kindly nature or character;
- soft or temperate;
- moderate."⁵

B. **10/10/11** Manifesting Gentleness

1. **10/10/11** Treating Others Gently – If we have made gentleness a personal trait, others will feel restful or at ease in our presence. Treating others gently requires containing our own strong opinions and dogmas so that we can be sensitive to others' opinions and ideas. Treating others gently also requires that we do not make our personal expressions of

⁵ <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/gentleness?s=t>

discipleship equivalent to doctrine and treat others poorly if they do not live out their faith with the same habits that we do. Treating others gently requires having genuine respect for the dignity of others, even if they do not live out their Christianity the way we do.

Col 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Treating other people gently may involve working hard to handle those with whom we disagree in a way that is not coercive or threatening. Sometimes our disagreements with people are based on personality conflicts, but sometimes our disagreements are based on wrong opinions or inappropriate understandings of fundamentally important truths. Even in situations when someone needs to be corrected, gentleness must be the foundation for resolving problems or settling disputes. When a brother in Christ is caught in a habit of sin, we are instructed to deal with him gently, carefully considering our own hearts lest we too be caught in sin. When we observe a brother or sister in Christ sinning or struggling, we are to look for ways to serve.

Gal 6:1-2 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. ²Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Matt 18:15-17 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Treating others gently will involve sensitive and respectful speech in both words and non-verbal deeds. We must speak in ways that show we are sensitive to the reactions they will have to our words and considerate about the way our conversations make them feel. If a believer must solve a problem in such a way that words hurt, they are quick and careful to bind up the wounds with biblical consolation and comfort, instructing when necessary, without belittling or degrading.

Heb 12:11-14 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. ¹²Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, ¹³and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. ¹⁴Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

2. **Thoughtful Consideration**

Several of the passages that instruct us about the overall trait of gentleness use words different than 'gentleness' to describe it. Those words include the general summary of being "considerate" to those around us or the need to consider the way our actions affect others. Some of the synonyms of consideration are: yielding, reasonableness, big-heartedness, and geniality. Consideration includes yielding our own desires and

subduing our own actions in order to better serve and love those around us. We consider them as more important than ourselves.

Phil 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Consideration of others includes not being so bound to the letter of the law that we are unable to extend grace in any circumstance. The Pharisees were known for being more concerned about *the law* than having concern for *the person* who was affected by that law. They were known for being rigid in the way that they dealt with others, but they were also lenient on themselves. They made allowances for their own failures but did not extend that grace to others. We are instructed to let our gentleness, not our sense of justice, be evident to all. We are repeatedly warned *not* to act like the hypocritical Pharisees.

Phil 4:5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.

Titus 3:2 Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, ²to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.

God's wisdom is full of gentleness and full of mercy. When we extend God's grace to others it is reasonable, which means "willing to yield." God's wisdom lived out in our lives makes us willing to acquiesce to others and treat them with the gentleness and mercy that Christ is known for.

James 3:17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

IV. **(click)** Examples of Gentleness:

(click) God – Isaiah 40

Isaiah 40's description of God shows us that gentleness is born out of power. Among the various depictions of God's powers, comes a beautiful verse that describes the gentle way God cares for his children.

God's Power:

v. 10 Behold, the Lord God will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him And His recompense before Him.

v. 15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust.

v. 25-26 "To whom then will you liken Me That I would be his equal?" says the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, Not one of them is missing.

Are you getting the idea? God is absolutely superior in strength and majesty, but in the middle of these exalting descriptions, verse 11 highlights **God's gentleness:**

Verse 11 Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.

God's gentleness is very eloquently described by King David in the Psalms, when he says that God *stooped down* to help him in his time of need. He sensitively and carefully cares for his children. His great power does not stop him from interacting with his children. In fact, he stoops down to serve them. He condescends to their level to protect.

Psalm 18:35 You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, And Your right hand upholds me; And Your gentleness (condescension) makes me great.

B. ((Click)) Jesus – the incarnate God (in human form)

Jesus was known for being particularly gentle, and the apostles encouraged Christians to follow his example and grow in that trait.

2 Cor 10:1 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ...

Jesus welcomed the weak and weary to himself, and he promised that he would be gentle and humble in heart toward them in such a way that they would find rest for their souls.

Matt 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Jesus is especially gentle with those who are hurting or who have little faith. Jesus does not condemn or cast out those who need him most. The people who need redemption received Christ's gentleness, not condemnation or berating them for demonstrating that they had a need.

Matt. 12:20 "A battered reed He will not break off, And a smoldering wick He will not put out, Until He leads justice to victory."

C. ((Click)) Paul –

In Paul's time as an apostle, he had many instances where he needed to deal with problems, solve conflict, and correct wrong beliefs. Paul was able to do those difficult things while exhibiting the gentleness of Christ, and he encouraged other believers to follow his example. He chose to compare his love for the Thessalonians to the gentle care of a nursing mother who tenderly cares for her children. He was tough on himself, but he was very gentle with others, even when they were caught in sin.

1 Thess. 2:7 But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

((Click)) How do you apply this in your life?

- I can ask my husband's opinion and yield to his desires in a considerate way.
- I can be willing to yield to other's preferences instead of fighting for things to go my way.
- I can be known for my mercifulness and gentleness.

- I can treat others gently even if I'm right and they're wrong.
- When I am in disagreement with someone else I can still be gentle, so even those who oppose me can be restful in my presence.
- I can treat other drivers with deference and think of their needs first.

((Click)) How do you help your family apply this?

- It is right for me to train my children to speak gently.
- It is right for me to speak to my children gently even if I am upset.
- My husband and I can be gentle and calm in our disagreements with each other.
 - [Help! I'm in a Conflict - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- My husband and I can correct our children with gentleness and kindness.
- We can teach our family to prefer others more than ourselves.
- We can expect our children to be courteous to each other.
- We can work to solve problems with our extended families as much as possible.
 - [Family Feuds - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)

((Click)) How does the way you apply this change across ages and stages of life?

Examples of possible applications:

- **Baby** - I can be gentle with my baby even when he/she is colicky and crying a lot.
- **Toddler** – I can expect my toddler to be able to learn to be gentle with others and to share with them.
- **Early Elementary** – I can train my early elementary children to ask other people what they prefer before they share their preferences.
 - [Tomas Looks Up and Out - Faith Resources \(faithlafayette.org\)](http://faithlafayette.org)
- **Upper Elementary** – I can expect my upper elementary children to be considerate of their classmates and not belittle them either in their presence or in their absence.
- **Junior High School** – I can teach my jr highers to solve problems gently instead of gossiping, slandering, or bullying.
- **High School** – I can help my highschoolers understand how to be gentle competitors in team sports and gracious winners/losers in sporting events.
- **College** – I can help my college age kids to know how to disagree with someone and stand up for truth without acting ugly, contentious, or inflammatory.
- **Adult children** – I can lovingly encourage my adult children to be gentle with their children when correcting them and can model that with my grandkids.

((click)) Optional Memory Verse: *James 3:17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, **gentle**, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, **unwavering**, without hypocrisy.*

((click)) Table Discussion Questions (** is also a Large Group Discussion Question)

1. ** How would you like to grow in personal application of Faithfulness and Gentleness?
2. How do you think you might need to help your family grow in application of this topic?

3. ** How do you see the application of this topic affecting your children at their current age/stage?

(click) Reading Discussion Questions

Discuss the questions on [Worksheet #6](#), which was assigned last week. [A helpful resource](#) including the passage discussed in this worksheet as well as some commentary was published on www.faithlafayette.org/mom2mommember.

Table Time Prayer Request Question:

In what specific ways can we ask Jesus to help you grow in Faithfulness and Gentleness this week?

((click)) Large Group Discussion Question

Table time discussion questions 1 and 3 will be used for large group discussion.