

Youth group @ Home

Sunday 31th May 2020

Christian Character – Session 7: Goodness

Good morning and welcome to session 7 of Youth Group @ Home. Each week we are going to look at a different element of what builds Christian character. Last week we looked at being Kind, this week we are going to explore how we can grow our goodness. Why not go through today's session with family or friends? You could always Zoom call some friends and go through the activities together.

Activity

Here is a little quiz for a bit of fun to start the session.

1. What is one of God's most central characteristics?
 - a. His wrath
 - b. His Goodness
 - c. His correction
 - d. His prophets
2. When Moses threw his staff on the ground in front of Pharaoh what did it turn into?
 - a. Lion
 - b. Worm
 - c. Snake
 - d. Lizard
3. The Bible is the most popular book ever written?
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. How many books are in the Bible?
 - a. 56
 - b. 66
 - c. 76
5. How many days and nights did it rain for while Noah was in the ark?
 - a. 35
 - b. 40
 - c. 45
 - d. 50
6. How many brothers did Joseph (with the technicolour coat) have?
 - a. 9
 - b. 10
 - c. 11

Think

Grab a piece of paper and a pen and answer the following questions:

1. How many different mobile phones have you had?
2. How many favourite sports personalities or bands have you had?
3. How many boyfriends or girlfriends have you had?
4. How many best friends have you had?

Now go through these 4 questions again and for each category rate yourself on how faithful you think you are to each thing. A score of 1 would be hardly faithful at all, whereas a score of 10 in this instance is a top score of 100% faithful. So ...

1. How faithful are you to mobile phones?
2. How faithful are you with regards to sports personalities or bands that you support?
3. How faithful are you in the area of boyfriends and girlfriends?
4. How faithful are you towards your best friends?

How would you define 'faithfulness' to someone who had never heard the word before?
In what areas of life can people be faithful?

Bible Study

Today we're going to be looking at Daniel – a man who remained faithful to God in very difficult circumstances so grab your bible or your phone to look up the verses in a bit. A bit of background to the story of Daniel:

Daniel, a young Jew and a follower of God, was taken captive by the Babylonian regime when they fought and conquered Israel. He, and his friends, were chosen to work for the King because they were healthy, good looking and bright. Throughout the rest of their lives they were forced to try and live out their faith as part of a regime that opposed their God.

While we look at the passages below:

- Daniel 1: 8-21
- Daniel 6: 1-11 and 16-23

Think about the following questions:

- In what ways was Daniel faithful to God?
- What risks did Daniel take by being faithful?
- Why do you think he took those risks?
- What was the outcome of Daniel's faithfulness?

Think

I wonder what comes into your mind when you hear the word 'faithfulness'? Have a think for a moment... maybe a friend, a parent or even a beloved pet! Those who are faithful to us

offer us love and acceptance at all times, no matter how 'unlovable' we are. They keep their promises to us, doing what they say they will. Faithful people can be relied on to 'be there' when we most need them. What would we do without those people?! God calls us to develop faithfulness as part of our character (have a look at Galatians 5:22). In doing so we not only learn much more about what it is to be in a godly relationship with those around us, but we also grow to reflect our Father God more and more. God is the ultimate example of faithfulness. The notes from the Life Application Bible put it like this:

"God's faithfulness is like human faithfulness, only more so. His love is absolute, and his promises irrevocable. He loves us in spite of our constant tendency to sin, and he keeps all the promises he has made to us, even when we break our promises to him."

How brilliant is that?! No wonder so many of our worship songs and great hymns choose to celebrate God's faithfulness – it is the foundation of our understanding of His character. Because God is faithful we can trust what he says, put our hope in his promises, lose our fear of abandonment and know that his love will never waver. We can praise God because his "faithfulness reaches to the skies" (Psalm 36:5).

When we begin to think about God's faithfulness it not only causes us to worship him, but it also poses a huge challenge to us. Those amazing traits we see in the Father are the very ones we should be developing in our own character! Have another look at the quote above; can you imagine if people were saying that kind of thing about you?

And, it's not always easy to remain faithful, particularly when we have been let down ourselves. Some of us will need to take time to heal from and forgive the failures of others to be faithful to us. Others may have to seek help to address their struggle to remain faithful in their marriage. And there will be people reading this who need to ask God for a new burst of strength and passion (If that fits you have a look at Isaiah 40:28-31). However, by leaning on God and reaching out to the wise and godly people around us, we can be faithful people. And you'll find that as you take opportunities to exercise faithfulness, it will grow as part of your character.

Think of the difference all this faithfulness would make to the people in our communities. Faithful marriages, faithful friendship and faithful followers of God are becoming rarer and rarer. Wouldn't it be great if we could model God's way of doing relationships to the people around us?

Proverbs 18: 24 says 'One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.' Can you think of one thing you could do this week to be a faithful friend?

Remember

Here are some key points for you to remember:

- 1) The characteristic of faithfulness is being loyal, not easily swayed or pulled away, sticking with someone through all sorts of circumstances, keeping promises.

- 2) Looking at Daniel's example of faithfulness to God, he was told several times that he was told he must worship the king but he held steadfast to his love for God and would not compromise putting God before all else in his life. He knew the risk, he was thrown into the lion's den but he showed he also trusted God to always protect him no matter what.
- 3) The fruitfulness of God is not just about being faithful to God but to those people around us in our lives. So making sure that we are loyal and keep our promises in our everyday lives to people we meet is just as important to God.

Prayers

Spend a minute thinking of people who perhaps you think feel like they have been let down by the lack of faithful people around them.

Now think of any times in your own life when you want to experience Faithfulness.

As we come to the end of our session, let's take some time to pray for everyone we know who is in a difficult situation currently.

Let's ask God to help us to grow closer to him to experience his faithfulness in our own lives.

Dear God,

We thank you that you give us these gifts of the spirit and work within us to mould us, as we grow closer to you, to be more like you.

We pray for those who we know who are struggling at the moment, who could do with experiencing your faithfulness in their lives, help them to experience how great and boundless your faithfulness is.. (name a couple of people you know personally)

We pray for those struggling at this time, who perhaps are experiencing difficulties in their own lives, help them to feel your peace and reassurance.

We pray for people who feel let down by times when they feel like we haven't been as faithful to them as we should have been (you may want to pray for a specific situation) Please help them to forgive us, and please help us to be forgiving to those who we feel haven't been loyal to us when we needed them, help us not to hold grudges and treat everyone kindly regardless of any history we have with them.

We pray for the situations in our lives at the moment where we feel under pressure, help us to stay positive and to know that your faithfulness is limitless (You could talk to God about your own personal situations).

Please God, lead us and guide us. Help us to remember that you are always with us and love us no matter what.

Amen.

Remember, you can pray anytime – day or night – God is always listening to you and He loves to hear your voice.

We really hope you enjoyed this session (if you managed to stay away from that sweet, well done, you may eat it now!). If you have questions you want to ask, or want to request a certain topic for a future session, you can email me: Freya@Bedhampton.Church.