

How can I learn to trust in the faithfulness of God?

Many places in Scripture extol the faithfulness of God. Lamentations 3:22–23 says, “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” So, what is faithfulness?

The Hebrew word translated “faithfulness” means “steadfastness, firmness, fidelity.” The opposite of being faithful is to be ever-changing or wishy-washy. Psalms 119:89–90 says, “Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations.” Here faithfulness is equated with God’s Word. God speaks never-ending truth. If God spoke something a thousand years ago, it still stands. He is faithful to His Word, because His Word is an expression of His character. The promises He made still hold true because He does not change (Malachi 3:6). We see this illustrated from a human perspective in a couple married for many years. When the wife lies on her deathbed, her husband sits nearby holding her hand. He won’t leave her, even though she no longer recognizes him. He is faithful to the promises he made to her. In the same way, God remains faithful to His promises, even though we are often unfaithful to Him (2 Timothy 2:13).

We learn to trust the character of a person by getting to know that person. We would not entrust our bank account to a stranger we met in line at the post office—we have no experience with him. We don’t know his character. Before we know God, we are afraid to trust Him. We don’t yet know who He is or what He may do. We learn to trust God by getting to know His character. There are three ways we can get to know Him: studying His Word, reviewing His working in our own lives, and learning to follow His voice.

When we study God’s Word, a pattern emerges. We learn that God never changes and never lies (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29). We learn through Scripture that God has never failed in the past (Isaiah 51:6). He was always true to His Word as He worked in the lives of the ancient Israelites. When He said He would do something, He did it (Numbers 11:23; Matthew 24:35). We begin to build trust upon His proven character. We can trust that God will be true to Himself. He will never cease acting like God. He will never cease being sovereign, being holy, or being good (1 Timothy 6:15; 1 Peter 1:16).

We learn through our own history that He has never failed us, either. One command God often gave the Israelites was: “Remember” (Deuteronomy 8:2; Isaiah 46:9). When they remembered all God had done for them, they could more easily trust Him for the future. We need to intentionally remember all the ways God has provided for us and delivered us in the past. Keeping a prayer journal can help with this. When we recall the ways God has answered our prayers, it equips us to continue asking and expecting answers. When we come to Him in prayer, we know that He always hears us (1 John 5:14; Psalms 34:15). He provides what we need (Philippians 4:19). And He will always make everything work together for our good when we trust Him with it (Romans 8:28). We learn to trust God’s future faithfulness by remembering His past faithfulness.

And we can also learn to trust Him by learning to distinguish His voice from the others that compete for attention. Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice; I know them and they follow me” (John 10:27). We who belong to Jesus need to cultivate the ability to hear Him. He speaks primarily through His Word, but He can also speak through other people, through circumstances, and through the inner confirmation of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16). As we carefully read and meditate upon Scripture, the Holy Spirit often quickens our hearts to a verse or passage and helps us claim it and apply it to our current situation. What the Spirit shows us in His Word is to be taken by faith as His message to us. We build trust by claiming His promises and applying them to our lives.

Above all things, God loves for us to demonstrate faith (Hebrews 11:6). Faith is trusting in the character of God before we see how He is going to work things out. He has given us His Word, and His promises still stand. As we see the ways He brings His promises to fulfillment, our trust in His faithfulness grows. Just as our trust in other people grows with daily interaction, our trust in God grows the same way. We trust Him when we know Him, and to know Him is to trust Him. When we know Him, we can rest in His goodness, even when we don’t understand the circumstances that seem to contradict it. We can trust that God’s plan for us will prevail (Proverbs 19:21). As a child trusts a loving father, we can trust our heavenly Father to always do what is right. *From GotQuestions.org*