



Family Values

Virtue Realities

Dependability

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The whereabouts of the other disciples is not known, but one of the twelve was present at the crucifixion. Standing next to Jesus' mother near the cross is John, the disciple Jesus loved. Jesus turns to his mother and says, "*Woman, here is your son.*" He then tells John, "*Here is your mother.*" From that moment on, "*the disciple took her into his own home.*" (John 19:26-27) John was reliable and dependable. He could be counted on to be there during difficult times. He was faithful and loyal, a trusted friend. Clearly John held a very special place in Jesus' heart. Much of it may have been because of his dependability.

The ultimate source of dependability is God. It is part of God's nature as expressed in the covenant relationship with Abraham. He promises: "*I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.*" (Genesis 17:7) God is faithful and will always be there. God can be counted on to follow through on the agreement. It is this same God who assures Joshua when he takes over after Moses' death, "*I will not fail you or forsake you.*" (Joshua 1:5) There is no question that God is dependable, which the Psalmist reminds us in the refrain: "*for his steadfast love endures forever.*" (Psalm 136)

This same attribute is applied to Jesus when the writer to the Hebrews states, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*" (Hebrews 13:8) Jesus points out his connection to the Father when he cries aloud to a disbelieving crowd, "*Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.*" (John 12:45,46) His loyalty and faithfulness is also evidenced in the Garden of Gethsemane when he prays, "*My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.*" (Matthew 26:39) He relies on God's will and follows through until "*It is finished.*" (John 19:30) The end result is that death loses its sting and we are made right with God - all because of the enduring dependability of a loving Father and a trustworthy Son.

We access these gifts through faith. Just as God through Christ is dependable, so also is dependability expected of us. Paul sums it up for the Corinthians when he writes, "*Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast,*

immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." (1 Cor. 15:58) Paul describes himself and his fellow missionaries "*as servants of Christ and as stewards of God's mysteries.*" He adds, "*Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.*" (1 Cor. 4:1,2) Dependability is a mark of discipleship and includes accountability. It gives credibility to our witness as followers of Christ for we recognize that "*each of us will be accountable to God.*" (Rom. 14:12)

Interestingly enough, dependability and accountability are not always valued in the church. For example, members sometimes do not follow through on their commitments. People will skip meetings, come late or leave early even though they have accepted a leadership role in the congregation. When meetings consistently start late, people continually digress from the topic at hand and the members default to the faithful few to get the job done, the congregation may have a dependability deficiency. The following is a fitting reminder: "*Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and of people.*" (Proverbs 3:3-4)

The following are ways to practice dependability:

- 1. Follow through on your commitments.** Be someone people can depend on. Be on time. Be responsible.
- 2. Admit mistakes and make amends.** When you fail to follow through, own your mistake and resolve not to repeat it.
- 3. If your heart is not in it, don't agree to it.** Avoid giving people false hopes and committing to something you don't want to do.
- 4. Hold others accountable.** Expect others to be faithful to their word and hold them to it.
- 5. Depend on God.** Ask God to help you grow in reliability and faithfulness.

Affirmation: I am trustworthy!

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