**Faithfulness**

Text: 2 Chronicles 2:1-30

1. Use your imagination to fill in the details of the passage. Now describe what you see (the setting, the mood, the people and so on) in verses 1-13.

In verses 14-19.

In verses 20-30.

2. Imagine yourself as one of the Israelites in verses 3-4. What are you feeling?

3. Examine Jehoshaphat’s prayer (vv. 6-12). On what basis does he appeal to God for help?

4. How would Jehoshaphat’s view of God encourage him and the people to trust God in this crisis?

5. Now consider God’s response to Jehoshaphat’s prayer (vv. 14-17). How would the prophet’s words have required faith from the people?

6. What evidence is there that the people believed his message (vv. 18-21)?

7. Have you ever praised God in the middle of a problem—before an answer came? Explain why or why not.

8. How would you have felt as you “came to the place that overlooks the desert and looked toward the vast army” (v. 24)?

9. Describe the effects God’s faithfulness had on the people (vv. 25-30).

10. What can we learn about faithfulness from the example of Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah in this passage?

11. How can an awareness of God’s faithfulness to us impact the way we treat others?

*Spend time thanking God for his faithfulness to you in the past. Praise him for his present involvement in your life. Ask him to help you grow in faithfulness to him and others.*

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obtain ultimate knowledge, reality, and truth. In the Christian age, it is still common to refer to the conflict between “flesh and spirit.” To Christians, the act of fasting is an attempt to overcome the desires of the flesh by concentrating on spiritual matters through abstinence and prayer.

But it is not the human body that Paul refers to as the source of temptation and sin. It is true that Paul speaks of the body as a danger to the spirit of man. He refers to the sinful body (Rom. 6:6) and he says that the deeds of the body must be put to death (Rom. 8:13). But Paul never says that the body itself is evil. In fact, he declares that the body can be used to glorify God (1 Cor. 6:20; Phil. 1:20) and that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). To Paul, the body is neutral, and its use is determined by whether it is controlled by a good or evil force.

A fair examination of Paul’s teaching in Galatians 5:19-21 indicates that the “flesh” he refers to is not the human body at all. Instead, it is the result of what some people allow themselves to become instead of what God intended for them to be. The “flesh” is in effect human nature that has been corrupted by sin and is inclined not only to fleshly lust but also to self-righteousness, pride, envy, and every other thought and act that separates a person from the holiness of God.

The desires that people feel in their bodies are really in their minds. The body itself cannot desire, hate, or love and is not responsible for these emotions or any other. As Paul puts it, “…put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph. 4:22-24). Few, if any, become completely free from the desires of the flesh, but the battle against the flesh can never be won without a renewed mind.

The Result of Walking According to the Flesh: Separation from God and Spiritual Death

Human beings are distinguished from other living creatures in one important way: the human mind can imagine God and seek communion with Him, but animals cannot do this. Because God is eternal, human beings ought to seek to be united with Him eternally. However, this eternal union depends on obedience to God in this life, and most people will not obey. For them, the result of disobedience is separation from God and eternal condemnation. Paul tells the Galatians directly: "Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:7-8).

Paul’s View of the Spirit

When Paul examined the behavior of people and observed the conflicts that

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