

When God's Faithfulness Seems Unfaithful to You

I realized recently just how completely ironic my life is. One of the things I disliked the most as a young person was writing, and now I spend a good portion of my day writing for magazines and websites. Now, I am working on my eighth and ninth books.

I also am what would be described as an introvert. As a child, with four brothers and three sisters, I would grab a book and hide in my closet to read and be alone. I much prefer small, intimate conversation to large crowds and yet, I spend much of my life either in the middle of or in front of crowds of people.

While I have been blessed to speak before crowds made up of thousands of people, my favorite times are not standing before crowds. My favorite times are when I can sit down in a small group (usually over coffee) and just talk with people. It is in these small, intimate gatherings that people open up with each other, and some real, powerful ministry and teaching takes place.

It was in one of these coffee gatherings that one of my younger friends asked me a very important question. "I am faithful to my family and faithful to my congregations. I pray and study and serve in several ways in my synagogue. I work hard on my job. What I don't understand is if I am as faithful as I am, why do I have so little? In other words, why does it seem to me that I have been faithful, but G-D has not?"

This person had opened their heart. They were feeling let down and left out.

I could have answered this person as others might have by saying, "Your question provides the answer to your question.

You are spiritually immature, and if you are only being faithful so that G-D will give you things, then you are being faithful to you and not to G-D."

That would have been an easy answer and one that many would have given. It would have been quick and surgical. But, a surgical strike, while quick and easy, is rarely the correct response to real heartfelt questions like this one.

This is how I answered him:

"First, I want to commend you for both being faithful to your family and synagogue. Second, I want to thank you for being honest about how you are feeling because you are not alone in feeling this way. However, let me ask you to look at this situation from a different vantage point.

"I believe that G-D's response to your faithfulness has been His being faithful to you. What you may not be understanding is that G-D can be just as faithful by not giving you something as He can be by giving you something."

Then I asked him to take a look at Deuteronomy 7:22 (TLV): "Adonai your God will drive away those nations before you little by little—you will not be able to put an end to them all at once, or else the beasts of the field will multiply on you."

I continued, "First, notice that this section of Scripture in Chapter 7 is all about how G-D is going to bless the children of Israel for their faithfulness to him. Then, we come to verse 22, where G-D says that He will give the land to Israel little by little so that the beasts of the field will not multiply on them.

Because G-D is faithful, He didn't just give the children of Israel everything at once. No. Because He is faithful, He purposely didn't give them too much too fast." I told him, and those sitting around the table, "Sometimes G-D shows His

faithfulness in response to our faithfulness by not giving us things we deserve until we are prepared to handle them.”

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