

bless

- * ♦ Say these words while making the sign of the cross on one another's foreheads:
"May you "befriend" FAITHFULNESS and grow to be known to all as someone who is safe, and trustworthy. In Jesus' name. Amen"

action

- ♦ Every morning this week pray, "God, show me how I can put FAITHFULNESS into ACTION today?"
- * ♦ Keep a list of ways you experience and express FAITHFULNESS this week.
- ♦ Notice what keeps you from being true to your word, or where your promises and actions don't match up.

* WEEK 5 MEMORY VERSE

*"For your steadfast love is before my eyes,
and I walk in faithfulness to you." Psalm 26:3*

40DAYS commitments

1. HEAR all messages in the Action series
2. READ the daily Bible verses
3. CONNECT in a small group
4. REMEMBER the weekly memory verse
5. SERVE on Impact Weekend Nov 6-7
6. PRAY we are all moved to ACTION to deploy the Fruit of the Spirit into the world
7. SHARE at least one characteristic of the Fruit of Spirit each day

* daily Bible readings

Try reading the passages in the translations suggested (biblegateway.com) Conclude each reading with, "Please, God, help me put FAITHFULNESS into ACTION."

1. Psalm 37:3 (ESV)
2. Hosea 6:6a (NET)
3. 1 Timothy 4:12 (NET)
4. Psalm 32:10 (NET)
5. Hebrews 10:23 (AMP)
6. Proverbs 3:3 (NIV)
7. Lamentations 3:23 (TLB)

*40DAYS of ACTION materials developed by Deborah Heierman,
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* "When faithfulness is most difficult, it is most necessary."

share

- * ♦ When did you experience KINDNESS and GENEROSITY last week? How were you able to share this Fruit of the Spirit with others?
- ♦ Were you able to see your interruptions this week as opportunities for KINDNESS and GENEROSITY? If so, how?

read

- ♦ This week, our attention is on FAITHFULNESS as a characteristic of the Fruit of the Spirit. When we (and the Bible) describe someone as "faithful," we're almost never talking about how much faith someone has, but rather, how much faith both God, and others, can place in that person—how much that person can be trusted. Faithful people keep (they cherish, maintain, and guard) the faith of those who trust in them. Growing in FAITHFULNESS proves to the world that God, and God's people, can be trusted. In this time, when so many are feeling desperate, hopeless, and insecure, could anything be more worthy of our energy and commitment?
- * ♦ We all know that strength is developed through exercise. If you want to grow strong muscles in your body, or in your mind, you must start by exercising the muscles you have. You must push against both internal and external resistance, over and over again. You must endure the discomfort of your current limited capacity and persevere—until your discomfort decreases and your capacity increases. This transition takes time, and if you want results, you can't give in to the part of yourself that will offer all kinds of reasons for why you should just give up.

We all like the idea of building stronger, healthier bodies, but may wince at even the thought of all that work. Likewise, we all like the idea of growing our skills, and getting better at the things we do well, but that means practicing and studying, doesn't it? In the same manner, growing in the Fruit of the Spirit, particularly growing in FAITHFULNESS, requires something of us.

In Psalm 37:3 (ESV), David says that "something" is three things,

"Trust in the Lord and do good, dwell in the land, and befriend faithfulness."

talk

- ♦ #1—**Trust in the Lord and do good.** We must trust in the only One who has always been, and will always be, faithful—the One who has always been, and will always be, good.

Why is this vital to our growing in FAITHFULNESS? Could we bear the fruit of FAITHFULNESS on our own? Why or why not?

- ♦ #2—**Dwell in the land.** We don't need a special FAITHFULNESS gym membership to begin to grow our capacity for FAITHFULNESS. We have everything we need, to train and to practice with, right in front of us—in the land (place, situation, home) in which we live.

Look around you. Opportunities abound—even if they may seem small or insignificant at first glance. Remember, Jesus tells us in Luke 16:10 (ICB),

- * **"Whoever can be trusted with small things can also be trusted with large things. Whoever is dishonest in little things will be dishonest in large things too."**

When have you experienced the truth in these words?

What "little things" in your life might God be using to grow your FAITHFULNESS now, perhaps preparing you to assume greater responsibility?

- ♦ #3—**Befriend faithfulness.** Read Paul's reflection on Abraham's "befriending faithfulness" in Romans 4:13, 20 (NLT)

"Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith... Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God."

What would it look like for you to "befriend faithfulness?"

pray

- * ♦ Pray for each other, that you will see where you need to become more trustworthy in order to grow in FAITHFULNESS—to help others see that they can trust you, and God.
- ♦ Pray for the empty chair in your group to be filled.