



**1. Faithfulness (not perfection) is what Christ has always required to receive and remain in a saving relationship w/Him.**

(IOW): to receive Christ as Savior, a person must vow faithful (not perfect) obedience to Him as Lord (LBS). Once they have gained that saving relationship (thru baptism – 1Pe 3:21), they must (then) fulfill their former vow by living in faithful (not perfect) obedience to Christ if they hope to maintain it and its promises. This is true under the New Covenant just as it was under the previous covenants (e.g. Old Covenant). The mechanics of salvation have remained the same (**Deu 28:1-2 w/Mat 19:16-17**).

**2. Other ways Scripture identifies faithfulness or people who have been faithfully obedient:** they are called the righteous, or practicing righteousness, are blameless, without blemish, holy, godly; they are considered those who fear the Lord, love God, are humble, are repentant, continue to bear fruit, possess a clear/good conscience.

**3. That salvation requires faithfulness is completely reasonable given that it does not negate faith in Christ (since our faith in Christ includes/implies faithfulness); nor does it mean we are earning our way to heaven (since our salvation is a marriage covenant w/Christ). Instead, what this requirement of faithfulness does mean is that our initial justification (by faith) is not enough and that God (having also required faithfulness), has supplied us (in His Word) with the knowledge necessary to both acquiring it as well as assessing whether we already possess it (“pistos” [Grk. = faith/faithfulness]; Rom 2:13 w/Jam 2:24; As it re: to our initial justification by faith including the obligation of faithfulness consider also Exo 12:1-27 w/13:8-9 w/1Co 5:7).**

**4. Obedience to God’s Word must be what characterizes our covenant life if our obedience is to be recognized by God as faithful<sup>1</sup>.**

Obedience therefore that happens rarely, sporadically, only some of the time, only half the time, only when things are good or easy, never (or again rarely) in relation to certain circumstances or with certain people is not what God considers faithful. The same can be said about bearing fruit. Unless such fruit exists as the evidence of a life characterized by obedience, then it is of no value. It must then be fruit that is consistent or filling the whole of our Christian life if it is to be eternally profitable (Phi 1:10-11).

**5. The obedience that characterizes our covenant life must also possess certain attributes if it is to be recognized by God as faithful. Or put another way, it is our commitment to these attributes that is the key to achieving the faithfulness God requires in our obedience.**

**5.1. Careful** [Question being addressed: Can I take risks and be sloppy in my practice of God’s Word and still be considered faithful? *No, you must be careful in both your lifestyle and obedience.*]

**(Deu 28:1b) – “If you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments”**

Being careful (שמר)[shamar]: 1) being cautious to watch, protect, or guard against risky/questionable persons, places, or things // 2) being mindful to keep the minor details or practice precision/strict observance in re: to God’s commands.

**5.2. Comprehensive** [Question being addressed = Can I be selective in what I choose to faithfully obey as commandments necessary to salvation? *No, you must be comprehensive in submission to God’s Word.*]

**(Deu 28:1b) – “If you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments”**

“do all his commandments”: [1] Every word God spoke for the purpose of being written down (i.e. the “revealed” word of God), [2] God expects His people to determine its authoritative instruction (i.e. determine God’s command to them through it) [3] and begin practicing (i.e. conforming their lives to) the moment such instruction is revealed to them. [4] Nothing God says is ever to be rejected, treated as outdated or optional but instead seen as absolutely necessary to their salvation. [5] This includes didactic as well as non-didactic revelation (e.g. narrative portions of Scripture). It is this attribute of comprehensiveness that keeps faithful obedience from becoming a crafty form of compromise (i.e. selective faithfulness/obedience).

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<sup>1</sup> Characterize = the behavior that most occurs, is the typical or predominate pattern of your life since becoming a Christian. If you are not sure, then ask those who know you best and will be honest with you.

### 5.2.1. Support:

[1] “Every word...written down” (Deu 12:32 w/Deu 29:29 w/Deu 28:58, 29:21 and 30:10 w/Exo 19:1-8 w/24:1-8 – Notice it is only after God’s Word is memorialized that the people are bound in covenant; 2Ti 3:15-16 – Notice it is the “sacred writings” or “Scripture” that Paul identifies as the words of God to be taught as commandment – i.e. as that which brings “reproof...correction...training in righteousness”; for further consideration see Rom 5:12-13).

[2] “determine its authoritative instruction” (Rom 15:4).

[3] “begin practicing the moment (it) is revealed” (2Co 6:1-2; e.g. Act 19:11-20).

[4] Nothing...to be rejected, treated as outdated or optional but ...necessary to salvation” (Num 15:30-31; Deu 29:18-20; Psa 119:152, 160 w/Mat 5:17-18 and Luk 16:16-17 w/Mat 23:23 // Lev 20:22-23, 26:14-31 – Notice, the sacrifices [for forgiveness of sins/justification] are contingent on obedience to *all these commandments*”; Deu 5:33, 6:24-25, 11:26-32, 12:28, 27:1-10 – Notice, it is only after *all* God’s words have been memorialized [“plainly”] and committed to that the second generation are considered God’s people and receive His peace [i.e. make “peace offerings”], 28:15, 58-59, 30:8, 15-20, 31:12, 32:45-47; Jos 1:7-8, 8:33-35, 22:5, 23:6; 2Ch 34:21; Jer 7:22-23; again 2Ti 3:15-16 – Notice it is “all Scripture” which is considered the “sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation”; Consider also Mat 5:19-20; Jam 2:8-11; Heb 10:26).

[5] Includes...non-didactic revelation (e.g. narrative portions of Scripture) (Gen 1:27 w/Gen 2:24 w/Mat 19:1-6; 1Co 10:11; In this light consider - Judg 19-20).

[6] “comprehensiveness keeps faithful obedience from becoming a crafty form of compromise (i.e. selective faithfulness/obedience)” (e.g. Mat 23:1-3 w/23-24).

5.2.2. How being comprehensive as Christians today differs from those in the Old Testament = God’s written words now include the New Testament as recognized by the apostles/early church (e.g. 2Pe 3:15-16; Athanasius’ Easter letter [367 A.D.]).

5.2.3 Why we can be confident there are no more written words of God that we need to observe as part of being comprehensive: 1) B/C the NT speaks of a time when the canon (God’s written words) was completed meaning no more words (of God) were given (1Co 13:8-10). The early church confirmed the canon to be closed in the 27 books of the NT - or the total 66 books of the Protestant Bible (e.g. Augustine, Councils of Carthage [397 and 419 A.D.]).

5.2.4. Why God demands comprehensiveness in relation to His commandments: 1) each are essential = none are insignificant or extra; everything is instead essential to the truth and faithfulness (Psa 119:160; e.g. Mat 19:16-21); 2) they are indivisible = they stand or fall together (Jam 2:8-11) – Hence the reason everyone who refuses to observe any of God’s commands is an antinomian (though they refuse the term); 3) together they accomplish love = it is only when we take a comprehensive approach to God’s Word and our obedience that we are loving God w/all our heart and people as ourselves (Mat 22:36-37; Rom 13:8-10; Jam 2:8-9).

5.2.5. Why we are not guilty of being selective in our faithfulness to God’s Word though as Christians we forego practicing circumcision, blood sacrifices, kosher laws and Sabbaths (i.e. the clean laws) = B/C we *do* practice those laws thru our faith in Christ Who is our circumcision, Sabbaths, passover and yom kippur [incl. kosher sacrifice – Lev 16:16] (Col 2:11; Heb 4:3; 1Co 5:7; Heb 10:12-14). Hence the reason Paul says what he does in (Rom 3:31 and Gal 4:10-11, 5:1-2).

5.2.6. Examples of areas that we at Christ Covenant Church could neglect and so doing fail to meet God requirements for a faithful obedience that is comprehensive: our obligations in the home, in the workplace, to our brother and sisters (e.g. Jam 5:19-20); our tithe; our finances; our time; what we think; our words; stress and how we respond to it. Jesus teaches these things as one of the reasons – not excuses, for Christians ultimately losing their salvation and going to Hell (Mat 13:22).

**Closing contemplation [a sneak peek ahead]:** Jesus teaches what we must do to avoid becoming those guilty of not being careful or comprehensive in our faithfulness (Mat 18:7-9).

**Closing question:** What “extreme” things are you doing to make sure that you can be - *and will remain* –careful and comprehensive in your faithfulness to God?