

# MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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Honoring Your Word

Dear Friend,

I'd like to begin by giving you a list of descriptive words for you to consider. The words are: loyal, honorable, trustworthy, unchanging, honest, committed. My first question is this; do these words describe you? If you answered yes, then you should have no problem taking God at His word. The problem is, far too many Christians cannot answer yes because they still think and act too much like the rest of the world. Their word means nothing and consequently they struggle at taking God at His word.

I remember 30 years ago, just after receiving Jesus as my Lord, listening to a preacher talk about why it was that Christians have such a difficult time taking God at His word. It would seem that believing someone who is in fact: honorable, honest, true, trustworthy, loyal, and committed, should be easy to do. The opinion of that preacher was that the reason we can't believe God and take Him at His word is because our word is no good. I've concluded that if his statement was true 30 years ago, just think how much worse things must be today.

I believe society admires honorable, trustworthy people, but because these qualities are so rare we have come to accept that no one can be this way all the time and in every circumstance. In other words, we believe in varying degrees of honesty and integrity based on the potential cost to the individual. We give a person a pass for shading the truth if it means that they save themselves a ton of money or jail time or their marriage or their job. It seems to me that we almost expect the person to lie in these circumstances rather than be honest no matter the cost.

It only stands to reason that by lowering our standards and making excuses for disloyalty and downright lying to save our own skin that we have done a huge disservice to our own hearts. In so doing have we not put ourselves in a position where it's almost impossible to believe that God can be taken at His word? It's as though we see God through the filter of our own shortcomings and

somewhere inside doubt that anyone can truly be completely honest, totally trustworthy, and honorable beyond question.

When we enter into an agreement with one another, isn't the common idea in today's world that we will find a way out of it if necessary? No matter if it is a business agreement or a marriage covenant, the commonly accepted idea is that we will squirm our way out if it costs us more than we are willing to pay, either financially or emotionally. It has gotten so bad that couples are opting to not even join themselves in marriage out of fear of commitment. In other words, they think that so long as they live together and enjoy all the benefits of marriage without the commitment of marriage they will avoid the pitfalls of marriage.

What they are not taking into consideration is the fact that the only way a relationship between a man and a woman will ever work is because God is the third member of the relationship. He is in fact the one who gives the strength and grace to the couple to weather any storm of life. Doesn't it make sense that the one who created us did so with a plan for how He wanted everything to work? If that's the case, wouldn't it also make sense that when we go outside of the plan we can expect consequences?

The answer isn't for couples to opt to live together and not get married. The real answer is for couples to learn that true commitment is a decision to love each other no matter the cost and to stay true to one another till death they do part. Instead of just repeating those words during their wedding they need to mean them with all their heart and choose to love each other after the goose bumps have passed. This is the way God is and it is the way He expects His children to be.

God is honorable, trustworthy, true to His word, and has integrity beyond anything we can imagine. When He says something He means it to be that way forever. If there is a cost to be paid in order to remain true to His word, God will pay the price up to and including the life of His only begotten Son. (John 3:16)

***“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”***

Think about the cost God was willing to pay in order to stay true to His word. Unfortunately, we can't hardly imagine being that committed to anything. The least little bit of difficulty or opposition and far too many of us run for the hills, Christians and non-Christians alike. If we are ever going to be able to experience success as a believer, this must change. It's crucial that we not only see God as He is in His unwavering integrity to His word, but we must become this way about our own word.

There is one illustration in the Old Testament that will help us to see the kind of unwavering loyalty that I am referring to. It's not only a loyalty to another person, but also a loyalty to your own word. The example is found in I Samuel 18 and it is the account of the relationship between David and Jonathan, the son of King Saul. (1 Samuel 18:1)

***“And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.”***

The relationship between David and Jonathan might best be described as two brothers, but it goes even further than brothers. Brothers are simply born of the same mother. That doesn't necessarily mean they have a bond other than that of having the same mother. Cain and Abel had the same mother and father and yet Cain killed Abel.

You see family relationship is not by choice. The relationship between David and Jonathan was strictly one of choice. They chose to bind themselves together in a covenant relationship that would continue even after the death of Jonathan.

Notice these words. (1 Samuel 18:3-4)

***“Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. (vs. 4) And Jonathan striped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.”***

The significance of what is being said here is the commitment that is being made between these two men. They are binding themselves in an agreement that each is willing to die to uphold. When Jonathan's father, King Saul, wanted to kill David, Jonathan was loyal to the agreement he made with David. This is the kind of loyalty and integrity that God expects from each of us, because this is the way God is.

After the death of Jonathan and the end of the kingship of Saul and David's subsequent rise to power, it would have been easy for David to go back on his promise to Jonathan and not have taken care of Jonathan's family. But, because David was a man of his word once he came into power he made a point of looking for the son of Jonathan so that he could show him the kindness that David had promised to Jonathan.

Jonathan's son was Mephibosheth. After the death of Jonathan and King Saul Mephibosheth came and fell on his face before David begging for his life to be spared. (2 Samuel 9:6-7)

***“Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant. (vs.7) And David said unto him, fear not: for I shall surely show thee kindness for thy father Jonathan's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.”***

David had to go looking for Mephibosheth in order to keep his promise to Jonathan. Once he found Mephibosheth, David treated him exactly as he would have treated Jonathan. Why did David do this? David was a man true to his word. He made promises to Jonathan and no matter the cost David upheld his word even after Jonathan's death.

There is tremendous symbolism in the account of David and Jonathan and Mephibosheth. It paints a beautiful picture of Jesus, the man who walked the earth and died for our sins, pictured as Jonathan and Jesus the first born from the dead pictured here as David. Notice the way David went after Mephibosheth to have mercy on him, just as Jesus went after us. All of which was made possible because David stayed true to his commitment to Jonathan, just as God in Jesus remained true to His word, and will forever be true to His word.

This is one message that we must not let slip through our fingers. God is true to His word, honest beyond reproach, honorable and faithful. If we are ever going to advance in the things of God our word must also be true. We must learn the importance of being truly committed no matter the cost. Then and only then will we be able to take God at His word. This will in turn produce success as a believer.

~ Jesus Loves You!

*Mark Jenkins*