

**KEEPING YOUR FAITH
IN GOOD TIME AND BAD**
Proverbs 3 verses 1-15

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There are Christians who go through good times and still manage to keep their love of God and their faith. Then, there are those who have plenty and lose their faith. They have money, health, possessions, power, all that they desire from this life, but they lose their way. They get lost in the pleasure, the greed, and wallow in the ultimate goodness of life. They get caught up in the power, the money or the stress and leave the Love of God behind. You hear about them everyday. People who have wealth, but steal for more, people who want a bigger high so they turn to drugs. Others are consumed with untruths, or sexual passion. How can a Christian who knows God, who has been so blessed with all that God offers, turn away from God? Is it as simple as “the human factor”/ we are just human?

There are those Christians among the truly faithful. They love God above all else, they sincerely love their fellow man and do good works and live a life filled with God and his love in their homes... This faith is not a matter of wealth as some of the poor are among the most faithful. They handle adversity in their lives just like breathing. They know God loves them, and when adversity comes they use the wisdom God gave them and their love of God to get through adversity. Some lose their jobs, others lose their ability to provide for themselves and their children, others are struck with terrible illnesses.

Some lose family members due to tragedy, but are filled with forgiveness.

You have seen these people on TV and you must wonder how they can forgive a drunken driver for killing a member of their family. You have seen these people speak on TV and they have forgiveness in their hearts.

A few years ago a deranged man killed 7 Amish girls at their school and wounded four others, with gunshots to the head.. The Amish pulled together, some struggled, but their faith carried them and helped them to forgive the killer and his family.

They embraced the killer's family with love and forgiveness. The Amish went as a group to the killer's funeral thus publically signifying their forgiveness. Would you have it in your heart to forgive the killer or his family if you lost your child or spouse?

How does an injured young soldier with no legs or arms keep his faith in God? Will he lose his soul as well as his life? Let's get a little closer to home, if your spiritual leader was found to be guilty of molesting children would your faith be shaken? Suppose your best friend ran off with your wife or husband, would your faith withstand a broken heart?

I turned to the Bible for answers.

I read about Paul, who was imprisoned, but rather than grieve his circumstances, he converted his jailer to Christianity. He managed to turn a negative experience into a positive one. I searched the Bible for answers of unending faith.

Finally, I went to King Solomon, who is said to be the wisest man who ever lived. He left us a legacy of written wisdom in three volumes of the Bible, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.

In these books, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Solomon gives practical insights and guidelines for life and how to keep faith. So it was there that I looked for the answer to keeping faith despite the temptations of wealth and power and despite having terrible tragedy. Have you ever blamed God when tragedy entered your life?

I have been there. I am sorry to say, I lost my faith, for a time, but through the grace of God, I found it again. We have a patient God, he helped me realize that my broken heart would heal in time.

I found help in the words of King Solomon. In Proverbs I found a great deal of help.

In Proverbs 3 verses 1-15. I realized that Solomon was very wise. He wrote that love and faithfulness are important character qualities. Both involve actions as well as attitudes. A loving person not only feels love, he or she acts loyally or responsibly. A faithful person not only believes the truth he or she also works for truth and justice for others. He knows God and is sure of God's love. If we learn these qualities early in life and faithfully practice our faith we will be ready when temptation or tragedy comes into our lives. Solomon also tells us to get wisdom at any cost. In Proverbs 4 verses 1-4 Solomon writes, "Listen my children to a father's instruction, pay attention and gain understanding.

I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teachings, for I was a son to my father still tender and cherished by my mother. Then he taught me, and said to me and take hold of my words with all of your heart; keep my commandments and you will live." Solomon is passing on his wisdom and his faith which ultimately comes from God. He urges us to faithfully practice our faith, thus preparing us for life as it comes. 3

If your parents never taught you to be faithful, love God, trust God , pray, come to church then God's word can function as a loving and compassionate mother or father to you. You can learn from the scriptures and then create a legacy of wisdom as you teach others. The scriptures tell us to respect and appreciate who God is, and show him love and reverence. Trust God and his word; allow his word to speak to us personally and willingly obey his commands. Follow Gods direction daily, and you will strengthen your faith and love of God and this love will shine on you and all you touch. You will find that you are doing random acts of kindness and generosity without even thinking about it. Your faith will grow strong and it will stand the tests that life brings to us.

Daily Prayer, repenting our own acts of unkindness or loving one another as Christ has taught us, will make our faith stronger.

Sometimes, difficult times come when we have no sin. Then our response should be faith, patience, integrity and confidence that God will show us what to do.

God wants us to let go of our anger, let go of our fear and anxiety and hold fast to our Faith.

He wants us to trust him in good times and in bad. He wants us to let go and let God take over.