

APPENDIX VI

Character Attributes

To fully develop into the a happy, joyful and successful person, we need to ask God to help us cultivate the following character attributes:

Faithfulness

The fruit of the Spirit known as “faithfulness” could also be called “fidelity.” It speaks of endurance, a firmness of purpose, especially when the going is tough.

Faithfulness implies steadfast adherence.

Synonyms include *loyalty*, implying undeviating allegiance; *constancy*, suggesting freedom from uncertainty; *staunchness*, implying such a strong allegiance to one’s principles or purposes that they cannot be turned aside; and *resoluteness*, stressing unwavering determination.

“Faith” and “faithfulness,” though closely linked, is not the same thing. Faith is that indefinable power, a gift from God, through which we can believe in a reality that yet remains unseen. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (*Heb. 11:1*). Faithfulness, in contrast, is the working out of this inner-belief system. When we have faith in God, we act in faithful ways. Acts of faithfulness are a demonstration of our faith, and such acts are the threads holding our belief and behaviour system together.

I hope you will seriously consider practising at the very least some of the guidelines we discussed. You might like to personalise, perhaps adapting aspects of my message in accordance with your own circumstances. You certainly can achieve great things in your life ... with divine help, if you believe you can, freely offered by your loving and caring heavenly Father.

The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 57.

The following words are some of the components of faithfulness:

Dependability

Dependability means people can count on you. When was the last time someone let you down? Do you remember how that made you feel? What does it say about your character if you lack dependability?

Honesty

Honesty is truthfulness. It means you are not going to lie or cheat or steal. Honesty is a cardinal building block of a strong character and should be in play every day of our lives.

Integrity

Integrity is like a code of honour. If you have integrity, you have certain values and beliefs that you live by. It also means you respect the values and beliefs of others. Integrity is also one of the building blocks of character.

Loyalty

Loyalty is allegiance. It means standing by someone even when times get tough. Loyalty is an important part of friendship. But does loyalty include doing something wrong for a friend? Does loyalty have limits? How might someone take a good thing, loyalty, too far?

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:

Faithfulness is the long-term product of faith in the heart. It is expressed as the constancy of a life devoted to God, a loyalty to Him that remains steadfast through both prosperity and adversity.

Few animals can match a dog for faithfulness and devotion. And history furnishes us with enough examples of canine loyalty to convince us of this truth. Greyfriars Bobby was a Skye terrier whose master was a policeman. When his master died on February 8, 1858, Greyfriars Bobby kept watch at his grave for 14 years until he died.

Delta’s remains were found across the body of a small child near ancient Pompeii.

According to Delta's collar, she had saved her small master three times: once from drowning, once from four robbers, and once from a wolf. But Delta couldn't save him from the hot ash of a volcano, though it is evident that the dog tried (information retrieved from <http://www.rusticgirls.com/animals/most-faithful-dogs-in-history.html>).

These stories touch our hearts, especially when faithfulness is displayed even when there is no hope. How much more inspiring are the lives of men and women who stay faithful throughout their lives and are rewarded at last, by seeing the Object of their love and loyalty return for them, to take them home forever!

POWER OF FAITH

Recently I came across the following information concerning the power of faith. I decided to share the inspiring uplifting and life-changing simple message. Here it is:

A young child lay dying in a hospital bed when his teacher visited him and gave him some schoolwork to do. **"Here, Michael,"** he said, **"are lessons on verbs and adverbs. Do the best you can."** The teacher, though, could not help but sense the futility of it all, because the child seemed so lethargic, so empty, so resigned to death. Yet, right after that, the child had a remarkable turnaround. Before the prognosis was not good, and he now seemed well on his way to recovery. When asked about what happened, about why the schoolwork seemed to have changed him so much, he replied, **"They wouldn't give a dying boy work on adverbs and verbs, would they?"**

No question, the link between our mind, our attitude, and our bodies is very powerful. Though science cannot fully explain how that link works, it recognizes that the link is there, and this can make a world of difference in our overall health.

And here is where faith in God and trust in His love and His goodness can make such a difference. How much easier to be calmer and less stressed when you know the reality of God's love and His care for you! Studies from around the world have shown that religious faith brings with it clear health benefits, that those who believe in God tend to live longer, to suffer less depression, and

to deal better emotionally with traumatic events. And while we certainly can't rule out the supernatural and miraculous power of God to bring healing in our lives, that is not necessarily what is only involved here. Instead, the peace, the assurance, the hope that faith gives believers no doubt can bring about mental attitudes that will impact our overall health. A merry heart can, indeed, be like medicine—even better, because so often medicine can come with deleterious side effects.

One of the greatest health challenges we all face has to do with stress; it does not have to be with major traumas in life but with life in general, with the daily pressures that we so often face.

Doctors report that up to 90 per cent of patients they see come with stress-related complaints. Science has shown that when we are stressed, we release certain hormones that can affect various organs in our bodies. Over long periods of time, the organs can be weakened by these hormones, making them more susceptible to disease. Stress, for instance, can release adrenaline, which causes the heart to beat faster and more powerfully, leading to palpitations. Some stress hormones cause the blood vessels to constrict, causing hypertension. Stress can induce shallow and rapid breathing, even hyperventilation. Stress can result in the diversion of blood from the stomach, causing digestive problems. (Who has not felt what fear, anxiety, and worry can do to the stomach?)

Stress can cause an increase in blood glucose, which in some people can lead to diabetes. Stress also is known to have a negative impact on our sleep, which in turn can have a negative impact on our overall health. Stress has been shown, too, to affect negatively our immune system, our body's frontline defence against disease.

The list can go on and on. And so the point should be clear. We need to learn to handle stress. Here is where faith in God can have such an important role, because knowing and experiencing for yourself the reality of God's love can have such a calming effect, greatly reducing stress and the negative health consequences that often follow it.

