

Being Merciful and Faithful

Ponder: What is around your neck and written on your heart?

Scripture: “Let not mercy and truth forsake you: Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart” (Proverbs 3:3a, NKJV).

We might have expected Solomon to say, “Do not forsake mercy and truth.” But he didn’t! Instead, he said not to let mercy and truth forsake you. You see, being merciful and true (i.e. faithful) doesn’t just automatically happen. Our parents taught us to be merciful and reliable, and God’s word teaches the same. But we have a tendency to let those qualities slip away.

Sometimes we might think, “That fellow made his own mess – let him clean it up himself. It’s none of my concern!” Fortunately for us, God doesn’t look at us that way. We shouldn’t look at other people that way, either.

Similarly, being true to our word, doing what we promised, can be downright inconvenient. We’re tempted to let reliability forsake us. But God is faithful, and we ought to be like Him.

So how can we keep mercy and truth from forsaking us? Solomon tells us in the last half of the verse: “Bind them around your neck, and write them on the tablet of your heart.” If you wore a beautiful gold necklace, you would likely recognize its value and not allow it to become lost. We must exercise that same discipline to keep mercy and truth from getting away from us.

The word picture of writing mercy and truth on the tablet of your heart reinforces the idea of permanence. Think of the stone tablets on which God wrote the Ten Commandments. The words were not written with ink, but engraved; they would be nearly impossible to erase. The tablet of your heart is always with you; if mercy and truth are engraved on it, they will not easily be forgotten.

When we are merciful and faithful, God is pleased. That, in itself, is reason enough to hold these qualities close and now allow them to escape. But Solomon wrote in the next verse that we will also “find favor and high esteem” in the sight of men. Even most worldly people appreciate someone who is merciful and faithful.

Let not mercy and truth forsake you!

Song: “This Is My Task”

Prayer: Merciful Father, You are worthy of our praise, for great is Your faithfulness. We also praise You for giving us a merciful and faithful High Priest in the person of Your Son, Jesus. Please help us to be more like Him, and never to let mercy and truth forsake us. In His name, Amen.