



Daily Verse and Comment

Jeremiah 5:1-3

(1) Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. (2) And though they say, The LORD liveth; surely they swear falsely. (3) O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.

King James Version

Prophet after prophet records that Israel has trouble being faithful to anything: [God](#), mate, country, employer, and contracts. Our national mind seems to be like quicksilver. As a people, Israelites are always trying to get the best for the self, willing to bend in any direction to obtain their pleasure. They really work at it. When we think of Jacob's deceitful ways in his early life, we can almost believe that this characteristic is in the genes, though it is not. It is a characteristic absorbed by yielding to a culture saturated with the spirit of harlotry.

Syndicated columnist Sidney J. Harris once wrote:

Most virtues exist on a sliding scale, all the way from excellence to ineptitude, and most of us are tolerably somewhere in the middle, without too much damage to ourselves or others. But there is one virtue that is all or nothing: and that is reliability. You are either reliable or you are not; and, if not, it doesn't much matter how nearly or how often you are reliable.

If I were an employer of any sort, I would be willing to put up with many kinds of personal or professional deficiencies, but never with

this. A person who is not dependable is bound to fail you (and himself as well) at precisely the wrong time.

It reminds me of the debonair Viennese gentleman who, when asked, "Have you been faithful to your wife?" replied, "Frequently." It is plain that a man who is frequently faithful is not faithful at all; he might as well never be.

Reliability is one of the hardest character traits to identify by testing or "screening" or anything except personal acquaintance. Some people are "rocks" by nature or training, while others are *papier-mâché* painted to resemble rocks, who crumble when sudden pressure is applied by circumstances.

If you are married to someone who cannot be depended upon to pull his or her own weight, it hardly matters what other admirable traits your mate may possess, because you can never know when or where you will be let down. It is the same as being married to an alcoholic, who is only "there" part of the time—and usually not when most needed.

Consistency is what is required in the people we associate with: the confident knowledge of what we can rightfully expect of them, barring sudden illness or catastrophe beyond anyone's control. Otherwise, there is no real relationship, but only a shifting accommodation to the winds of caprice and self-indulgence.

It is easy to feel affection for another; what is harder is to translate this feeling into acts, daily acts, that demonstrate steadfastness of purpose in a domestic routine that may not be as dramatic as some heroic rescue, but that keeps the craft afloat no matter which way the wind happens to blow. The deepest and most important virtues are often the duller ones; they win no medals, and get no glory; but they are the glue that binds society together and makes it work, now and always.

Men seem to be particularly irresponsible and ambivalent regarding sex, but with the unleashing of the feminist movement, women are rapidly catching

up. In the July 28, 1978, *Woman's Day* magazine, an article revealed that 50-70% of all American men commit [adultery](#) at least once, while the Hite Report result was 66%. Yet, 67% of all husbands say that adultery is *always* wrong! The dichotomy between belief and practice is obvious. Clearly, they are confused: They feel it is wrong, but a large percentage is willing to do it if the opportunity presents itself!

This illustrates what God meant through the prophets. No wonder God calls us a faithless people! We are a self-seeking, opportunistic people who are willing to "bend" on principle, standard, tradition, or belief if we can see advantage for ourselves. Even if we can see that the "advantage" is at best short-term—and may even be very risky—we almost always seem to rise to the "bait."

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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