

God's Character: Lovingkindness and Truth

When speaking of His compassionate and gracious character to Moses, God spoke of abounding in lovingkindness and truth.

Then Yahweh passed by in front of him and called out, "Yahweh, Yahweh God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and **abounding in lovingkindness and truth**; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." (Ex 34:6-7, LSB)

1. When you encounter a possible association of ideas (lovingkindness and truth), it is worthwhile to do a quick concordance check to see if there is an association and how that association helps you understand God better.

- a. Go to Legacy Bible online (LSBible.org)
- b. Search for "lovingkindness truth." What comes up?

2. When God speaks of "lovingkindness," He is always referring to a loyal steadfast love that takes place between two parties that have a significant relationship between them, which in this case is His unilateral and unconditional covenant relationship with Abraham:

And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your seed after you. (Gen 17:7, LSB)

God's covenant to Abraham is in response to Abraham's faith. When God speaks to Moses of "who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin" (Ex 34:7, LSB), who is He referring to?

3. To understand the meaning of “truth,” see if there are any passages from your concordance study involving “lovingkindness and truth” that might provide some insight. What do you observe about Jacob’s meaning of “truth?”

Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two camps. And he said, “If Esau comes to the one camp and strikes it, then the camp which remains will escape.” And Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Yahweh, who said to me, ‘Return to your land and to your kin, and I will prosper you,’ I am unworthy of **all the lovingkindness and of all the truth** which You have shown to Your slave; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. (Gen 32:7-10, LSB)

4. What is the significance of God’s pairing of lovingkindness and truth when He speaks of Himself? Observe another passage from your concordance study: Psalms 69:13. For this challenging question, think carefully of salvation in both the Old and New Testament.

But as for me, my prayer is to You, O Yahweh, at an acceptable time;
O God, in the abundance of Your **lovingkindness**,
Answer me with the **truth of Your salvation**. (Ps 69:13, LSB)

Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel because the Egyptians are holding them in slavery, and I have remembered My covenant. Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, “I am Yahweh, and I will bring you out from under the hard labors of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their slavery. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out from under the hard labors of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am Yahweh.” (Ex 6:5-8, LSB)

But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses. And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which is through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all. And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.” (Acts 3:12-18, LSB)

God's Character: Lovingkindness and Truth Teacher Notes

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- a. Go to Legacy Bible online (LSBible.org)
- b. Search for "lovingkindness truth." What comes up?

Ask the student: who wrote the various passages that used "lovingkindness and truth?" It is important for the student to realize that the association of lovingkindness and truth is repeated by the Holy Spirit not simply a human author.

The Holy Spirit and authors of the Bible saw the pairing as significant, because it is repeated elsewhere in many locations.

2. When God speaks of "lovingkindness," He is always referring to a loyal steadfast love that takes place between two parties that have a significant relationship between them, which in this case is His unilateral and unconditional covenant relationship with Abraham:

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God's covenant to Abraham is in response to Abraham's faith. When God speaks to Moses of "who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin" (Ex 34:7, LSB), who is He referring to?

Encourage the student to ask questions of the text to help them understand the passage within the context of the whole Bible. As they learn more about and are reminded of divine covenants, the student will be able to understand more about each passage.

God's deep loyal steadfast love is just not to Abraham but to all of Abraham's descendants. They all make up God's treasured possession among all the peoples, His kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex19:5-6).

3. To understand the meaning of "truth," see if there are any passages from your concordance study involving "lovingkindness and truth" that might provide some insight. What do you observe about Jacob's meaning of "truth?"

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This question is significant, because today's culture views "truth" as subjective and relative to each person. Help the student recognize this issue. Encourage discussion of his observation of Jacob's understanding of truth. What did he experience that convinced him of the truth of God? Why was God true?

When Jacob speaks to God, he indicates that "truth" is not a subjective notion. In experiencing the fulfillment of God's promise, Jacob expresses that God's word is true, reliable, and accords with reality. Truth is the correspondence of word and deed. And for Jacob, it is humbling.

4. What is the significance of God's pairing of lovingkindness and truth when He speaks of Himself? Observe another passage from your concordance study: Psalms 69:13. For this challenging question, think carefully of salvation in both the Old and New Testament.

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One method to help the student with this question is to have him focus on each character trait from God's perspective.

- a) God's lovingkindness is associated with His faithfulness to His unilateral and unconditional covenant with Abraham. Without this covenant, God would have no basis to commit His loyal and steadfast love.
- b) With the Exodus, salvation from Egypt, the invisible God makes His presence known. God's word proves reliable and trustworthy when the nation of Israel makes their way to the Promised Land. However, the nation forgets their commitment to meet the standard required of a descendant of Abraham.
- c) With the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the invisible God makes His presence known (John 1:18; 14:7-9). With faith in Jesus Christ, who fulfills the Mosaic Law, the Believer is promised eternal life and an inheritance in the Promised Land (Matt 19:29; 25:34). The dimensions of New Jerusalem match the physical dimensions of the land promised by God to Abraham.

When God describes Himself as One "abounding in lovingkindness and truth," it is a statement that He is absolutely trustworthy, because His loving actions to His people are characterized by a steadfast and loyal commitment to the covenant that He made unconditionally and unilaterally with Abraham.