

Rooted Simply Word Study: Faith/Faithfulness

Faith and faithfulness are deeply connected in Scripture, but they are not the same: faith is trusting, while faithfulness is living out that trust consistently.

1. Core Difference

Faith = belief, trust, reliance.

Faithfulness = loyalty, steadfastness, reliability that flows from faith.

Faith is the *root*; faithfulness is the *fruit*.

2. Old Testament Word Study (Hebrew)

FAITH (rare in OT)

The OT rarely uses a word that directly means “faith” the way the NT does. As one study notes, *faith appears only a handful of times in the OT*, and often in the sense of “breaking faith” rather than belief.

Why?

Hebrew thought emphasizes actions and loyalty, not abstract belief. So the OT focuses on faithfulness, not “faith” as a concept.

FAITHFULNESS (common in OT)

Key Hebrew Words

’aman (אָמַן) – to be firm, reliable, trustworthy.

emunah (אֱמוּנָה) – firmness, steadfastness, fidelity; translated as *faithfulness* 25 times.

emeth (אֱמֶת) – truth, faithfulness, reliability.

Meaning

Faithfulness in Hebrew is relational loyalty—keeping covenant, staying steady, being dependable.

3. New Testament Word Study (Greek)

FAITH – pistis (πίστις)

Meaning includes:

belief, trust, confidence

reliance on Christ

constancy (rarely)
fidelity (possible but debated)

Pistis comes from *peithō* (to persuade), meaning faith is being persuaded by God.

FAITHFULNESS – pistos (πιστός)

Meaning:

faithful, trustworthy, reliable

4. Are “Faith” and “Faithfulness” the Same in Greek?

Some scholars argue that pistis means both “faith” and “faithfulness” simultaneously. But recent lexical research argues that Paul uses pistis with two distinct meanings—active (faith) and passive (faithfulness)—depending on context.

Conclusion:

Pistis does *not always* mean “faithfulness.”
Context determines whether Paul means *trust* or *loyalty*.

5. Comparison Table

| Concept | Hebrew Emphasis | Greek Emphasis | Meaning |
|--------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Faith | Rare term; focus on trust expressed in action | Common term; belief, trust, reliance | Internal trust in God |
| Faithfulness | Very common; covenant loyalty, steadfastness | pistos = reliable, trustworthy | Outward expression of faith through consistent obedience |

6. Theological Insight

Faith produces faithfulness.
Faithfulness proves faith.
In Scripture, you cannot separate what you *believe* from how you *live*.

7. Summary

Faith = trusting God.
Faithfulness = living loyally because you trust God.
Hebrew emphasizes faithfulness; Greek emphasizes faith, but both concepts are inseparable.
Paul uses pistis with distinct meanings, not a blended “faith/faithfulness.”