

Faithfulness in Erwin, Gunn & Carroll's Movie Script *I Still Believe*

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Abstract : This research aimed to reveal how commitment and communication are revealed as parts of faithfulness were portrayed in the movie *I Still Believe*, which told the true story of Christian singer Jeremy Camp. Using a qualitative approach, this study analyzed commitment and communication as parts of faithfulness through the lens of Abrams' (1979) objective theory. The data, derived from the film, highlighted two key aspects of faithfulness; commitment and communication both connected to God and spouse. These elements collectively illustrated faithfulness as a deliberate choice rather than an emotional reaction. Faithfulness to God was portrayed as unwavering trust and dependence on divine guidance, even in times of suffering. Likewise, faithfulness in human relationships mirrored this devotion through patience, trust, and perseverance. The film underscored that true faithfulness was not about seeking immediate answers but about surrendering to a higher plan. Ultimately, *I Still Believe* demonstrated that faithfulness strengthened both spiritual and personal bonds, shaping character and resilience in the face of adversity.

Keywords: *Faithfulness, relationship, character analysis, I Still Believe.*

INTRODUCTION

Faithfulness is the concept of unfailingly remaining loyal to someone or something, and putting that loyalty into consistent practice regardless of extenuating circumstances (Payne, 2020). Faithfulness is commitment to someone or something. Faithfulness is especially valued in spouses and in sports fans.

Faithfulness is divided into two directions; to god and to spouse. Faithfulness is also a decision to continue to believe in a suffering and will continue to depend and

submit the continuation of something without having to define what final result will be obtained, whether the final result is positive or negative (Prianto & Tampubolon, 2023). Moreover, faithfulness is when someone is depending, relying and has trustworthiness towards God (Strauss, 1980). Faithfulness involves open communication, expressed interest, and patience in dealing with challenges (Fletcher et al., 2015). These elements work together to sustain and strengthen relationships over time.

In faithfulness, there are commitment and communication as parts of it. Commitment to God is interpreted through actions such as enduring trust and service, often underpinned by theological constructs like faithfulness to divine promises (Lengkoan, et al. 2022). Commitment to God is often discussed in terms of perseverance in faith, regular spiritual practices, and service to the community. Theological analyses link this commitment to the concept of "sanctification"—the ongoing process of becoming more aligned with divine principles (Liando, et al. 2022). Commitment to God is described as a covenant requiring continual renewal through prayer, charity, and ethical behavior (Pambuka & Saifuddin, 2023).

Commitment to God refers to the steadfast dedication to spiritual practices, values, and a life aligned with divine teachings (Andries, et al. 2019). This form of commitment is characterized by consistent engagement with religious practices, moral behavior, and trust in God's plan during challenges (Liando, 2010). There are several aspects about commitment to god; moral and ethical alignment, perseverance in faith, and spiritual discipline.

Wirianto & Zubaidah (2024) emphasized that commitment to God requires aligning one's actions with moral teachings, such as engaging in prayer, charity, and community service. The research linked this commitment to greater life satisfaction and spiritual peace. According to Pambuka & Saifuddin (2023), perseverance in religious commitment is a key component of trust in God, where believers maintain faith and devotion despite life's uncertainties. This commitment involves accepting God's will as ultimate and striving for righteousness. Commitment to God is reinforced through spiritual disciplines, such as regular scripture study

and meditation (Ariputra, 2023). Commitment to God is not merely a belief, but a consistent practice that requires moral alignment, perseverance, and discipline. As supported by Wirianto et al. (2024), Pambuka & Saifuddin (2023), and Ariputra (2023), this commitment is demonstrated through actions like prayer, charity, spiritual study, and acceptance of God's will. Such dedication not only strengthens one's relationship with God but also contributes to a sense of peace, purpose, and personal growth amid life's challenges (Liando, et al. 2023).

On the other hand, commitment to spouse is underscored in relationship counselling literature, where it emphasizes the importance of consistent communication, shared values, and prioritizing the partner's well-being (Liando, et al. 2023). Commitment ensures resilience against external and internal conflicts (Hubi et al., 2023). Commitment to a spouse involves emotional, practical, and moral dedication to sustaining a lifelong partnership. It includes emotional intimacy, conflict resolution, and fostering mutual growth.

Istiqomah and Marzuki, (2023) emphasized that commitment to a spouse requires fostering emotional intimacy through consistent communication, shared goals, and empathy. Their research highlights how emotional availability strengthens marital bonds. Rusbult et al., (1998) suggests that commitment grows when partners perceive high satisfaction, significant investments, and low-quality alternatives. The willingness to resolve conflicts and invest in the relationship is central to this commitment. Ariputra, (2023) noted that a commitment to marriage is tied to a shared value system and fulfilling responsibilities, such as parenting and financial stability. He argued that this mutual commitment fosters trust and resilience in the partnership.

Commitment to God and commitment to a spouse, while distinct in their nature, share foundational qualities such as trust, perseverance, and dedication. Commitment to God often serves as a moral compass that influences marital relationships, emphasizing values like forgiveness, patience, and selflessness, which are crucial for marital stability.

On the other hand, Communication is the main foundation of a successful relationship (Kharisma & Kasrabowo, 2021). According to Canary & Stafford (1992), relational maintenance strategies, including open and honest communication, are essential in demonstrating faithfulness and fostering trust between individuals. In a relationship with God, an individual should be open with God about their thoughts and feelings through prayer and meditation. This way, they don't have to guess or question their beliefs. There is nothing to

doubt when one maintains an honest and open line of communication with God. This research will discuss the main character Jeremy Camp and how he remains faithful to God through the communication he maintains with Him. In the researcher's view, communication with God is very important because everything that happens in one's life can be discussed with God through prayer. This communication is essential for building a deep and intense relationship with God.

When a married person is faithful, he/she stand by their spouse and don't cheat. The main character here shows faithfulness to the partner and also to God. Here the researcher discusses about faithfulness in the main characters in *I Still Believe* movie. When someone is truly faithful to God, this shapes the way he/she lives. In this case, he/she is able to be loyal in our relationships here on Earth and truly love others. Faithfulness requires us to submit our ways to God. It comes from a place of realizing that we are in need of a Savior and that He is in control of our lives. People today are more often pursuing fast-paced lives that are convenient and simple. Continue to today's world, Faithfulness word sounds old and unnecessary. People respect others, but they rarely show their faithful to others (Kikuchi, 2008). People do not express faithfulness anymore. One special aspect of people is focus. When we lose focus, we lose deals, we lose games and we can lose life, itself. With a strong focus on our faith, we can move on to the future with both confidence and assurance.

I Still Believe is a 2020 American Christian romantic drama film directed by the Erwin brothers. It is based on the life of American contemporary Christian music singer-songwriter Jeremy Camp and his first wife, Melissa Lynn Henning-Camp, who was diagnosed with ovarian cancer shortly before they married. Camp's song *I Still Believe* is the film's namesake. At the start of the movie the main character Jeremy is a college freshman who has a passion for song writing and he is hungry to learn more about the music industry. Jean-Luc of *The Krys* takes Jeremy under his wing and teaches Jeremy that pursuing a career in music is not about making it. It is about what your songs can give people. But this movie is less about song-writing and more about faithfulness and love.

When people hear the word faithful today, our attention is often drawn to the context of marital fidelity. For sure, using faithful in that context is an accurate understanding of the biblical word usage. Faithfulness and many other essential components of love is the key to a successful relationship. Being faithful contributes to the maintenance of a relationship just as much as any other significant need. So, from how important faithfulness is to people nowadays, the researcher was very interested to analyze commitment and communication as parts of faithfulness in *I Still Believe*.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher analyzed the movie *I Still Believe*. The researcher will use qualitative research because the data gathered are in the form of words, rather numbers or diagram. As stated by Bogdan & Biklen (2007) qualitative Research is descriptive, the data collected are in the form of word or picture rather than numbers, the writer results of the research contains quotations from the data illustrate and substantiate the presentation.

In this research, the researcher herself was the main instrument, followed by researcher's laptop, notebook, papers and pen as the secondary instruments. The data were collected from the movie *I Still Believe* (2020) and the movie script which was scripted and released in 2020 by Jon Erwin, Jon Gunn & Madeline Carroll.

The researcher employed an objective approach, as defined by Abrams, (1979), which views a work of art as an autonomous entity, analyzed based on its internal structure and elements without considering external factors such as the author's life or audience response. This approach allowed the researcher to focus solely on how *I Still Believe* presents faithfulness through its characters, plot, and dialogue, treating the film as a self-contained text. By doing so, the study emphasized how the theme of faithfulness is developed within the narrative itself, ensuring a focused and unbiased analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter delves into the exploration of faithfulness as depicted in the biographical drama "I Still Believe," based on the life of Christian music artist Jeremy Camp. Through a detailed analysis, four key aspects of faithfulness are identified: commitment, communication, showing interest, and patience.

Faithfulness to God is a profound expression of commitment, trust, and reliance on divine guidance, especially in times of suffering. It is an unwavering dedication to maintaining belief despite hardships, demonstrating a deep spiritual resilience. Research has shown that faithfulness is not merely about passive endurance but an active decision to continue believing, even when circumstances seem unfavorable (Lewis & Atkins, 2020). This steadfastness reflects a person's inner conviction that their faith transcends momentary struggles and is rooted in a long-term spiritual journey.

Faithfulness is a conscious choice rather than an emotional response to life's difficulties. According to Peterson (2019), true faithfulness to God involves trusting in His purpose without demanding immediate clarity or resolution. This perspective aligns with the idea that faithfulness is a commitment to depend on God's will, regardless of the outcome (Prianto & Tampubolon, 2023). People who exhibit faithfulness understand that their journey with God does not guarantee an easy path but instead fosters spiritual growth and character development.

This idea is also evident in theological studies, which argue that faithfulness is the willingness to surrender control and trust in divine plans (Keller, 2016). Unlike a transactional approach to faith, where belief is contingent on receiving blessings, true faithfulness endures even when prayers seem unanswered. As seen in *I Still Believe*, Melissa's faithfulness is not dependent on whether she is healed but on her steadfast trust in God's plan for her life.

Beyond commitment, faithfulness to God is also characterized by trust and dependence. Strauss (1980) defines faithfulness as relying on and trusting God completely, recognizing Him as the ultimate source of strength. Trusting God means

accepting that one's future is in His hands and that His plans, even when unclear, are ultimately for good (Williams, 2018). This dependence fosters peace amid suffering, as seen in how Melissa and Jeremy in *I Still Believe* turn to prayer and worship rather than despair when faced with challenges.

Dependence on God also aligns with the psychological understanding of faith as a coping mechanism. Studies indicate that people who rely on their faith during crises experience greater emotional stability and resilience (Park & Wortmann, 2017). This suggests that faithfulness not only nurtures a spiritual connection but also contributes to mental well-being, reinforcing the idea that trusting in God's plan provides comfort and direction.

Faithfulness to God also parallels faithfulness in human relationships, particularly in romantic and familial bonds. Fletcher et al., (2015) highlighted that faithfulness is a key element in maintaining strong relationships, as it involves open communication, patience, and mutual trust. Similarly, faithfulness to God requires ongoing spiritual communication—prayer, worship, and reflection—to sustain a deep relationship with Him (Evans, 2021).

Moreover, just as faithfulness in relationships involves standing by someone through challenges, faithfulness to God entails remaining committed despite doubts and struggles. This unwavering loyalty strengthens not only an individual's spiritual identity but also their relationships with others, as seen in how Jeremy and Melissa's shared faith reinforces their love and support for each other.

Faithfulness to God is a multifaceted concept that encompasses commitment, trust, and dependence. It is a decision to remain devoted to one's faith, even when facing suffering or uncertainty. As demonstrated in *I Still Believe*, faithfulness is not about seeking immediate solutions but about trusting in God's greater plan. This trait extends beyond spiritual devotion, influencing personal relationships and contributing to emotional resilience. In essence, faithfulness is both an act of surrender and an affirmation of unwavering belief, shaping one's character and spiritual growth in profound ways.

COMMITMENT

Being committed is a part of being faithful, and a strong sense of commitment within an individual fosters happiness, which in turn becomes a source of strength in facing challenges encountered during separation from a partner (Amana et al., (2019) in Maria & Soeharto, (2024)). According to Sternberg (1986) in Amana et al., (2019), commitment is a decision made by an individual, affirming their love for another person and their intention to continuously maintain that love.

It is proposed that commitment to God and commitment to one's spouse are closely connected. Those who prioritize their faith often embody the same values of patience, love, and loyalty in their marriage (Mahoney et al., 2003). Engaging in spiritual practices, such as praying together, has been shown to strengthen marital bonds and enhance relationship satisfaction (Lambert et al., 2012). Couples who participate in shared religious activities generally experience a heightened sense of purpose and commitment in their relationship.

Commitment to God

Commitment to God, often termed spiritual or religious commitment, entails dedicating oneself to the beliefs, practices, and principles of one's faith. This commitment involves consistent participation in religious activities, personal prayer, and adherence to religious teachings (Mahoney et al., 2003). Research indicates that such spiritual commitment significantly impacts moral decision-making, personal well-being, and even the stability of relationships (Mahoney et al., 2003). Individuals who uphold strong religious commitments are more inclined to demonstrate faithfulness and perseverance in their daily lives (Lambert et al., 2012).

1. The first data comes from the scene where Jeremy's disappointment when Melissa is hiding their relationship from Jean-Luc.

Jeremy: "So, I understand you now."

"What?"

Jeremy: "You don't like to disappoint people."

"That's not true."

Jeremy: "Okay, it's sometimes... Okay, it's true."

Jeremy: "This is about Jean-Luc."

"I can't. I... I really don't wanna hurt him. So, yeah. That's why I should just never look at you again."

Jeremy: "Melissa."

"Okay."

Jeremy: "Permission to speak freely?"

Melissa: "Okay."

Jeremy: "What if this is destiny? What if we were supposed to meet and we were supposed to feel this way about each other, and God wants us to run towards it, not away from it? I think we wouldn't wanna miss that, right? Just promise me you'll think about it." (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 00:24:18)

In this scene, Jeremy expresses his disappointment when Melissa hides their relationship from Jean-Luc. His statement, "What if this is destiny? What if we were supposed to meet and we were supposed to feel this way about each other, and God wants us to run towards it, not away from it?", highlights his deep faith in God's plan. Jeremy's belief that their relationship is divinely orchestrated reflects his faithfulness not only to Melissa but also to God. By trusting in God's guidance, he acknowledges that their love is part of a greater purpose. His appeal to divine will also illustrates his

commitment to honesty and openness, reinforcing the idea that faithfulness requires trust and courage. The struggle between Melissa's hesitation and Jeremy's insistence reflects the challenges that faith often entails, choosing between human fears and spiritual convictions.

2. The next data comes from the scene where Jeremy asked for his fans a prayer for Melissa's healing.

Jeremy: Earlier this year, we had some tough news, some really tough news. I've never seen a faith like yours, babe. It's a beacon for me. It's a beacon for everyone who knows you. It reminds me of a story. There was a woman who was sick for a long time, a really long time. But she had this... This total faith that if she could just touch Jesus, just touch his clothes, that she would be healed. And that's exactly what she did. She broke through the crowd, and with everything that she had, she reached for Him. Just like I see you do at every single concert, Melissa, reaching out in faith, touching heaven. Can we do something special for the most special person in my life tonight? Can we pray for her? Because I believe that God still heals. You guys agree? Anyone who's sitting around her, why don't you go ahead and lay a hand on her. If not, just put your hands in the air. God, heal the love of my life. Heal her tonight. (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 01:00:54)

Jeremy's public prayer for Melissa at a concert is a powerful demonstration of his faith and belief in the power of collective supplication. His words, "Can we pray for her? Because I believe that God still heals," not only express his trust in God's power but also showcase how faithfulness extends beyond personal conviction to communal support. By involving his audience, Jeremy exemplifies how faithfulness is strengthened through shared belief and mutual encouragement. His recognition of Melissa's faith as a "beacon" reinforces the idea that faithfulness can be inspiring, motivating others to maintain their trust in God despite hardships. The scene also

illustrates how prayer serves as a direct form of communication with God, reinforcing the connection between faithfulness and reliance on divine intervention.

3. The next data comes from the scene where Jeremy is asking a prayer from her fan to Melissa as she will be having a surgery.

Radio Host: Welcome back to The Fish, Los Angeles, and we have a great young artist in the studio with us today, Jeremy Camp. And Jeremy's gonna do some songs live for us in just a minute. But first, Jeremy, you have some pretty big news you wanted to share with us?

Jeremy: I do, yeah. First off, thank you so much for having me. Um, for everyone listening, my fiancee's name is Melissa. Uh, she has a huge surgery coming up this week, and it's really serious. And basically, she needs a miracle. So I just wanted to ask everyone listening, if you could just stop what you're doing and pray. I'll do the playing. You guys do the praying. Thank you. (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 01:06:57)

On the radio, Jeremy's request for prayers further reinforces his unwavering faith. His words, "She needs a miracle," acknowledge the severity of the situation while simultaneously expressing his belief in God's ability to intervene. This moment highlights the intersection between faithfulness and vulnerability. Jeremy is not merely asking for emotional support; he is actively demonstrating his trust in God by seeking intercession from others. His willingness to turn to both God and the broader community illustrates the reciprocal nature of faithfulness, not only in receiving support but also in fostering a collective spirit of trust in God's plan. His statement, "I'll do the playing. You guys do the praying," signifies that faithfulness also requires action. While he entrusts Melissa's fate to God, he continues to do his part in spreading faith through music and testimony.

4. The next data comes from the scene where Jeremy told Melissa that her cancer is gone.

Jeremy: Your cancer, it's gone. They didn't go through with the surgery. You're cancer-free. And that is the story you're gonna tell our kids one day. (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 01:10:21)

When Jeremy informs Melissa that her cancer is gone, his overwhelming joy reflects his gratitude and faith. The moment reinforces the notion that faithfulness is not only about trust during hardships but also about acknowledging God's blessings. His statement, "That is the story you're gonna tell our kids one day," signifies his belief in a future shaped by divine intervention. This moment captures the essence of faithfulness in both its spiritual and relational dimensions, trust in God's healing power and commitment to building a life together. Jeremy's reaction exemplifies how faithfulness is rewarded with hope, reinforcing the belief that enduring trust in God leads to divine provision.

5. The next data comes from the scene where Jeremy announced that Melissa was healed and her cancer was gone.

Jeremy: If anyone here has ever wondered if miracles still happen, or if God still heals, then I wanna introduce you to the most beautiful girl in this room. You're a miracle. That's what you are. (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 01:10:42)

By proclaiming Melissa as a "miracle," Jeremy not only expresses his gratitude but also reaffirms his faith in God's ability to heal. His public declaration of Melissa's healing serves as a testament to God's power, reinforcing how faithfulness to God manifests in the act of witnessing. His statement, "If anyone here has ever wondered if miracles still happen," transforms his personal experience into a broader spiritual message. Faithfulness, in this context, is not just a private matter but a communal one. Jeremy's announcement serves to inspire and affirm the faith of those who may be struggling with their own doubts. By sharing his experience, he becomes a vessel for reinforcing the power of faith, showing that faithfulness also involves spreading God's truth to others.

6. The next data comes from the scene where Melissa has accepted that her cancer would take her away.

Jeremy: On our first date, you said, "Some stars shine brighter than others." You know the stars that shine the brightest? The ones with the shortest life. And when they die, they explode in a supernova. It's... It's the most beautiful thing. Color and light all mixed together, God's painting. The death of a single star outshines everything else in the galaxy.

Melissa: What if I'm not supposed to be healed?

Jeremy: No, don't. Don't. Don't say that.

Melissa: I want you to promise me something. I want you to find someone else.

Jeremy: Don't. Don't. You're going to be healed. I promise you that.

Melissa: Jeremy. Would you just stop? Stop making promises that aren't yours to make. (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 01:22:26)

Melissa's acceptance of her fate is one of the most profound demonstrations of faithfulness in the film. Her words, "What if I'm not supposed to be healed?" convey a deep trust in God's sovereignty, even when the outcome is not what she or Jeremy desires. This moment underscores the idea that faithfulness is not contingent upon receiving favorable results but is instead rooted in an unwavering trust in God's plan. Her plea for Jeremy to stop making promises he cannot keep illustrates an important lesson about faithfulness: it requires surrender. While Jeremy struggles to accept the possibility of losing her, Melissa exemplifies the highest form of faithfulness, complete submission to God's will, even in the face of death. Her patience and peace contrast with Jeremy's resistance, highlighting how faithfulness sometimes requires letting go rather than holding on.

7. The next scene shows the moment where Melissa passed away.

Jeremy: Someone help! Someone help! I love you. She's with Jesus. (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 01:30:07)

In the final moments of Melissa's life, Jeremy's response encapsulates his deep love and faith. His desperate plea for help, followed by his final words, "She's with Jesus," showcases his journey of faithfulness coming full circle. While grief-stricken, he ultimately acknowledges that Melissa is now in God's presence. This moment exemplifies the ultimate test of faithfulness, accepting loss while trusting in God's plan. Jeremy's love for Melissa remains steadfast, but his faith allows him to find peace in the knowledge that she is with God. His words signify not only his commitment to Melissa but also his enduring faith in God's promise of eternal life.

This final act of faithfulness demonstrates that true devotion to God does not waver in the face of suffering. Jeremy's ability to trust in God's will, even in his deepest sorrow, underscores the depth of his spiritual resilience. His journey throughout the film illustrates how faithfulness requires persistence, trust, and ultimately, the ability to surrender to God's greater plan.

Through these seven key moments in *I Still Believe*, faithfulness is depicted as an ongoing journey of trust, patience, and surrender. Each scene reinforces the idea that faithfulness to God is not merely about receiving blessings but about unwavering commitment even when faced with trials. Whether through love, suffering, or hope, Jeremy and Melissa demonstrate that faithfulness is an act of devotion that transcends circumstances and ultimately leads to a deeper spiritual connection with God.

Commitment to Spouse

Commitment to one's spouse includes emotional, psychological, and physical devotion within a marital relationship. It encompasses loyalty, mutual support, and a readiness to overcome challenges together (Lambert et al., 2012). Academic research emphasizes that a firm marital commitment enhances relationship satisfaction,

stability, and overall family harmony (Mahoney et al., 2003). When individuals regard marriage as a sacred institution, they are more likely to exhibit greater dedication and patience in confronting difficulties (Lambert et al., 2012).

1. The first data comes from the scene where Jeremy and Melissa confessed their feelings to each other.

Jeremy: "God, if she tells me she loves me... This is ridiculous. It's ridiculous."

"This is... What I'm about to say is gonna be... Might be weird. Could be weird."

Jeremy: "All right."

Melissa: "Um... Okay, uh, so, I... Well, uh, the other day, when you came by, it just, uh... It just really... It meant a lot to me. After you left, I had this feeling, like God wanted me to pray for you."

Jeremy: "Okay."

Melissa: "And for your wife."

Jeremy: "My wife?"

Melissa: "Yeah." "Is that weird?"

Jeremy: "I'm not sure yet."

Melissa: "Okay. So, I started praying, and then the more I prayed, the more I realized, I love you. I love you."

Jeremy: "Keep them closed."

Melissa: "Okay."

Jeremy: "Open."

Melissa: "What?" "How did you..."

Jeremy: "That's why it took me so long. Yeah. I wanted to bring the galaxy to you. I want you to know that whatever this is, and wherever it takes us, that

I'm with you. Every step, every moment, I'm with you. I'm in. I'm so in. And, um...And, you know, I figure if we're gonna get married, we have a lot to talk about."

Melissa: "Married?"

Jeremy: "Yeah. I love you. I love you, I do, madly. So marry me. And I know relationships need to be prayed about, and you can take as much time as you need. But that's why I brought you here..."

Melissa: "Yes. Yes. Yeah, I'll marry you. I'll marry you." (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 00:48:34)

In this scene, Jeremy and Melissa openly confess their love for each other, and Jeremy proposes marriage. His words, "I want you to know that whatever this is, and wherever it takes us, that I'm with you. Every step, every moment, I'm with you," reflect an unwavering commitment to Melissa. His proposal is not just an emotional declaration but a spiritual commitment, rooted in faith and trust in God's plan. Melissa's initial hesitation, emphasizing the importance of prayer, further underscores the depth of their faith-based relationship. Jeremy's response, allowing her the time to pray about their future together, reinforces his respect for both her spiritual convictions and their shared belief in divine guidance. His eagerness to merge their individual stories into a unified journey symbolizes a deep level of commitment beyond just emotions, it is a commitment to God's plan for their union. Melissa's acceptance of his proposal highlights mutual dedication and an understanding that their love is built on faith, trust, and shared devotion to God's will.

2. The next data comes from the scene where Jeremy's decision to marry Melissa is told to his family.

Dad: Married? You're gonna marry her? But will she get better?

Jeremy: I... I don't know.

Dad: Son, you're only 20 years old. You just met this girl.

Jeremy: I love her, Dad.

Dad: And that's wonderful, but...

Jeremy: Look, look, look. Why don't you just... Just slow down, take a little more time, you know? Go one step at a time here.

Jeremy: Dad, I'm supposed to be with her. I can't explain it. I just... I know that. And I don't want it to just be her story and my story. I want it to be our story. I know you're worried, and I get it. But... I'm gonna marry this girl. (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 00:54:07)

When Jeremy informs his family of his decision to marry Melissa, his father expresses concern about the uncertainty surrounding Melissa's health. Jeremy's response, "I'm supposed to be with her. I can't explain it. I just... I know that," exemplifies an unshakable commitment to Melissa, even in the face of potential suffering. His determination to make their story one, rather than separate narratives, signifies his belief that true commitment involves embracing both joy and hardships together. Jeremy's conviction, despite his father's hesitation, highlights a mature, selfless love—one that transcends fear and uncertainty. His unwavering stance demonstrates that genuine commitment is not contingent on circumstances but is a choice to stand by one's spouse regardless of challenges. This moment reinforces the idea that love is not just about personal happiness but about honoring a vow to be together through all trials. His decision to marry Melissa, knowing the difficulties ahead, reflects the depth of his devotion and a true embodiment of faith-driven commitment.

3. The next data comes from the scene where Jeremy read Melissa's journal that he found after he destroyed his guitar.

Melissa: Jeremy. I know you'll find this someday. See? I'm finally letting you read my journal. And I've thought a lot about the day I realized I loved you. Remember? I just watched you there, awestruck by your gift. Knowing God would use it someday to touch the world. I felt that day the same way I do now. You're asleep on my shoulder right now. I guess one of the benefits of the pain is that it's hard to sleep. Which means I have a lot of time to think. And I've thought a lot about the stories you love to tell at your concerts. You're so good at it. Ancient stories, still relevant and true. In one story, God grants healing. Miracles do happen. Yet to another, His call is to suffer, and even die. And I realized something, they both have value. Because each is a chapter in a bigger story. Each is the stroke of a brush on His beautiful canvas. Each is the light of one star helping to form a galaxy. And I think I'm one of those lucky people meant to experience both. I had my miracle. It led to the perfect day with you. It was enough. I've learned that suffering doesn't destroy faith, it refines it. And God is worth trusting. Even when we can't see. I'm safe in His arms going bravely into the light with a peace that I can't understand. So, do one thing for me, Jeremy Camp, for my sake. For the sake of your gift and everyone meant to hear it. When you're ready, pick up your guitar. (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 01:38:28)

Melissa's journal entry serves as a profound reflection of her acceptance of both love and suffering within God's plan. Her words, "Each is a chapter in a bigger story. Each is the stroke of a brush on His beautiful canvas," emphasize her unwavering faith and understanding that both miracles and suffering hold value. This perspective highlights her deep commitment not only to Jeremy but also to a greater divine purpose. Her acknowledgment of Jeremy's gift and encouragement for him to continue his music underscores her selfless love, she prioritizes his purpose and growth even as she faces her own mortality. The passage, "I had my miracle. It led to the perfect day with you. It was enough," illustrates her gratitude and fulfillment

in the time she shared with Jeremy, despite the brevity of their marriage. Her request for him to pick up his guitar when he is ready serves as a final act of love, encouraging him to find strength in his purpose rather than dwelling in sorrow. This moment encapsulates a profound level of commitment, one that endures beyond life, guiding and shaping the surviving spouse's journey even in absence.

4. The next data comes from the scene where Jeremy made a concert as a tribute to Melissa.

Jeremy: A few years ago, I met a girl named Melissa, and she is, and always will be, the love of my life. Melissa died with this incomprehensible, selfless faith. She was always reaching for heaven. And I believe she finally touched it. I believe she finally touched it, and she had to tell me that there would be another day, with no more pain, with no more tears, with no more sorrow, another day where I would get to see her again. I know I'm not the only one hurting here today. She told me that if just one person's life was changed by her story, then it would've all been worth it. Just one. So, this one's for her. (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 01:43:29)

Jeremy's concert tribute to Melissa is a testament to his enduring love and commitment. His words, "She is, and always will be, the love of my life," emphasize that his devotion to her did not end with her passing. He recognizes her "incomprehensible, selfless faith" and chooses to honor her legacy by sharing her story with the world. The statement, "She told me that if just one person's life was changed by her story, then it would've all been worth it," signifies that their love was not just about personal fulfillment but also about inspiring others. By dedicating his music to Melissa, he continues to uphold their shared faith and commitment, transforming grief into purpose. His ability to carry forward her message reflects a love that transcends earthly existence, a love rooted in faith, legacy, and a continued spiritual bond. This scene highlights that commitment to a spouse is not merely about

the present moment but about ensuring their impact and love endure beyond their time together.

Each of these scenes illustrates the depth of Jeremy's commitment to Melissa, highlighting love that is deeply intertwined with faith. His devotion is unwavering, even in the face of suffering, loss, and uncertainty. Melissa's faith and encouragement serve as a guiding force, emphasizing that true commitment extends beyond time and circumstance. Their love story exemplifies a faith-driven relationship where commitment is not solely based on emotions but on trust in God's plan and the willingness to walk through life's trials together. Jeremy's actions after Melissa's passing further illustrate that commitment to a spouse is not just about being present during life but also about honoring and carrying forward their love and faith even after they are gone.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is a vital aspect of human relationships, serving as a bridge that fosters understanding, trust, and emotional connection. Whether in a marital relationship or one's spiritual journey with God, communication plays a crucial role in deepening commitment and sustaining faith. Effective communication ensures that individuals can express their needs, emotions, and beliefs, leading to stronger bonds and enduring devotion. Scholars emphasize that strong communication skills contribute to higher relationship satisfaction and emotional security (Gottman & Silver, 1999). In marriage, open and transparent dialogue reduces misunderstandings and strengthens trust between partners (Fincham & Beach, 2010). Similarly, in spirituality, maintaining a consistent prayer life enhances one's sense of divine connection, providing emotional resilience and psychological well-being (Koenig, 2012). Research also suggests that spiritual communication, such as prayer and meditation, serves as a coping mechanism during stressful times, reinforcing faith and commitment to God (Pargament, 1997).

Communication to God

Communication with God is a fundamental aspect of faith that fosters spiritual growth, emotional resilience, and a deeper sense of purpose. Prayer and worship serve as primary channels through which believers express gratitude, seek guidance, and find comfort in times of distress (Ellison & Levin, 1998). Studies indicate that regular spiritual communication strengthens an individual's faith, reduces anxiety, and enhances overall well-being (Koenig, 2012). When individuals engage in prayer, they establish a personal and intimate connection with the divine, reinforcing their sense of trust and dependence on God (Pargament, 1997).

1. The only data comes from the scene where Jeremy asked for his fans a prayer for Melissa's healing.

Jeremy: Earlier this year, we had some tough news, some really tough news. I've never seen a faith like yours, babe. It's a beacon for me. It's a beacon for everyone who knows you. It reminds me of a story. There was a woman who was sick for a long time, a really long time. But she had this... This total faith that if she could just touch Jesus, just touch his clothes, that she would be healed. And that's exactly what she did. She broke through the crowd, and with everything that she had, she reached for Him. Just like I see you do at every single concert, Melissa, reaching out in faith, touching heaven. Can we do something special for the most special person in my life tonight? Can we pray for her? Because I believe that God still heals. You guys agree? Anyone who's sitting around her, why don't you go ahead and lay a hand on her. If not, just put your hands in the air. God, heal the love of my life. Heal her tonight. (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 01:00:54)

Jeremy's public prayer for Melissa is a powerful act of faith. Instead of keeping his plea private, he invites others to join him, making it a communal demonstration of faith. His prayer also reflects his struggle, his hope for a miracle, his fear of loss,

and his unwavering belief in God's power. By referencing the biblical story of the sick woman who touched Jesus' robe, Jeremy aligns Melissa's faith with divine intervention, reinforcing the idea that faith can lead to healing. This moment is significant because it shows that even in times of desperation, communication with God is not just about asking for help; it's also about affirming trust in Him and inspiring others to do the same.

Communication to Spouse

Effective communication is essential in maintaining a healthy and enduring marital relationship. Open and honest dialogue fosters emotional intimacy, trust, and conflict resolution between spouses (Gottman & Silver, 1999). Research suggests that couples who engage in frequent and meaningful conversations tend to have higher relationship satisfaction and resilience in the face of challenges (Markman et al., 2010). Moreover, active listening, empathy, and constructive communication patterns contribute to stronger marital bonds and long-term relationship stability (Fincham & Beach, 2010).

1. The first data comes from the scene where Jeremy tried to understand the relationship between Mellisa and Jean-Luc.

Jeremy: "Hey, can I ask you something?"

"Yeah."

Jeremy: "What's the deal with you and Jean-Luc? You guys, like, a thing? Or..."

"Oh. It's, um... It's complicated."

Jeremy: "How so?"

"He was my first friend here, actually. But, uh, I think this year, his feelings for me, um, have changed. And I never felt that way about him, so..."

Jeremy: "So, uh, what do you feel about me?" (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 01:32:58)

Jeremy's direct question about Jean-Luc shows his need for clarity and reassurance. Instead of assuming, he openly asks Melissa about her past and how she feels about him. This moment highlights the importance of honesty in relationships, by discussing past attachments, they can establish trust and move forward with transparency.

2. The next data comes from the scene where Jeremy confronted Melissa as Jean-Luc asked her out.

Jeremy: "You were out there for a long time. Did he ask you out?"

"Sort of."

Jeremy: "Okay." "And?"

Melissa: "Doesn't this all just bother you?"

Jeremy: "Yeah, of course it bothers me, Melissa." "You should just tell him."

Melissa: "I can't tell him." (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 00:34:03)

When Jeremy confronts Melissa about Jean-Luc's invitation, he pushes for directness while Melissa avoids conflict. His approach emphasizes the importance of open and truthful communication, while Melissa's reluctance suggests her struggle with confrontation. This moment reflects how faithfulness in relationships involves honesty, even when conversations are uncomfortable.

3. The next data comes from the scene where Melissa is embarrassed by how Jeremy acted in the family's dinner.

Jeremy: "Okay, you're walking really fast. Why are you so mad?"

Melissa: "I'm not mad."

Jeremy: "Really? 'Cause you seem mad to me."

Melissa: "Maybe it's because you're embarrassed by your family, and I don't get that."

Jeremy: "I wasn't embarrassed by them."

Melissa: "So, you're embarrassed by me, then?"

Jeremy: "I'm embarrassed by the fact that you don't want anyone to know that we're dating. It's... It's awkward. What are we doing here? What do you even want?"

Melissa: "Give Jean-Luc his jacket back."

Jeremy: "Oh, my gosh." (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 00:35:44)

The argument after the family dinner reveals different perspectives on identity and openness in relationships. Jeremy wants acknowledgment, while Melissa's hesitation suggests internal conflict. His frustration comes from wanting to be fully embraced, and Melissa's reaction hints at fears of commitment or public scrutiny. Their disagreement shows that being faithful to a relationship means embracing each other openly, without fear of judgment.

4. The next data comes from the scene where Jeremy and Melissa get into a complicated situation and had a break up.

Jeremy: "Um, can I come in?"

Melissa: "I... I don't think that's a good idea."

Jeremy: "This is for you. It's, uh... It's another journal. I figure, after what I've done, you could use a lot more pages." "Wait. I'm sorry that happened."

Melissa: "Obviously."

Jeremy: "But I'm also kind of relieved."

Melissa: "Relieved?"

Jeremy: "Yeah. I don't even know what that means. I am not relieved. I don't think Jean-Luc is relieved." "Okay. 'Relieved' isn't the right word. I'm happy that this is not a secret anymore."

Melissa: "I didn't wanna hurt him, okay? So, I'm sorry, I just really don't wanna see you right now."

Jeremy: "Hold on. What are you saying? We're breaking up?"

Melissa: "Call it what you want."

Jeremy: "Why, I call it breaking up." "Okay. Then I don't wanna see you for a while." (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 00:39:38)

Their breakup is filled with unsaid emotions, misinterpreted intentions, and unspoken pain. Jeremy's attempt to apologize is mixed with confusion, and Melissa's response is defensive. Their lack of clear communication leads to a painful separation, highlighting that misunderstandings and unresolved feelings can weaken faithfulness if not addressed.

5. The next data comes from the scene where Jeremy found out that Melissa is having a stage 3C cancer.

Jeremy: "So, um, what's going on?"

Melissa: "Um... They... They removed a, um, tumor the size of an orange from my stomach, tested it, and it turns out it's Stage 3C cancer, whatever that means. And, um, it spread to my liver. So, the truth is, the odds are not altogether in my favor."

Jeremy: "Melissa, I'm so sorry."

Melissa: "Don't be. It's okay. I'm okay. Somehow. I mean, I can't really describe it. It's, like, warm, like a blanket. I've been listening to this Ginny Owens song, If You Want Me To. Do you know it?"

Jeremy: "Yeah."

Melissa: "I just keep thinking, maybe God has chosen something bigger for me, something I wouldn't have chosen for myself. But to be honest with you, I am so scared. But I have to believe there's a reason. If one person's life is changed by what I go through, it will all be worth it." (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 00:45:29)

Melissa's revelation about her illness is a moment of vulnerability and faith. Instead of focusing on fear, she finds meaning in her suffering, demonstrating her deep trust in God's plan. Jeremy's response is one of empathy and concern, showing how communication in relationships should be centered on support and understanding, especially in difficult times.

6. The next data comes from the scene where Jeremy was telling the truth about his relationship with Melissa to Jean-Luc.

Jeremy: "Look, man. I should've told you."

Jean-Luc: "Yeah. Yeah, you should've told me. It took me a while, but I see it now, you two."

Jeremy: "Oh, man. I don't know what I'm supposed to do. I mean, I wanna be there for her and I wanna help. I don't even really know what we are, you know? How she feels about me." "We've talked about it, but if she really is that sick, it's just hard to know what's ahead."

Jean-Luc: "There's only one question you need to answer. Can you live without her?" (Erwin, A., & Erwin, J., 2020, 00:47:29)

Jeremy's conversation with Jean-Luc reflects his uncertainty about the future. Instead of making decisions alone, he seeks wisdom from someone who understands the situation. Jean-Luc's response—asking whether Jeremy can live without Melissa, shifts the focus from fear to love, guiding Jeremy to recognize his commitment. This scene highlights how faithfulness includes seeking advice and reflecting on personal emotions before making life-altering decisions.

This study explored how commitment and communication act as core expressions of faithfulness in *I Still Believe*. Through a detailed analysis of the film's narrative, dialogue, and characters, it was found that faithfulness is reflected not only in moments of ease but more so in times of trial. The film portrayed faithfulness to God through trust, spiritual surrender, and consistent communication, especially through prayer. It also illustrated faithfulness to a spouse through unwavering support, transparency, and emotional endurance. These findings affirm that faithfulness is a conscious, resilient act of devotion, anchored in love, trust, and an acceptance of divine purpose, revealing its transformative power in both spiritual and human relationships.

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