

Whom Can I Trust?

USA legal tender displays the motto: "In God We Trust." And, as long as I have some of that money in my pocket, I trust in God. In that case, my trust in God goes about as far as my money goes.

I get the impression that a lot of people don't trust God. Neither do they trust people. At one time, they did not have control of their own lives; others controlled them. Maybe they were psychologically, physically or sexually abused. Maybe they were traumatized by war... by crime... by a bad business deal or by a heartbreaking romance. Now, they strive to control their own lives because they trust no one, not even God. (Why did he allow those things to happen?) Today, they are trying to protect themselves from more harm.

The need for control is very important to people, especially if they feel unsure or unsafe. It's not that these people necessarily *want* control; they feel they *need* it; for them, it's survival. They would prefer to trust but find it hard – if not impossible. Both God and people now have to prove their trustworthiness. There is nothing intentionally unspiritual about these people. They want to trust but cannot because experience dictates otherwise. The road back to trust is long, slow and difficult, with formidable obstacles along the way: uncertainty, insecurity, suspicion, skepticism, bitterness, fear.

Some people are upset with *themselves* because their gullibility, naivety or weakness got them into trouble. They find it hard to forgive themselves. It should not have happened to *them*. *They*, of all people, should have known better. This raises the question of can I trust *myself*. Yes, of course, you could fall back on *self-trust* but, since you are only human (like the rest of us), just how much can you trust yourself? Apostle Paul says: "...let anyone who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

Most of us have had our moments of human failure, downfall. All of us came into this world with certain advantages (strengths) and handicaps (weaknesses.) And God takes all that into consideration. With the help of the Holy Spirit, I can overcome the obstacles; I can become more disciplined, mature and wiser. And what God's Spirit gives me is better than *self-confidence*. What can be better than confidence that comes directly from the Lord?

Human trust is precarious. We suffer if we trust; we suffer if we don't. We think we can't afford to trust but, in reality, we can't afford not to. Trust is an inseparable part of love. Without trust, love is not love. Our love cannot be healthy without trust. We can't love correctly without trust. We are to love ourselves, others and even our enemies.

By the way, another inseparable part of love is forgiveness. Without forgiveness, our love is deficient and diseased. Not to forgive is not to love. Remember that forgiveness is more than a feeling; it's a choice. Besides, if I do not forgive, I will not be forgiven.

In the love chapter (13) of first Corinthians, the KJV reads: "...*charity believeth all things.*" The NIV says: "...*love always trusts.*" And we can certainly learn how to handle betrayed trust from Jesus and how he treated his "friend" Judas Iscariot.

Trusting *God* is totally different from trusting people. Why? Because you can rightly accuse *people* of bad behavior, but you can never accuse God of wrongdoing. According to Job 1:22, that would be an outright sin.

Besides, God tests us from time to time. He allows unpleasant things to happen to see how we will handle them. Without testing, our faith and our trust are theoretical. Will we glorify God or will we curse him? Job's response to his wife was: *"Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"*

The tests God sends, the trials he allows and the discipline he administers do not mean he loves us less. Quite the opposite; it proves he loves us immensely and intensely. He says: *"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline."*

We betray God's trust, yet he continues to trust us. He loves and trusts you fully, so *you* can love and trust *him* fully. He is totally trustworthy, no matter what.

It's safe to say along with Job, *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."*

Yes, it may very well be wrong when certain people control my life. But it's equally wrong when I alone control my life. The best option, by far, is to be under our loving Lord's control. ◇◇◇