

# HOW CAN I TRUST AGAIN?

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Text: Psalms 12

Have you ever been burned in a relationship? You know, you put your trust in someone only to have him or her betray you. It hurts, doesn't it? Being burned emotionally is kind of like being burned physically—it takes time for it to heal, it will probably leave a scar and the event seems to be indelibly imprinted in your mind.

You may end up feeling like the cat Mark Twain told about. He said, "A cat that sits on a hot stove, won't sit on a hot stove again. He won't sit on a cold stove either. That cat just don't like stoves."

Many people are like that cat. They've been burned, they remember it and they aren't taking any chances on it happening again. That may be fine and good when it come to cats and stoves; but when we are talking about human beings and other people it can disastrous.

A person who doesn't want to trust anyone will often end up isolated, bitter and lonely. Those who won't trust God are far worse off.

Notice the *issues* that must be addressed concerning trust.

## I. CAN ANYONE BE TRUSTED ANYMORE (vv. 1-4)?

### A. Notice the cynic's point of view.

■ There is an old story of a father who took his young son out and stood him on the railing of the back porch. He then went down, stood on the lawn, and encouraged the little fellow to jump into his arms. "I'll catch you," the father said confidently. After a lot of coaxing, the little boy finally made the leap. When he did, the father stepped back and let the child fall to the ground. He then picked his son up, dusted him off, and dried his tears. "Let this be a lesson," he said sternly. "Don't ever trust anyone." --Bernie May, *Learning to Trust*, Multnomah Press, 1985, p.4

According to statistics there must be a lot of those types of fathers around. Note what the statistics have to say:

■ Percentage of adults who believe the following:

Always trust a minister/priest/rabbi: 60

Totally honest politicians can get elected: 43

Charities always put donations to intended use: 38

There will be Mideast peace in our lifetime: 30

-- *USA Today* (1/28/98), source: Bruskin Goldring Research for Kirshenbaum Bond and Partners. From the files of Leadership.

■ Statistic: Concerning the question "Whom Do You Trust?"

Percentage of people who have great confidence in the military: 64

Who have great confidence in the police: 58

Who have great confidence in organized religion: 57

Who have great confidence in the presidency: 45

Who have great confidence in the justice system: 20

-- *Emerging Trends* (Vol. 18, No. 4). Leadership, "To Verify" (1997).

■ Percentage of Americans who believe that "most people can be trusted": 35.

-- Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, cited in *Harper's* (4/96). Leadership, "To Verify."

**B. What is our point of view in light of what we have suffered?**

■ Someone I know said that it's, "Not that they look for the bad in people—it's just there!"

■ Dr. Jerome Frank at Johns Hopkins talks about our "assumptive world." What he means is that all of us make assumptions about life about God, about ourselves, about others, about the way things are. He goes on to argue that when our assumptions are true to reality, we live relatively happy, well-adjusted lives. But when our assumptions are distant from reality, we become confused and angry and disillusioned.

-- Haddon Robinson, *"How Does God Keep His Promises?," Preaching Today*, Tape No. 130.

■ A guy complained to his buddy that whenever he argued with his wife, she got historical. His friend said, "You mean hysterical." He said, "No, historical. She dredges up the past and reminds me of every time I've failed her in the past."

-- Jim Nicodem, *"The Father Heart of God," Preaching Today*, Tape No. 152.

## **II. HOW CAN WE OVERCOME A LACK OF TRUST?**

### **A. We must first deal with the obstacle of disappointment?**

■ Jean Otto writes, “Have some of your carefully created castles been washed away? Mine have. Several times along my life's journey, I had nowhere to turn except into my heavenly Father's arms. There I remained quiet, soaking up his love for as long as I needed. Then I saw his hand begin a new creation for my life, a new direction, a new service for him and his kingdom. Waves need not always destroy. We must allow our heavenly Father to use them to redirect our lives.

-Edythe Draper, *Draper's Book of Quotations for the Christian World* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1992). Entries 2797-2798.

### **B. We must deal with the obstacle of abused trust?**

■ Oswald Chambers wrote, “Jesus Christ never trusted human nature, yet he was never cynical, never in despair about any man, because he trusted absolutely in what the grace of God could do in human nature.”

-Edythe Draper, *Draper's Book of Quotations for the Christian World* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1992). Entries 2183-2186.

## **III. WHERE, AND IN WHOM, DO WE PLACE OUR TRUST (vv. 6-7)?**

### **A. Obviously, we should first put our trust in God.**

■ David writes in verses 6 and 7, “The words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. O LORD, you will keep us safe and protect us from such people forever.

You've probably seen the sign in a store before that says, "In God we trust; all others pay cash." That's seems to be the philosophy of many in our society. They say, "I don't trust anyone but God." But do they really trust God?

What happened to believing that God can lead, guide and direct us in our lives? What happened to believing that God is looking out for us?

Do we not believe in the Lord's ability to keep us from those people who would want to harm us, mislead us or be untruthful to us?

■ In Psalms 25:1-3 the psalmist wrote, "To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; in you I trust, O my God. Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame, but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse.

#### **B. Less obvious, is that we must learn to trust others.**

I know what you may be thinking; but I'm not suggesting that you be gullible or naive about your relationships.

## **CONCLUSION**

■ An experiment was captured on film that demonstrated "how adversity may condition us into a state of hopelessness.

A pike was placed into a large tank. At feeding times minnows (it's favorite food) were poured into the water. The pike energetically swam, gobbling up dinner.

Next, a clear glass cylinder was set in the center of the tank, and the minnows were placed within the oval. Unaware that an invisible wall separated him from his prey, the pike darted for the first minnow—only to slam into the glass. Stunned, he backed away and tried again. Same result.

For a number of hours this process continued. Finally, in defeat, the pike settled to the bottom of the tank.

The glass cylinder was extracted, freeing the minnows. They swam right by the nose of the pike, but conditioning had convinced him the minnows were inaccessible. Eventually he died of starvation." (Wood, 49)

I can't guarantee you that people will never fail you. I can't even tell you that you will never be burned again. So, you may be wondering, "How can I ever learn to trust?" The only way I know is by remember that God is in control.

#### References

Wood, George O. (1997). *A Psalm in my heart*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House.