

## Encounter T is for Trust Levels (Part One)

### Towering or Teetering?



*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. (John 14:1)*

What a wonderful promise that is! Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom – and the Lord wants us to exult in this freedom and to move in the power of it. It is so precious to the Lord when He finds people who are willing to love Him wholeheartedly and to trust Him implicitly! No wonder the powers of darkness do all they can to sap our confidence by targeting our trust. That’s why we are going to be checking over the next two weeks how our trust levels are doing? Are they towering high – or teetering rather too close to empty for comfort?<sup>1</sup>

The middle verse of the Bible says: “It is better to trust (take refuge) in the Lord than to trust (put confidence) in man.” (Psalm 118:8) How fitting that is! Imagine your trust levels as a bottle of spring water. Would you say that your bottle is full, half full, more than half empty, or dangerously close to empty?

#### **Checking your trust levels**

Faith has been weakened in modern jargon to the point where, for many, it has come to mean no more than trusting in themselves. Biblical faith always means trusting in God, with confidence in who we are in Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Scripture is highly challenging on this point: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord.”

BUT

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.” (Jer. 17:5,7,8)

Using a sliding scale between 1 and 5 – where 5 means you instinctively turn to the Lord and trust Him, and 1 is a cry for help – how would you rate your response? Keep that thought in mind as we make our way through this teaching.

Let's start with a few Bible verses. Take your time and savour their power. The most common word for trust in the Bible is *batach* and it means 'to be confident.' Amongst many other examples we may note:

*"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation."* (Isaiah 12:2 ESV)

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on [depend on] your own understanding.* (Proverbs 3:5)

*Trust in the LORD and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper.* (Psalm 37:3 NLT)

*O my people, trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart to Him, for God is our refuge.* (Psalm 62:8 NLT)

By definition, if we are not putting our trust actively in the Lord, we will be placing it somewhere else. The powers of darkness are skilled not only at sapping people's confidence but at inducing them to place their trust in even the most absurd and unworthy objects.

No sooner had God given Jerusalem fame and beauty than she began to trust in it, and to use it for her own advantage (Ezek. 16:15) Like our own nation, Ephraim depended (trusted) in her own strength, with the result that God permitted great trouble to come her way. (Hosea 10:13)

*"He who trusts in himself is a fool,"* (Pvbs. 28:26), but

*"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped."* (Psalm 28:7)

Forgive us, Lord, when we allow the focus of our heart to stray.  
May our trust in You be pure and strong.

### **The Bridge of Trust**

"Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 1:6)

Imagine a bridge. At one end is the challenging problem, at the other the Lord. The road surface, which runs all the way across, is love, and there are three specific spans to this causeway: Faith Trust and Hope.<sup>2</sup>

If anything happens to damage our faith, trust and hope we are wise if we make serious efforts to restore the damage straight away, lest serious damage be done to the bridge. We may, for example, need to forgive anyone or anything that has dented it – even episodes that occurred many years ago. Many, deep down, blame the Lord Himself for allowing certain things to come – or not come – their way. All such loss of momentum needs facing honestly. Without becoming obsessive about this, spend time in His presence, letting Him interpret matters to you. The more fully we manage to align our expectations with the Lord’s own purposes, the less inclined we will be to feel let down and disillusioned. When things happen that damage our faith, trust and hope, we are wise if we make serious efforts to restore the damage as sin as possible, lest serious damage be done to the bridge’s infrastructure. We may, for example, need to forgive anyone or anything that has dented it – even episodes that occurred many years ago. Many, deep down, blame the Lord Himself for allowing certain things to come – or not come – their way.

We need to face all such loss of momentum honestly, spending time in His presence, and letting Him interpret matters to us. The more fully we manage to align our expectations with the Lord’s own purposes, the less inclined we will be to feel let down and disillusioned.

#### **Trust: A Front Line Battle Zone**

The chief lesson I have learned in a long life is that the only way you can make a man trustworthy is to trust him; and the surest way to make him untrustworthy is to distrust him.

Henry L. Stimson

Trust men and they will be true to you; treat them greatly and they will show themselves great.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

In some ways, Frank Peretti’s novels *‘This Present Darkness’* and *‘Piercing the Darkness’* are not so far fetched. Someone who is full of trust moves in the power and authority as well as in the grace of the Lord Jesus. As such, this person represents a considerable threat to the powers of darkness. No surprise, then, that the powers of darkness enemy concocts elaborate schemes to try to undermine the people of God and to knock their trust.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> There is a very strong link between trust and hope, which is a spiritual and psychological necessity. Going through his unimaginable series of losses, Job cries out:

*Though he slay me, I will yet trust [hope] in Him.* (Job 13:15) *Yahchal*, the word used here for “trust,” means “to wait with hope.”

<sup>3</sup> Speaking of the temptation to despair, which is perhaps the most subtle and insidious of them all, the catholic novelist Graham Greene wrote, ‘It is impossible to go through life without trust. That is to be imprisoned in the worst cell of all, oneself . . . . Despair is the price one pays for setting oneself an impossible aim. It is, one is told, the unforgivable sin, but it is a sin the corrupt or evil man never practices.

Their first aim is to mask their own involvement. They are well aware that if we ‘twig’ what is going on, it is likely to invite full blown spiritual retaliation. Instead they engineer circumstances in such a way as to make everything appear plausible, whilst at the same time undermining our confidence that the Lord is in control. Once our trust is affected, it reduces both our willingness and our ability to respond to situations in faith.

Don’t be surprised if the battle intensifies when you are about to do something special, or are on the verge of experiencing breaking through into some new level of release. The powers of darkness often get wind of things that will glorify God and bring.

### Enemy Tactics

One of the common failings among honorable people is a failure to appreciate how thoroughly dishonorable some people can be, and how dangerous it is to trust them.

Thomas Sowell

The trust of the innocent is the liar’s most useful tool.

Stephen King

In a workshop I led on Intimidation at Ablaze last year I detailed the sophisticated ways in which Sennacherib’s master propagandist set out to demoralize Hezekiah’s defenders in Jerusalem. (<http://www.ruachministries.org/audioresources.htm> and see under Ablaze.) It is well worth studying his technique first in order to identify the dynamics involved, and then to shore up your own defences. The man’s aim was to prevent people from trusting what Hezekiah was telling them. It is a mirror image of the way Satan works (e.g.1 Kings 18:30 and Is. 36:15).

When we are about to do (or pray) something important, the powers of darkness would not be doing their job if they failed to remind us of similar occasions when things did not work out particularly well. Accusations along the lines of “You thought you were trusting the Lord and just look what happened,” are the Accuser of the Brethren’s stock in trade. Take it for granted that they are angling for a subliminal pact along the lines of “I’ll stop troubling you, if you will just pull back a bit.” **Don’t fall for it!**

Be aware: it is only a small step from blaming oneself for being a failure, (one of the many prongs of condemnation), to blaming someone else (the BSE syndrome)! From there the slippery slope accelerates until we end up blaming God Himself. When we begin to say (and even worse to believe) that God Himself has failed us, we are distancing ourselves from the one person who is able to help us. **Don’t fall for that either!** There is much we may not understand, or, indeed particularly like about what we are going through – and

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He always has hope. He never reaches the freezing-point of knowing absolute failure. Only the man of goodwill carries always in his heart this capacity for damnation.” It is particularly important to recognise despair for what it is. It masquerades as a logical reaction to a particularly difficult situation.

we can certainly tell the Lord this – but we must also continue to trust Him to work it all out for His glory.

Take a specific issue that you are concerned about and ask the Lord to strengthen your trust as you go through it. Resolve now: **“I will not allow lack of trust, or any specific flashbacks or human reasoning to hold me back!”**

**Trust is twinned with Discernment.**

*My son, walk not in the way with them; do not go along with them but refrain your foot from their path.* (Proverbs 1:15)

“Just trust me,” urges the charlatan persuasively. The proper response will often be, “Why should we?” In order to keep our trust strong and intact, there are people and incidents we need to steer well clear off, as well as other things that we need to embrace wholeheartedly. Don’t be too quick to leap to do or believe something – make sure it has the stamp and seal of the Lord on it before committing yourself to it.

Psalm 62:10 shows us where we are *not* to place our trust. *Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them.*

Jesus likewise warned: *The disciples were amazed at his words, but Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!”* (Mark 10:24)

We need special trust when the Lord’s path leads us by indirect routes that include delays and seeming detours. This is less surprising when we remember what Christians around the world are experiencing. We could almost say that following God’s will *regularly* led Jesus into the zone of maximum danger.

*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

*(1 Peter 4:12-13)*

The Lord may not always stop our water pipes from bursting – but He will often have a plumber in the vicinity to help us!

All our times of preparation and delay have a reason in the Lord’s economy. Why? Because He wants us to be involved and effective in redeeming the circumstances around us.

That does not mean that everyone will agree with us, even when we are proceeding in the right direction. Neither will they automatically prove mature or compassionate enough to be able to help us when the wind has been knocked out of our sails and our trust levels

are floundering. We need discernment *who* to share with, but the important thing is that we share at a heart level with *someone*.

If we are not willing to do this, it makes it much harder to “process” what we are going through. We then risk attempting to impose our own order into events – in other words to control people and the environment around us for fear that the Lord may not be doing so for us.

Who is most likely to develop into a controlling person? People who have been rejected, or who are inclined to be domineering. Why? Because their trust levels are so stilted that they don’t know how to give people the freedom that they need to grow.<sup>4</sup> There is a kind of person who brandishes their faith in aggressive and belligerent ways, making it more like a weapon than a love relationship that they exercise with humility!

### **Trust brings Rest: Rolling our burdens on the Lord**

Anxiety is the rust of life, destroying its brightness and weakening its power. A childlike and abiding trust in Providence is its best preventive and remedy.  
Anon

*Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves [trust not in ourselves] but on God who raises the dead.*

(St Paul, 2 Cor. 1:9)

If we look inside ourselves for answers we will feel oppressed.

If we look at circumstances we will feel depressed.

If we look to the Lord we will be blessed!

In Psalm 22:8 the Hebrew word used for trust ‘*galal*’ means to roll. Imagine yourself “*rolling*” your burden onto the Lord and trusting him with it. Apply this thought to some situation now. It will keep your focus from drifting into wrong places.

In 2 Sam 22:3 the word ‘trust’ primarily means “to take refuge”. *My God, my rock, in whom I trust (take refuge), my shield, my saviour.* This concept is expressed in dozens of places in Scripture. Remember the idea I mentioned earlier of “scoring” yourself on a 1-5 sliding scale. Review your marks to see what they are pointing to. Try and be as specific as possible. “A ‘middling’ mark of 3, for example may need further breaking down: “*I am trusting You here, Lord, because . . . , but I’m struggling with . . .*”

*He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge [trust]. His faithfulness is a shield and buckler.* (Psalm 91:4)

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<sup>4</sup> See my book review of John Paul Jackson’s book, *Unmasking the Jezebel Spirit.*  
<http://ruachministries.org/bookreviews.htm>

*Every word of God proves true; He is a shield to those who trust in Him [take refuge in Him].* (Proverbs 30:5)

*Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who trust [=take refuge] in Him.* (Psalm 2:12)

*But he who takes refuge [trusts] in Me shall possess the land and shall inherit My holy mountain.* (Isaiah 57:13)

*The Lord is good a stronghold in the day of trouble; He knows those who trust [take refuge] in Him.* (Nahum 1:7)

God bless,  
Robert & Rosalind

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