

Trusting God in Trials

Ps.145:17 The Lord is just in all His ways, and kind in all of His doings.

Trust the Driver Illustration

"Have you ever ridden in the passenger seat of a car when you don't really trust the driver?

Tailgating...changing lanes without checking the blind spot...how do you feel?

A bit tense? Holding on, pressing the brake that is not there

Bottom line: you want to drive.

Have you ever ridden in a car when you trust the driver completely?

Captain Jonathan Newsom—cutting corners, potholes, insurgent land mines.

You're in the army now. You and your partner are in a jeep, and you must drive across a field that you know has been mined by the enemy.

Who do you want to drive...you or your partner?

BUT...there's a question you should have asked me before you made your decision. You didn't have enough information to make a wise decision.

Who is my partner?

Let me tell you. Has spent years studying the enemy's tactics and has driven safely across this particular field many times.

In this case, you would not only be willing to give up control, **you would desire to do so.**

We can't give our wills over to a God we don't trust.

So Satan lies and demeans God's character in order to turn our hearts away from God.

Obviously, if our view of God is tainted with thoughts of His being **uncaring, unjust, tyrannical, or boring**, we won't be very excited about following Him. Even a single wrong thought can cripple us.

boring—a popular lie, especially among young people.

Afraid to miss out (I'll serve God when I get older, but I want to have some fun first.)

The more accurate our view of God is, the more we'll want to follow Him.

If we don't trust God, it's because we don't know what God is like.
The cure is the truth.

**Trust comes naturally
when we view God accurately.**

Nutmeg story

Did you ever have a pet when you were growing up?

There were two problems with the house:

1) it cost an extra hundred in rent. it would get on you.

Let's get a hamster!

Have you ever seen the Cover girl hamsters...?

Cinnamon or Nutmeg

We bought her everything (castle, tunnel that came out the side, plastic ball, hamster chocolates)

Her whole reaction was based on a misconception.

Many people are in that same situation...

Because they don't know Him, because they don't know what He wants to do with their lives, they're afraid to put themselves in His hands.

Launching pad

frozen in the starting blocks

The truth about God's plans is not that they will bring disappointment.

Single—forever!

Missionary in Africa. In a nutshell, I was afraid He would wreck my life.

I didn't trust Him.

I thought life would be better if I stayed in the driver's seat. Today, after thirty years of getting to know God better, I realize how incredibly deceived I was. **I stand in awe at how kind God is.**

God is more wonderful than any person has ever conceived. So good and so wise, that rebelling against Him is utterly stupid.

God's will for your life is much better than you've ever dreamed.

"It's taken all this time for my heart to be taught to say: **Whatever You want, that's what I want too.**"

A person who doesn't want to follow God is a person who doesn't understand what God is like.

Kid Stories

Electric baby

"You're mad at me--because I won't let you eat a nail."

"**Sweetheart, you need to learn to trust me because I am on your side.** You can't even begin to understand how this nail would tear you up on the inside. If something is really good for you, I want you to have it."

Though she had no clue about what is dangerous or deadly...

No parent is perfect. Far from it. **As parents we sometimes act selfishly or foolishly.** We may do what we think is best for our child but later discover we were mistaken. But God is never foolish, never selfish, never mistaken. We are to acknowledge Him for who He really is. **He is completely worthy of our trust.**

God wants you to know that you can trust Him—even with those hopes and dreams that are most precious to you.

I can't promise that God will go along with your plan, but I can promise that you can trust Him. **If God's agenda is different from yours, it's only because His is better.**

All white!

Some Christians are like that with God. In their hearts, they say, **“Okay, I’ll do what You say, but I don’t like it.** But I’ll do it, because You’re God and You’re big.”

People who don’t trust God are people who don’t understand what God is like.

Parents do many things for the good of their children that do not appear good to the children

Even on a human plane, a child can get a very wrong impression of a loving parent if he judges the parent by the way things appear.

Timmy & his plastic lawnmower

The same is true of misjudging God, the best Parent of all.

God is good--all the time! God is kind—consistently.

The Bible declares: “The Lord is just in all His ways, and kind in all of His doings” (Psalm 145:17).

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.

Abused children are often quick to obey.

But that is not the kind of obedience God is looking for from us. He’s not looking for obedience built on intimidation; He’s looking for obedience built on trust.

I can obey God without first acknowledging that God is good.

We must respect Him— **not only as the One that is almighty**, but also as the One who is perfect in wisdom and kindness, as a good God...

If we fear God's will for our lives, we don't fear God biblically. We don't respect God in the way that we should because our view of him is inaccurate.

Please pay close attention to this next verse:

Ps. 147:11 **The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him**, in those who hope in His **steadfast** love.

Those who fear God properly are those who understand that His love is **steadfast**. It never changes. They are not fooled by appearances. Even when their circumstances are bad, they understand God is still good.

Your Father in heaven wants you to trust His heart, to trust in His love for you. Do you know that His love for you is steadfast? Have you ever pondered that reality?

Lives Based on Deception

Wouldn't it be horrible to get to the end of our lives and discover our lives had been based on a lie?

Satan must deceive. That's the only chance he's got. **If people see God as He really is, they'll run to Him.**

All sin begins with the suspicion that God is not good.

Sin is an attack on His character. We only rebel when we believe that our way is better than God's way.

Sin attacks God's character. We don't believe God's way is best.

People can't give their wills over to a God they don't trust.

as fast as you could rip.

But often God doesn't show us His plan. Instead, He wants to show us **something even better.** He wants to show us His heart.

Rebelling from Him is **the stupidest thing anyone could possibly do.**

Some people think God is **the great cosmic killjoy.** Thus they are afraid to give themselves fully to Him. And it's all based on a lie.

The Bible declares that just the opposite is true: **"You have made known to me the ways of life; in Your presence there is fullness of joy, in Your right hand are pleasures forevermore (Ps. 16:11).**

Misjudging What God is Like

Some people misjudge God's character by looking at what this world is like. Although much beauty is here, there is also no shortage of tragedy or injustice. They wonder, *If God is all-loving and all-powerful, why is there war, and child abuse and rape? Why would a good God allow these things to happen? How can I entrust my life to God when He created a world with so much pain?*

If this is the kind of world that God made, then how can I trust Him? I don't want to serve a God like that.

They forget that God did not create the world like this. This is a world in rebellion against God.

Two ways to learn what God is like:

I. Look at a place where His will is perfectly done

BUT...why does evil exist?

If God is all-loving, He must not be all-powerful...if God is all-powerful...

They reason this way: If God is all-powerful and He allowed this to happen then He must have wanted it to happen, because He could have stopped it if He wanted to.

C. S. Lewis on Free Will

"God created people which had free will. That means creatures which can go either wrong or right. Some people think they can imagine a creature which was free but had no possibility of going wrong; I cannot. If a thing is free to be good, it is also free to be bad. And free will is what has made evil possible. Why, then, did God give them free will? Because free will, though it makes evil possible, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or goodness or joy worth having. **A world of puppets--of creatures that work like machines--would hardly be worth creating.** The happiness which God designs for men and women is the happiness of being freely and voluntarily united to Him...

Love Potion #9 Would you use it?

God is sovereign, but does sovereignty mean He does not give people free will? **Does that mean that everything that happens is His will?** Does He initiate everything that happens?

Student--angry at God because his parents got divorced.

Do you think God wanted his parents to get divorced? God hates divorce. Does God not give people free will?

Why do people blame God?

When you choose to do something that is not the will of God, does He step in and stop you from doing it? Does He force His will upon people?

“God is not willing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance.” Does that mean no one is going to perish?

A lot of people believe that since God is all-powerful, He controls everything that happens down here.

They have trouble trusting God because bad things happen to them and to people they care about.

Mark 6:5-6 And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief.

Daniel 2:31-35, 44 The Kingdom of God takes over.

But Jesus said to **pray that God's will would be done "on earth, as it is in heaven."**

God's sovereignty doesn't mean that He controls everything that happens.

Obviously, there is much that goes on here that is not God's will at all. By definition, **God's will is violated every time a person sins, and there doesn't seem to be any shortage** of sin in this world.

The Bible never claims that God causes everything. On the contrary, the pages of the Bible are filled with stories of people exercising their free will to do or not do the will of God.

Genesis 6:5-6 The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man upon the earth, and **it grieved Him to His heart.**

He is judge over all the earth. Every one of us will give account to Him.

"God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:9). Notice it doesn't say God is going to step in and stop the man from sowing something bad. Rather, the man will reap what he sows.

If we want to get an accurate view of what God is like, here are two ways to go about it: 1) look at what heaven is like 2) look at what Jesus is like.

If heaven is a reflection of God's character, what is heaven like?

Many think heaven consists of floating around **on a cloud playing a harp FOREVER.** The Bible says, "No mind has conceived, nor has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him."

Take the best conception of heaven that anybody has ever come up with, and heaven is going to be much better than that.

Incidentally, I'm glad that someone conceived of the clouds and harps idea, because now we know it's not going to be *that way*.

Image of angels—fat babies floating around

Matthew 28:2-5 And behold there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.

Eighteen out of the nineteen raised their hands.

People in heaven (undeceived!)—not complaining

'The will of unselfish love could not be anything else but delightful. The reason heaven is [paradise] is because God's will is perfectly done there.'

Heaven is going to be better than any person has ever conceived. Much better. **Why? Because God's will is perfectly done there.** Heaven is a reflection of God's character.

He is our Father, and He loves us, and He knows just what is best, and therefore, of course, His will is the very most blessed thing that can come to us under any circumstances. I do not understand how it is that the eyes of so many Christians have been blinded to this fact. But it would really seem as if God's own children were more afraid of His will than of anything else in life,-- His lovely, lovable will, which only means loving-kindnesses and tender mercies, and blessings unspeakable to their souls. I wish only that I could show to everyone the unfathomable sweetness of the will of God. Heaven is a place of infinite bliss because His will is perfectly done there, and our lives share in this bliss just in proportion as His will is perfectly done in them. He loves us,--loves us, I say,-- and the will of love is always blessing for its loved one. (H. Smith, A Christian's Secret to a Happy Life, P. 35)

How Can We Get an Accurate View of What God is Like?

II. Look at what Jesus is like

If you want to know what God the Father is like, then look at God the Son.

"Christ revealed God by what He was, by what He did, and by what He said. **From the cradle to the grave, every moment of His life was a revelation of God.**"

Hannah W. Smith, The God of All Comfort

Just what God [the Father] would have said and done under the circumstances, that Christ said and did. Hannah W. Smith The God of All Comfort

"the visible image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15).

John 14:9 Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father."

He was God manifested in the flesh. He was the will of God expressed.

Perfect in love (unselfishness), joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and self-control.

"It is evident, therefore, that we must never accept any conception of God that is contrary to what we see in Christ, and most utterly reject

any view of His character or of His acts, or any statement of His relations with us as human beings, no matter how strongly upheld, which is at variance with what Christ has revealed." H. Smith The God of All Comfort

binds up the broken hearted

heals the lame

forgives the woman caught in the act of adultery

opens the prison doors, dungeons

loves the little children

willing to endure excruciating pain—for you

willing to endure shame and humiliation—for you

Greater love has no man than this, that he lays down his life for his friends.

What kind of a person would do these things? **Everything Christ did was love-motivated.** Why? Because God is love, and Jesus was the visible expression of the invisible God. Jesus' actions show us the heart of the Father.

"We know now that God is like this that we have seen in Jesus. He is Christ-like. And if He is, He is a good God and trustable. If the heart that is back of the universe is like this heart that broke upon the cross, He can have my heart without qualification and without reservation." (E. Stanley Lloyd-Jones)

Some see Jesus one way and the Father another.

-kind

-harsh

-gentle

-severe

You haven't really lived until you've known and trusted God as your loving Father.

The Good Shepherd

Unlike a hireling, our shepherd will never leave us.

John 10:11, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." **The good shepherd always acts in the best interest of His sheep—even if it costs him his own life to do it.**

You can trust Him with your future. You can trust Him with your life.

Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, **he had compassion for them**, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

What would it be like to be a sheep without a shepherd?

What about you? Do you have a good shepherd? Do you live like you have a good shepherd? Is your heart at peace?

Lord, life with You as our shepherd is a great life. Even though there's pain, You walk with us through the pain, and You use it to instruct our hearts. You never waste a sorrow.

"The Lord is my shepherd." Think about that! What's the logical conclusion that David comes to in Psalm 23? **"My cup runneth over."** That's how good my God is! He's a wonderful shepherd.

John 10:12 He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, **whose own the sheep are not**, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

John 10:13 He flees because he is a hireling **and cares nothing for the sheep.**

He's not concerned about the sheep; he's concerned about himself.

What is the Lord trying to teach us? He's saying the Good Shepherd is not like the hireling. He truly cares for the sheep.

He is totally committed to us and our welfare.

a bit crazy.

But if you were a sheep, **which shepherd would you rather have?**

Look carefully at the following passage about the Messiah—another window into the heart of God.

Isaiah 40:11 He tends his flock like a shepherd; He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart.

What is this passage trying to teach us about the character of God?

Faithfulness in Trial

Dog with Problems

"I'm sorry, Sandy; it's a *chicken* bone"

Infection in her eyes.

Her heart was never the same again.

Her behavior seemed to say, *I thought I could trust you, but now I see that I was wrong.* She now had “proof” that she could not trust me.

What about you? **Do you have some proof that God has not been good to you?** That He has not been faithful to you?

Unfaithful Husband

“Oh my gosh! **My marriage was destroyed, because I believed a lie.**”

if **God really loved you, He wouldn't have let this happen to you.**

It's so easy for Satan to deceive us when we start judging God by our circumstances. Circumstances are not always good, but God always is.

The Hebrews Faced Plenty of Adversity

Unfortunately, they kept interpreting the adversity as “proof” that God had not been faithful to them.

“**Why do you bring us out of the land of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?**” (Exodus 17:3-4)

“**Because God hated us,** He has brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to give us into the hand of the Amorites, **to destroy us**” (Deuteronomy 1:27).

Judging God as cruel, as a sadist.

And the Lord said to Moses, “**How long will this people despise Me?** And how long will they not believe in Me in spite of all the signs which I have wrought among them?” (Numbers 14:11)

An amazing interpretation of what was going on. So many people make the same mistake today.

Exodus 14:11-12 “**It is because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?**

we can learn from their mistakes. That's why this was written down—for our instruction.

A wise man learns from his mistakes. A wiser man...

Their problem was **spiritual forgetfulness.**

Psalm 106:7 Our fathers **did not consider** thy wonderful works; they **did not remember** the **abundance** of thy **steadfast love**, but rebelled against the Most High at the Red Sea.

Moses knew that:

Trust comes naturally when we view God accurately.

“you have seen how the Lord your God bore you, as a man bears his son, in all the way that you went (piggy back ride or on the dad’s shoulders—tenderness shown) until you came to this place,” Yet in spite of this word, you did not believe the Lord your God, who went before you in the way to seek you out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by night, to show you by what way you should go, and in the cloud by day.
Deut 1:31b-33

“They forgot what he had done, and the miracles that he had shown them....They **did not keep in mind** his power, or the day when he redeemed them from the foe” (Psalm 78:11, 42).

They did not fill their minds with it.

If you want to be ready for the future, you must consider what God has done in the past.

If they had “remembered the abundance of His steadfast love,” **history would have been different.** They would not have jumped to false conclusions, and they wouldn’t have spoken as they did. **They would have fulfilled and entered into their calling.**

Their lives became based on a lie!

If we respond to trials with self-pity and complaining, we are probably making the same mistake. Spiritual forgetfulness. Not mindful of what God has already done for us.

What about you? Has Satan used times of trial in your life to lie to you about God’s character?

The fact that God’s will for us is good does not mean that everything is always going to go our way,

Not always rosy circumstantially,

But He's promised to be with us. He's promised to be our strength. He's promised that he has good plans for us, that he causes all things to work for the good of those who love him.

God never says that all things...**look good, or feel good, or even that they are good.**

Romans 8:28 says, "**God causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him.**" It doesn't say that God causes all things; it says God causes all things to work together for good.

Excellent at turning around bad situations.

"God wants you to **thank Him for His blessings by name every day.**"

My heart seems as cold as ice.

It affects your heart when you call certain things to mind..

However, by the time I acknowledge

- that the God of the universe cares for me personally,
- He knows me by name and He cares about my life
- that He has already delivered me from numerous forms of bondage,
- that He has good plans for my life,
- my wife and children
- that He sometimes uses me to bless others, etc., etc., etc.,
- **I feel like climbing on the roof and shouting, "Praise God!"**

Little boy with face shining--

When they worshiped in the temple, the glory of the Lord came down.

We can't magnify the Lord.

Responsive reading Psalms

Oh Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.

Truth is an anchor for our souls.

(If only they had remembered the abundance of His steadfast love.)

When we go through trials, it is easy to question God's motives or to charge God with wrong. If we grumble, "I don't understand why God did this (or allowed this)," **we are calling His character into question. In so doing we turn ourselves into God's judges.** We thus exalt ourselves above God.

I set the standard, and He doesn't live up to my standard. The implication is that I could run things better than He is doing it. Face it. The world would be a better place if I were on the throne.

We must hold steadfastly to our knowledge that God is good because **appearances will sometimes indicate otherwise. Circumstances are not always good, but God always is.**

Frustration with God

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise" (Psalm 100:4).

Or with complaining we can stay outside.

People crying out to God in prayer, immensely frustrated about some issue in their lives, and yet God is silent.

I've prayed about it a million times. **I'll do my part if You'll do Your part.**

Anger at God

Many people are angry at God, convinced God has been unjust or unkind in some way. **They are commanded to love God, but they can't do it. Their God is not lovable.** They are commanded to trust Him, but they can't do that either. **Their God is not trustable. Or so they think.**

Instead of cooperating with God, these people give God the stiff-arm or just ignore Him. They run their own lives.

Satan is the one who calls God's character into question, knowing that all sin begins with the suspicion that God is not good. His strategy has not changed since he approached Eve in the garden. Once Satan established this suspicion in Eve's mind, disobedience soon followed.

Satan is a deceiver. He can't afford to let people see God as He really is.

If we believe Satan's lies which demean God's character, **our hearts will turn away from God.** That's what these lies are designed to do.

God is not guilty of any of the charges of injustice or wrongdoing which have been leveled against Him.

Our sense of justice is a subset of His. His is complete; ours is not. He sees the whole picture; we see part. He can see right into people's hearts; we judge by appearances.

When we judge God, when we accept a thought that God is not fair, we are out of line. **Compared to God, we have peanut brains.** God is much more just than we are.

So relax. The next time someone says, "**Well, what about the people in Africa who never hear the gospel,**" relax. God is more just than you are. God is more kind than you are.

Arrogance--respecting ourselves more than we respect God. "**If I were in control, I wouldn't have allowed that to happen. Let's face it. The world would be a better place if I were on the throne.**" **The prayers of a grumbler grieve God's heart:** "Lord, why did You let this happen? I don't understand. Why don't You talk to me? Lord, why don't you show me what Your will is? I've prayed about it a hundred times. I'm willing to do my part if You'll just do Your part." In short the grumbling heart says, "**You're a bad shepherd.** You are mistreating me. How can I trust you?"

Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Will you even put me in the wrong?...Will you condemn me that you may be justified? (Job 40:1-2a, 8)

we are not only being arrogant, we are also being inaccurate. **The Lord is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings** (Ps. 145:17).

"Those who were incensed against Him shall come before him and be ashamed." (Isaiah 45)

Drowning in Blessings!

Those who allow the truth about God's nature to penetrate their hearts approach God with humility and thankfulness: "Lord, thank you for being so good to me. **I'm drowning in your blessings!** Lord, I don't understand all that's happening in my life, but I trust in You. **I thank You that You are causing all things to work together for my good.**"

If we're not thankful, it's not because we lack blessings. Legs, eyes, immune system (Aids), salvation, music, joy, peace, love

Always be ready to give account for the hope that is within you. (I Peter 3:15)

When things are going great, are people going to ask why you're so hopeful? No, **it's when your circumstances are falling apart, but you're not falling apart...**What's the deal?

Feeling disappointed because God has let them down. **"In this world you shall have rosy circumstances."**

Everything's going wrong

"Though the fig tree [shall] not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like hinds' feet" (Habakkuk. 3:17-19).

Sure-footed in tough times

My circumstances may have changed for the worse, but I will rejoice --- because God is still the same. Still kind, still wise, still in love with me, still faithful.

the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness (Isaiah 61:3b)

Is. 49:14-16 **But Zion said,** "The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me." "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she would have no compassion on the son of her womb?" Even these may forget, yet I will never forget you. **Look! I have you graven on the palms of my hands."**

Truth is an anchor for your soul. Don't let it go! Count your blessings daily.

So you won't turn away from the Father Heart of God when times get tough and it appears as though God has not been good.

Trust Him, and obey Him, and be courageous and fulfill your calling.

How Should We Respond to the Character of our Heavenly Father?

Romans 2:4 says that **it is the kindness of God that leads men to repentance.**

Think about that! **If we simply believe the truth about how kind He is, we will turn to Him.**

God is kind—consistently.

Lordship

Re: your view of God

What difference does it make? All the difference in the world, because it will determine who runs your life.

Who is the boss of your life?

Two different approaches to Lordship:

Okay, but I'm really scared about what He might ask me to do vs. My Daddy is so good!!! His will is more fulfilling than my highest dreams, more blessed than I can imagine.

I haven't been obeying You because, let's face it, I haven't been trusting You. I haven't believed the truth about what you're really like.

Lord, forgive me for resisting Your ways, for thinking Your ways are not good, for thinking I know better.

If you do, you're going to have a great life.

God can do great things with a heart like that.

Purpose of this material: Challenge them to trust that God's will is better than their own—in every area of their lives. Richer than you ever dreamed possible. More fulfilling...more blessed than you can imagine.

