

# TRUSTING GOD

by Robert Leslie

Life Perspectives from Fellowship Bible Church



Trusting in God appears to be the most difficult command that God asks of us. Some of us have *trusted in Jesus Christ* for our eternal salvation. (John 3:16) But, the reality of trusting in Him to control our **everyday life** is *down right difficult*. We'd simply rather trust in ourselves or in numerous other gadgets ticking and shining on this whirling earth.

The Book of Psalms is a **great** book which should revitalize our thinking and thus bring into **reality** the *fact that* God is Sovereign. As we read through the Psalms we hopefully identify with David in some of his dark and lonely moments, and we perceive that he eventually pivots his foundation from trusting himself to trusting his Maker. He stirs in us the futility of trusting in the bow, in the sword (Ps. 44:6) and even in the proud, or in man. (Ps. 40:4, 41:9) He encourages us not to trust in chariots or horses, but to trust in the name of the Lord our God. (Ps. 20:7)

***Difficulties afford a platform upon which He can show Himself. Without them we could never know how tender, faithful and almighty our God is...***

Hudson Taylor

Several years ago, I was spelunking with my son, Jeff, and two of his pals in a Rocky Mountain cave. We entered a narrow portion of the cave referred to as "Fat Man's Misery." Two of the young men were tall and thin making it easy for them to crawl through narrow passageways. Jeff and I were heavier and bulkier in stature which caused us a little more concern. After entering the cave, we were able to sliver through "Fat Man's Misery" with minor difficulty so we assumed we could exit it just as easily. Our only lights were faint flashlights and without them, the cave was pitch-

black...we couldn't see our hands in front of our faces. Being a 40+ year old martyr at the time, I allowed the younger men to make their exit first. After they had left, I approached the eerie passageway. Naively, I advanced on my belly for the final approach and after crawling a bit, I sensed that I was in trouble. Along the way I had inched my head, turned my shoulders, and flattened my gut making slow but steady headway. All of a sudden I felt a sharp rock from above cutting into my back. I was in an awkward position and I couldn't go forward, or backward no matter how hard I tried. The more I grunted with all my strength to move or turn my body, the more intensely the rock above penetrated my flesh.



The realization became apparent that I was well below the surface of the earth in total darkness. I couldn't move! My thoughts were wild imagining that I would remain there. My whole being and state of mind tried to escape, but my body wouldn't cooperate. The more I tried to move forward, backward, or to the side, the more acutely the rock above cut into my back. The rock held me in its grasp and I was helpless! I began to experience the feeling *panic*. Upon experiencing intense pain with my each attempt to struggle, I soon realized that I had no other choice but to remain still. After the fact, one of the verses that comes to mind, is "*Be still and know that I am God.*" (Ps. 46:10)

There are many times in our lives when God desires for us to remain still and to trust Him. We may panic, try to squirm out of it, or just attempt to fix the problem another way, but nothing seems to work. We have no alternative but to trust God. Believe me, I was at that point on my belly. My only alternative was to pray for God's help and deliverance. The time seemed to pass ever so slowly after I prayed. I didn't feel peace or even comfort, but I did realize that my God was God. Eventually though, one of the thinner

***Be still and know  
that I am God.***

Psalm 46:10

guys was able to gain entry through another opening adjacent to where I was stuck. He then got behind me and was able to lift up my legs, and place my body in a diagonal position, which allowed me to slip my body through the narrow rocks with minimal pain. At last, I was free and delivered, gratefully free and delivered!

One of my favorite stories in the Bible regarding trusting God is that of Abram in Genesis 12 and 13. In Genesis 12:1, God spoke to Abram saying, “*Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you...*” So Abram obeyed and left Haran with his wife Sarai and nephew Lot. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 11:8 that “*By faith*



*Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.*” Abram and his family set out for the land God would show them, referred to as Canaan. He entered the land and traveled through it to Shechem. “*The Lord appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your offspring I will give this land.’*” (Gen. 12:7) So Abram built an altar to the Lord and worshipped Him. Then Abram set out and continued his journey. Hebrews 11:9 tells us, “*By faith [Abram] made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country...*”

We can observe that Abram demonstrated strong faith in God by making this journey and by settling in the promised land, Canaan. A potential insight we might gain from this is that by demonstrating faith, by obeying God, and by believing His promises, there would generally be smooth sailing ahead. Right? Wrong!

***God desires for each of us to discover the  
source and objective of our faith.***

Then, there was a famine in the land of Canaan and Abram thus decided to go down to Egypt to live for a while. Abram didn’t even bat an eye, as he immediately took his family down to Egypt. By the way, note that there was no phone call or email to God, no checking in with his Lord, just a quick fix-it, knee-jerk response, or panic time. ***What appeared to have overtaken Abram was a big dose of fear.*** (The text does not elaborate on Abram’s attitude or feelings.)

Oh no—what next? What time was it? It must have been God’s test time!

At this time in Abram’s thinking and maturity, what do you think was the object of his faith? Was it Egypt where food and resources were abundant? Or was it his own self-sufficiency and ability to resolve the problem? C. S. Lewis was quoted as saying: that “We trust not because a God exists, but because this God exists.”

***We trust not because  
“a God” exists, but  
because this God exists.***

C. S. Lewis

As Abram and his family entered Egypt, Abram then remembered he had another dilemma. (Gen. 12:11-16) He seemed to recall that he had a beautiful wife, Sarai, and then suddenly wondered how much her beauty might impact his survival. Unfortunately, when Abram chose not to initially trust God, one thing led to another and he found himself trapped in an even more difficult situation.

Not only did he now have the potential of losing his life but also the lives of Sarai and Lot. Also, what would happen to God’s promise to Abram and to His promised seed (Jesus Christ)? According to Abram, there was a solution even if it meant a little deceit on his part and a little deceit on Sarai’s part. ***When in doubt just lie a little!***

Sarai, who was under Abram’s authority, was requested by Abram to lie or deceive the Pharaoh because of her beauty by saying that she was

Abram's sister. (Actually she was Abram's half-sister, but more importantly, she was Abram's wife). If the Egyptians had known that Sarai was Abram's wife, they would have murdered him and taken her. It appears that Abram believed that the end would justify the means in this case and that he would be treated better portrayed as Sarai's brother.

***Material gain in someone's life does not necessarily mean that they are in God's will or obeying Him.***

In fact, Sarai was taken as the Pharaoh's wife and Abram was treated with dignity. Again, what about God's promise to Abram and Sarai, and what about the promised seed? ***God thus intervened and caused the Pharaoh's household to experience serious diseases.*** As a result, the Pharaoh found out about the deceit and reproved Abram for lying to him and demanded that Abram and his family leave Egypt immediately. The Pharaoh asked Abram some convicting questions. *"What have you done to me? he said. Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? Why did you say, she is my sister, so I took her to be my wife? Take her and go!"* (Gen. 12:18-19)

During this ordeal, Abram's nephew, Lot, had the opportunity to observe Abram's **actions** and along with Abram had accumulated sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, menservants and maidservants (Gen. 12:16). **Wow!** It looks as though the end did justify the means and that God had blessed Abram for going to Egypt without consulting Him. Right? Wrong!

In fact, as we consider all the things that Abram accumulated in Egypt, it looks like he did quite well. His family accumulated all this "stuff" to bring back to Canaan with them including Hagar (as she was one of the maidservants brought out of Egypt). Abram demonstrated his renewed trust in God by calling

on the name of the Lord (Gen. 13:4) on his return from Egypt. After all, Abram, Sarai and Lot escaped with their lives by God's intervention. Nevertheless, there was a new set of problems for the family based on their trip to Egypt. I repeat, an abundance of possessions is not always a blessing. Due to the possessions, the land could not support both Abram's and Lot's herds and there was quarreling among the herdsmen. Therefore, in order to avoid conflict with his nephew and to maintain a good relationship with Lot, Abram came up with another solution (Gen. 13:9-11). Abram realized there was considerable land before them, and it could be divided between them.

Abram took charge and made another decision. I'm the oldest, I'm the leader, I'm the authority, and I'm the one who received the promise from God or we wouldn't be in this promised land. I'm also responsible for accumulating all these material possessions so I rightly get the first choice in selecting my portion of the land. Right? Wrong!

Abram demonstrated his sincere trust and faith in God in this specific circumstance. He had the maturity and ability to give freely to another. He let Lot take the first choice — demonstrating Abram's trust and faith in God. Lot could have easily responded by taking a lesser choice but he selected the well-watered plain to the north, the Jordan, like the garden of the Lord—appealing to the eye (Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 13:10-13).



Afterwards, God took Abram aside and said, *"Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you, and your offspring!"* (Gen. 13:14-15).

The following depicts the potential results of both trusting and not trusting God. You may have experienced results from both. Remember it is a difficult command and we all fail at one time or another. **But, it is He who never fails.**

## RESULTS OF NOT TRUSTING GOD

⇒We react instinctively out of fear, panic, or insecurity.

⇒We have to fix the problem now! We can't wait for God's timing.

⇒The end justifies the means; we begin to compromise or rationalize; a little deceit won't hurt anyone.

⇒We don't trust God to deal with our enemies so we must either harm them, eliminate them, or emotionally abuse—such as shun them until they go away (revenge).

⇒We have to take the best seat; if we don't take it, someone else will; after all, we deserve it. It's difficult to occupy the lesser seat and to allow God to move us up in His timing.

⇒We become territorial—it's my group and, therefore, I'll determine how its run and who performs what task; it's my land and I'll choose who lives where or serves under me.

⇒As a leader, we set a poor example of how those under our responsibility could respond. For instance, Lot observed situational ethics, how to manage and maintain abundant material possessions, and who to trust in a crisis.

⇒We utilize the art of controlling people under our charge so they will respond according to our desires. As examples, Abram encouraged Sarai in her deceit to take responsibility for his wrong decision. And, Abram could have manipulated Lot to take the not-so-good piece of land.

⇒Not trusting God is walking by the flesh and not by the Spirit.

## RESULTS OF TRUSTING GOD

⇒We turn to God and wait patiently for Him. God's timing is best.

⇒We give people the freedom to choose and to be themselves. Isn't that what God does?

⇒It becomes easier to honestly follow God's principles and rely on Him for the results (no manipulation or deceit is necessary).

⇒We become less fearful of our enemies allowing God to deal with them (no room for revenge).

⇒We don't need to take the first seat, or make sure that we receive our rightful recognition.

⇒A trusting God attitude reaps more security for his/her family members as they

observe that he/she is not reacting to problems (no knee-jerk responses).

As a leader we set an example for others to trust God. Our actions do speak louder than our words. *Trusting God is walking by the Spirit, not by the flesh.*

In conclusion, let's consider the supreme example of one who trusted God in the fullest sense — Jesus Christ. In 1 Peter 2:23, Peter is referring to Christ when saying, "*When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly.*"

In January 1988, Robert and his family began attending Fellowship Bible Church. Shortly afterwards, Tomi and Robert began leading a fellowship group. Robert became an elder in 1993 and was heavily involved in the construction of the new building in the position of elder liaison and also construction coordinator; has served as elder representative for the Love Fund; and most recently serving as the elder overseeing fellowship groups.

As an MAI appraiser, Robert works with his wife Tomi in their own business, preparing commercial real estate appraisal reports. Their family includes — Jeff who lives in Spokane, Washington with his wife Nicole and three children; oldest daughter, Julie and son-in-law Todd Thornburg who have two sons and live in Denver; and lastly, youngest daughter, Lori (16), who attends Rampart High School.