

## Trust God

Last week we discussed scriptures that highlighted and focused on character issues and spiritual development. It is prudent we continue along these lines in sharing scriptures that can lay a foundation for spiritual growth. As our studies have shown, the “Beatitudes” (from Matthew 5-7) are sequential in building one upon the other. These characteristics are critical in spiritual growth. As “simple” is my middle name, plain and straightforward is the best direction.

If we love God *first*, the rest of the development can follow under this one commandment.

**Matthew 22:36-38-** “Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?” And Jesus said to him,” ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is *the* first and greatest commandment;”

The issue in fully keeping the commandment is “with all your heart.” The word “all” is used over sixteen-thousand times throughout the Bible. “All” (noun) is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as: The whole of one’s energy or interest: giving their all for what they believed. *If* we love God with all of our heart, (all of our being, our innermost character, feelings, our essence, and convictions, which go *beyond mere beliefs*).

Our heart comes into play as it must be in the right place. That is why there is emphasis on its development in the beginning of the “beatitudes.” The humble and contrite heart is where God can and will build us in His character. As we read in the essay, Paul was addressing issues of carnality to the Church of Corinth. He was reminding them of their lack of focus on their calling and this was blinding them to the leading of God.

Something to consider, between loving God with all of our hearts and being led by Him, we must have total trust in Him. How many of us would follow someone or something if we did not trust them? A good example of this would be, how many of us trust the current judicial system and government after this week’s verdict of guilty for former President Trump?

Trust is defined in Webster's Dictionary as: "(noun) assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something. One in which confidence is placed." We may half-heartedly trust the system as it is the only one in place, but we certainly would not bet the ranch and the dog on the ones who are running it.

**Proverbs 3:5-8-** "**Trust** in the LORD **with all your heart** and lean not to your own understanding. **In all your ways** acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It shall be health to your navel and marrow to your bones."

Failing to trust in God with **all** of our heart tells Him we have doubts of His abilities. We have spoken of this in the past talking about "half-hearted prayers." We tend to limit God by an ineffective prayer, accepting defeat at the on-set. "If it is your will Oh Lord..." news flash, everything is His will! He does permit us to make foolish choices of *our* free will. They lead to a lesson and repentance, or we fail until we do. We can even lose our salvation. God has an eraser for the Book of Life for anyone who thinks "once saved, always saved." Sorry to disappoint you.

**Matthew 21:21-22-** “Then Jesus answered *and* said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only shall you do the *miracle* of the fig tree, but even if you shall say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it shall come to pass. And everything that you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”

We have an Intercessor to the very Throne of God. Jesus Christ paid the admission price for our prayers and supplications to be heard on high.

**Hebrews 4:14-16-** “Having therefore a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses, but *One Who* was tempted in all things according to *the* likeness of *our own temptations*; yet *He was* without sin. Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

If we hold back in any way, we are telling God we do not fully trust Him. We must first trust Him to lead us. When we love Him with *all of our hearts*, we will *trust Him above all else.*

One of the greatest acts of trust in the Bible was performed by Abraham when he was ready to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

**Genesis 22:10-12-** “And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called to him from the heavens and said, “Abraham! Abraham!” And he said, “Here I *am*.” And He said, “Do not lay your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

How great was his amount of trust? He had the knife raised to slay his son when the angel stopped him. I cannot believe any of us can imagine that level of trust and faith.

Even Job displayed a level of trust and faith that seemed beyond reason. Of the trials and misfortunes, he refused to curse God.

**Job 2:9-10-** “And his wife said to him, “Do you still hold to your integrity? Curse God and die!” But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speak. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.”

**Job 13:15-** “Though He slay me, I will trust in Him; but I will maintain my own ways before Him.”

The greatest example of trust was Jesus Himself. He trusted in God the Father to raise Him to life after being crucified, dead, and buried for three days and three nights.

Trusting in God will help us in overcoming any of our fears. He has told us he will never leave or forsake us.

**Hebrews 13:5-6-** “*Do not allow the love of money to influence your behavior but be satisfied with what you have; for He has said, “In no way will I ever leave you; no—I will never forsake you in any way.” So then, let us boldly say, “The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”*”

Having that One-on-one relationship with God gives us the peace we so desperately need for times such as these.

**Psalm 56:3-4-** “When I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God—I will praise His word—in God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?”

**John 14:27-** “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give it to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it fear.”

We must never lose our fear of God (a reverent fear, respect). God is the Only One Who can kill you twice. Keep that in mind.

**Revelation 2:10-11-** “Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death.”

It is not difficult to get pulled back into worldly things if you are forgetting any of these basic steps towards spiritual growth. Petty arguments, wrongful judgments, being a “busybody,” “he said/she said,” just take a deep breath and be still. There are protocols in scripture for addressing issues found in Matthew 18. If you want to judge someone, begin with yourself.

**2 Peter 2:20-22-** “For if, after escaping the moral defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they again become entangled in them, and are overcome, the final end is worse than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment *that was* delivered to them. But the *pronouncement found* in the true proverb has happened to them: The dog has returned to *eat* his own vomit; and *the* sow *that was* washed *has returned* to her wallowing place in *the filthy* mire.”

Just as a reminder, forgive those who wrong you, esteem others more important than yourself, are your actions glorifying God, will others see Christ in you? If *no* to any of these, again, just take a deep breath and be still.

**1 Corinthians 10:31-** “Therefore, whether you eat, or you drink, or you do anything, **do all things to the glory of God.**”

Professing to be a follower of Jesus Christ, *especially* if you are a baptized member, **be vigilant of your own spiritual condition.** You may not be as holy as you think you are.

**Luke 6:37-** “And do not judge others, so that you yourself will not be judged in any way. Do not condemn others, so that you will not be condemned in any way. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.”

Every one of us has an individual walk with God. It is between God and the individual. Nobody else. God sets the pace with the individual according to their intensity of commitment. We can only *encourage* and *pray* for one another. The best way for others to grow around us is to display and exemplify the love and image of Jesus Christ.

Trying to dominate someone with your perspective or your will is not even remotely Christ-like. Stay out of the world and its ways. We have been called out from among them, why go back? If we work on our own spiritual development with commitment, it will leave little time to sit in judgment of others.

**Proverbs 26:11-12-** “As a dog returns to its vomit, *so* a fool returns to his own folly. Do you see a man wise in his own conceit? *There is* more hope for a fool than for him.”

Putting all of our trust in God will assuredly strengthen our faith as the two are linked and synonymous. We can have this confidence *if* we are walking according to His Word.

**Philippians 1:6-** “Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will complete *it* until *the* day of Jesus Christ.”

It is critical we examine and comprehend every word in the Bible and the context in which the words are used. Studying foundational principles and building upon them establishes a solid understanding of the spiritual attributes God desires to see develop in us. *Loving and trusting Him with all our hearts is the beginning.*  
Amen.

BL- 06/01/24