

### Volume 3, Day 17: Trusting God is Living with God

What I hoped God would do in my life has sorted out very differently than I dreamed. But I wouldn't trade anything that God has brought into my life today for anything I hoped for back in the past. This life, as God's allowed it to unfold for me, was far from perfect, far from everything I wanted, but it has enabled me to know Him in the ups and downs in life, to trust Him as things unfold, to not have to arrange every detail of my life. I don't even get rental cars and all those things nailed down when I leave anymore because I ended up on too many trips with other people who were driving me somewhere who wanted and needed the conversation. And those conversations were very powerful for us.

So I want to encourage you. Don't try to give God your faith. Don't try to get more faith. Don't try to go into that routine because even scripture declares that just a little bit will do. All it takes is faith the size of a grain of mustard seed. What our faith needs to do is be based in God and who He is. It is faith **in** Him. It is **trusting** that Jesus **is** the **author** and the **finisher** of my faith. This brings me into a deeper reality that grows over time. When you follow Him, you don't try to save yourself. It is then that He does something amazing.

The reason I don't book six months or two years out on my travel schedule anymore is because I would miss things God wants me to experience. Wayne trying to provide for himself had over planned everything. If you want to grow in trust, if you want that to be a reality that happens in you, just follow His agenda. When you stop trying to save yourself, then and only then will you find the most incredible joy of learning to live **with** Him.

### Volume 3, Day 18: Trusting God is Ultimate Freedom

I hope to help those of you who are from religious backgrounds mostly about standards and expectations and rules to follow. You likely were feeling guilty if you didn't keep the rules. You may have been wondering what you should do or shouldn't do. Maybe you even missed the simplicity of listening to God to let Him lead you on. Instead, you tried to meet God's expectations or those put on you by others.

In Galatians chapter five Paul describes those who were giving up their freedom in Christ, that is, simply believing what the Holy Spirit was showing them, and instead trying to fit back into the rules and laws of the past. He wrote to them said, "Don't let go of your freedom. Don't give it up for anything. Don't take on any yoke of slavery or burden. The only thing that counts is faith that expresses itself through love.

If that's the only thing that counts, then that gets to wipe out everything else such as expectations, laws or principles. Instead of following those things, what he's encouraging us to realize this. Something happens in the human heart when faith begins to take hold in us, where we **fully trust** His love for us. Then we'll find ourselves loving other people around us more freely. We'll find that love will affect in us all the change that God wants to do. In fact, Paul says at the end of Galatians five, "Love fulfills the whole law. If you get the loving right, then everything God wants to come out of your life will come out. The whole of the Christian life is 'Christ in you' doing His own work and will. Trusting self in any way is not helpful. Trusting God completely and His Holy Spirit is all.

### Volume 3, Day 19: Trust in God, Never Yourself

So here's how those things have worked out in my life. When I was feeling tempted, like maybe I should do something, or wondering, "What if I'm wrong about this journey," I kept coming back with this. This is the only thing that counts. It doesn't count when I'm working hard for God. It doesn't count just because I'm doing things that other people expect. So I found the freedom then to live inside what God's saying to me.

So, first of all, follow what God's showing you. I think the tendency a lot of us have when God shows us something, we want all of our friends and family and everyone else to believe it. So we spend more of our time arguing, trying to convince others, push them into the same thing we are seeing instead of simply following it ourselves, letting God love us into a place of change instead of trying to push other people to it as well. Secondly, beware of religious people. You know the type, and if you've grown up in religious environments, they may be all the people. They may be still living by old expectations and they want you to do so as well. They use guilt and fear as tools to try to manipulate you to the conformity they want.

When you really discover that the only thing that counts is a growing **trust in who God is** expressed in our love for people, that manipulation of religious folks loses its power. No longer do you feel compelled to follow that. You don't have to push them out of your life and go away. Just be wary. Learn to care for others. Watch out for other people around you. You learn how to love them in a different way as that trust in Him grows. Now I love easily and trust carefully. But it is God that I trust!

ENGAGING God -- Bob Clarkson

### **Volume 3, Day 20: Trust in God – Wary of People**

A lot of people confuse love and trust. If I love someone, I'll trust them. You can love people you don't trust or even respect. Love is just having affection for them given that they are children of God, even if not 'born again.' God breathed life into them too. I can love you regardless of whatever character traits you exhibit or don't. Love is a feeling. Trust is an expression.

Trust is something that is earned over time through observation and evaluation. Trust is not all encompassing. If I know that your loyalty to me is such that you would lay down your life for me, then I can trust you with my life. However, just because you might die to save my life, does not indicate that you can be trusted to handle my money or people I value in a way that I can entrust my wealth or children to your care.

Christians are often more gullible than others. We can be easily deceived because they go to our church. Many people want to con you in order to get you to trust them. Then when you do, they violate that trust and steal your valuables.

You can love prolifically, but you should trust cautiously. Trust is the responsibility of the one who entrusts his valuables to another. If you have not done due diligence regarding their character, you may become extremely angry when you find that they have poorly handled what you have given to their care. Even those whom you love might disappoint you sorely in some matters of trust. I have a friend who is known to wreck cars a lot. I will not let him drive any of mine! Maybe you shouldn't let him drive yours either.

### **Volume 3, Day 21: Create Space and Time for Them**

I have observed how my heart has opened to love the least, the last and the lost when I needed to be loved by other people. I thought that's what we all needed to survive. We naturally look out for the neat people, the people we like, the people that are fun to be with.

When God begins to fill up the space in your heart of love and you're not so busy doing all the things you used to do, you're not running to the busyness to hide anymore. So now you've got space, time and energy in your life available when those who need to be loved, who are at broken places emotionally are going through difficult times. Instead of running from them, you can step in.

Create space in your life to be with those who are broken, hurting, or ignored. Make it a point to spend time with them or including, inviting, loving, and enjoying them. Finally be patient with all of them. I love that phrase from 'Thessalonians. 'There's not a single relationship in which a little patience won't go a long way.

No, you don't have to make everybody do what you want. And no, you can't love everybody in your life. But as you're growing trust in father's affection for you, it frees you to love other people around you. You'll know what you need to do. You'll know when to get involved and when you should not. Yes, you can love everyone around you. No, you can't meet every need. You will exhaust yourself if you try. But as this growing trust in Father's affection satisfies you, you'll find you have less need of people. When you don't need for them to do what you want, you're able to love them exactly as God wants.

### Volume 3, Day 22: Listen to the Right Things

Let's learn to **listen to the right things**. Often religion taught us to listen to the wrong things. We focused on whether we had the right doctrine. And though that's not unimportant, you can have the right doctrine and still not know how to live this life or how to listen to God. We learned about getting other people's approval and attending the right church or going to the right meetings or being under the right leadership or having the right look or pretending to be someone. We were acting better. Somehow we thought that all those things were going to be helpful to this journey. I found that they really aren't.

Let me tell you about eight things that I think are very helpful for people to tune out the signals that are the noise, the static and the distraction, and tune in more of that signal, which includes more of God's heart in the way we live. Let's look at the first one.

Be focused less on appearances. That's both material **appearances**, whether I've got the right clothes and the right look. It's also **pretending** to be better than I am not focusing on what's real in my life. I hear people all the time say, well, if I do that, what are other people going to think? If you're worried about what other people are going to think, you're not going to do well on this journey because you're going to try to meet everybody else's expectation around you. So, learn to focus on what God wants me to be part of right now. What might be on God's heart? Follow that, even if other people, maybe even people very close to you or other people you love don't understand. **Just be the best follower** you can be. And be following God's plans and purposes, just like Jesus did.

### Volume 3, Day 23: Guilt, Busyness and Ability

Secondly, **listen for the signal of guilt and fear.**

Religion teaches that those are valuable tools to get you to act right. What we learn by observing the life of Jesus is that His love is what changes us. So begin leaning away from fear and guilt. Actually, just let them die. If you're going to feel guilty if you don't do something, don't do it. Let that guilt die. This will enable you to live in the security of His genuine and deep affection. You really are a love child. And out of that love you can do whatever He asks and whenever He wants to be part of your life. You don't have to rush around, terrorized by fear and guilt, trying and make something happen.

Third, **reduce busyness and complication.**

The life of Jesus is pretty simple. It's simple in that we just need to **follow** him. Do what feels best on our heart each day. And if we don't know what to do, then we don't have to do anything. It's not always about doing something. It's about living true to who you are in the light of who He is. So move away from busyness and complication. Have more margin (availability) in your life for yourself, for Him, and for others that he might want you to engage.

Fourth, **lose confidence in your own abilities.**

I think religion is notorious here. Say, you can do this. Here's the five principles. You've got to work this discipline. You can make this happen. Paul said he lost all confidence in his flesh on this journey. It wasn't human effort that could ever accomplish the work of God. So you want to lean away from that which puts pressure on you to perform and lean into that reflection of God, "What are you doing in me today? And how do I cooperate with that instead of trying to make it happen on our own."

### Volume 3, Day 24: Humility, Chaos and Conformity

Five. In your relationships with others, I'd encourage you to be less arrogant and confrontational and be more **gracious and humble**. Express more patience to people around you. Try not to force your opinion on others. Don't demand other people to see it the way you see it. Learn to live inside the freedom of you having your journey and letting them have theirs. There will be that honest moment you need to face that is difficult with somebody, but it won't come when you want it. It's going to come when it's in their best interest, not yours.

Six. **Don't try to avoid the chaos.** So much of our journey has been, well, if we just get things right, God will bless us. So I try to do whatever's easiest, most convenient, whatever's going to be most comfortable for me. We try to avoid the chaos of the world we live in. This is a broken and therefore chaotic world. There's plenty of chaos to go around. Don't live trying to avoid it. Embrace Him in the chaos. Life is what it is. Watch it unfold. God has things to show you. If He has things He wants you to pray about, He'll make that clear to you. You can go with that as well.

Seven. **Drift away from conformity** to what other people want you to do or to be. It may even be people who are spiritual leaders who want you to say certain things and do certain things for them. Avoid conformity of other people's expectations and learn to live in the 'fruit' of the Spirit. His emotions of love, joy, and peace will produce expressions of longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. Learn to live in that Spirit's way, not your performance or conformity to others' expectations.