Lesson One

**CAN YOU TRUST GOD?**

*(Preface and Chapter 1)*

***Developing Trust***

1. Do you have a harder time trusting God in the major trials of your life or in relatively minor things? Explain why you think this is the case.
2. Do you think Christians struggle more with questions and uncertainties in the midst of adversity than nonbelievers? Why or why not?
3. a. According to Proverbs 27:1, what should be our perspective on the future?

b. How does this affect our need to trust God?

1. God desires that we learn to trust Him. What do you learn about trust from these verses?
* Psalm 32:10
* Proverbs 3:5
* John 14:1
1. a. What is the difference between trusting God and obeying Him?
* b. How are trusting God and obedience related?
* c. Is it easier for you to trust God or to be obedient? Explain why.
* d. Describe a situation in your life where obedience and trusting were both important.

* e. Describe a time when trusting God made it easier to be obedient.
1. Read Psalm 78:9-22.
2. What attitude did the Israelites reveal in the desert?
3. What was God’s reaction to their attitude?
4. Describe a time when your attitude was similar to that of the Israelites.
5. How do you think God felt about your attitude? (See Hebrews 11:6 and Philippians 2:14)
6. What in your life indicated how God felt?
7. According to Isaiah 55:9 and Romans 11:33, why is it important for us to trust God even when we don’t understand what He is doing?
8. a. What do these verses say about our privilege of knowing God?
* Psalm 9:10
* Jeremiah 9:23-24
* Philippians 3:8-11

b. Knowing God is more than simply knowing facts about Him. What does it mean to know God?

c. What are you doing to get to know God better?

d. Do you need to make or renew your commitments to these actions?

1. Write a prayer in which you express your desire to know God more intimately.

***Trust in Action***

Choose one or more of these ideas to work on. Groups may want to allow time each week to share experiences from this section.

1. Keep a journal while studying this book. Record all the circumstances in which you see God’s control and guidance in your life. Beginning this log now will help you see concrete evidence for truths discussed in later chapters.
2. Memorize Psalm 32:10
3. Make a commitment to memorize Romans 8:18-39. This may seem like an overwhelming task, but if the passage is broken down into small sections, it can be memorized fairly easily. The rewards of having this amazing passage memorized will be more than worth the effort.
4. Think of a relationship in which you have trusted another person. Write a letter to this person and share your thoughts from this lesson. Tell this person how much you value his or her trustworthiness.
5. Ask God for the opportunity to share something about His trustworthiness with an unbeliever. Watch for the opportunity and take advantage of it.

Lesson Two

**IS GOD IN CONTROL?**

*(Chapters 2 and 3)*

***Developing Trust***

1. a. What is God’s providence? (The “Examining Trust” section may help you answer these questions.)

b. What is the purpose or objective of God’s providence?

c. Describe a situation in your life when God’s will and your best interests seemed to be in conflict.

d. How was this conflict resolved?

1. What do the following verses say about God’s providence?
* Psalm 31:15
* Psalm 147:8-9
* Acts 17:24-28
* 2 Corinthians 9:10
1. What specific evidence of God’s sustaining presence in the universe is most dramatic to you? (Illustrations from science would be appropriate here.)
2. a. In what ways do people see God’s providence as limited?

b. Do you think of God’s providence is limited? Explain.

c. In what ways do you act as though God’s providence is limited, even though you may believe that it isn’t?

1. a. Restate Matthew 10:29-31 in your own words.

b. Think about a person who sees chance or randomness as the explanation for all that happens. How would this philosophy affect his or her life?

 c. What would such a person value?

 d. How does Matthew 10:29-31 refute such a perspective?

1. a. Do you believe that God is active in the daily affairs of your life?

b. What evidence do you see, from your past or present, for His involvement in your life? (If you have begun keeping a journal, it may help you answer this question.)

1. There is an invisible war being waged between God and Satan, and our lives are often the battleground. What do the following passages say about Satan’s ability to touch us?
* Job 1:12; 2:6
* Luke 22:31-32
1. God never permits people to act contrary to His sovereign will. How do the following verses support this statement?
* Proverbs 16:9
* Proverbs 19:21
* Lamentations 3:37
* James 4:13-15

(For additional study see Proverbs 21:30; Ecclesiastes 7:13; and Revelations 3:7.)

 9. What conclusions about God and what He does can you draw from these verses?

* Job 42:2
* Psalm 115:3
* Isaiah 46:10
* Daniel 4:34-35

(For additional verses see Isaiah 14:27; 43:13; and Ephesians 1:11-12)

10. In his book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People,* Rabbi Harold Kushner concludes that God cannot be both sovereign and good, so Kushner chooses to believe in a God who is good.

 a. What do you think about Rabbi Kushner’s conclusion?

 b. How do you reconcile God’s goodness and His sovereignty? That is, if God is able to prevent evil, and if He is committed to good, when why doesn’t He ever prevent evil?

11. We need to be very sensitive in teaching others about the sovereignty of God and encouraging them to trust God when they are in the midst or problems or pain. It is much easier to trust in the sovereignty of God when it is the other person who is hurting. We need to be like Jesus, of who it was said, “A bruised reed he will not break” (Matthew 12:20). Job lost his children, his wealth, and his health. His friend preached to him about God’s sovereignty. Read Jog’s response to his friends in Job 6:14-27.

 a. What did Job’s friends do wrong? How did they “bruise” him?

b. If you had a friend in Job’s position, how would you deal with him when he questioned God’s sovereignty and goodness?

***Trust in Action***

1. Choose one of the following Bible characters and read his or her story. Briefly summarize how God guided the events in this person’s life. Remember that these stories were given to us for encouragement (see Romans 15:4). What God did for these people, He will do for you.
* Joseph: Genesis 37; 39-45
* Esther: Esther
* Ruth: Ruth
1. Think of someone you know who is in a difficult situation. Express God’s love to him or her in a tangible way (prepare a meal, write a note of encouragement, offer to help with household repairs, and so forth).
2. Memorize Romans 8:28-29.

Lesson Three

**GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY OVER PEOPLE**

*(Chapter 4)*

***Developing Trust***

1. Examine the following Scriptures for evidence of God’s work in the hearts of believers and unbelievers. Record the key words used to describe His working.
* Ezra 1:1, 5; 6:22
* Proverbs 21:1
* Daniel 1:9
* 2 Corinthians 8:16-17
* Deuteronomy 2:30
* Joshua 11:20
1. Read Exodus 4:21 and 8:15.
2. Who is given the responsibility for Pharaoh’s hard heart in each of these verses?
3. How do these verses, taken sided by side, help us see the relationship between man’s responsibility and God’s work in our hearts?
4. God’s restraining influence on people’s actions and decisions is seen in the following verses. Complete the chart.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Scripture** | **What action did God prevent?** | **What emotion did God influence?** |
| Genesis 20:1-7 |  |  |
| Genesis 35:5 |  |  |
| Exodus 34:23-24 |  |  |

1. According to the following verses, how do the sinful actions of man affect God’s purposes?
* Genesis 50:20
* Acts 4:27-28
* Revelation 17:15-18
1. Do you agree that a finite mind cannot comprehend an infinite Being beyond what He has expressly revealed? Why or why not?
2. a. God can and does work in the minds and hearts of people to accomplish His will. How should that truth affect your attitude?
3. How should that truth affect the way you pray about your job or other concerns?
4. Why should confidence in God’s sovereignty in the lives of people keep us from becoming resentful and bitter when we are treated unjustly or maliciously by others?
5. a. Describe a time when you were treated unfairly.
6. How did you react?
7. To what extent did your reaction show trust in God?
8. Would you like your response to be different next time? If so, why?
9. What was the end result of the situation?
10. What good, if any, came from this situation?
11. What are some specific things you can pray for in your own life this week, knowing that God can work in people’s hearts?

10. a. Describe a time recently when you were affected by someone else’s or action.

1. At the time how did you feel about the situation?
2. How do you feel now about the outcome of the situation?
3. Does you study of God’s sovereignty in the hearts of people affect your perspective of what happened? How?

***Trust in Action***

1. Memorize Deuteronomy 29:29 or Proverbs 21:1.
2. Think of three people you know who need to turn to the Lord. Ask the Lord to work in their hearts.
3. Are there people who have treated you unfairly whom you have not forgiven? Spend some time with the Lord, asking Him to cleanse you of all bitterness toward others. Pray Psalm 51:10.

Lesson Four

**GOD’S RULE OVER NATIONS**

*(Chapter 5)*

***Developing Trust***

1. There are many events that took place during the life of Jesus that show how government officials, acting freely, fulfilled the purposes of God. Gill in the following chart.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scripture** | **Name of Ruler** | **Official Action** | **Prophecy Fulfilled** |
| Matt 2:13-16(cf. Hosea 11:13) |  |  |  |
| Matt 2:17-18(cf. Jer 31:15) |  |  |  |
| Matt 2:21-23(cf. Isa 9:1) |  |  |  |
| Luke 2:1-4(cf. Micah 5:2) |  |  |  |
| Acts 4:27-28(cf. Isa 53:3-6) |  |  |  |

1. What truths are taught about governments and rulers in the following verses?
* Proverbs 16:9, 33
* Proverbs 21:31
* Isaiah 40:22-24
* Daniel 4:17
* Daniel 4:31-32
* Romans 13:1-4
1. What responsibilities do we have toward our government?
* Romans 13:1-7
* 1 Timothy 2:1-4
1. a. Describe a time in your life when a governmental decision had an effect on your life (for example, military draft, new tax laws, or zoning regulation).
2. How did you see God’s hand in the events at the time?
3. From your present perspective, what do you think God was doing in that situation?
4. a. Read 2 Samuel 15:1-16 and 16:20 – 17:14. Why did God want Absalom to follow Hushai’s advice?
5. What might be God’s purpose in allowing rulers to make foolish decisions?
6. Does God protect His people from the consequences of these poor decisions? Why or why not?
7. According to Daniel 9:1-19, what was Daniel’s response when he realized Israel’s exile in Babylon was almost over?
8. a. What is promised in the following verses?
* Matthew 28:18-20
* Revelation 7:9-10
1. How can you respond to these promises?
2. a. What are your general thoughts about the present world situation?
3. Did the truths in this chapter change your perspective on current events? If so, how?

***Trust in Action***

1. Spend some time with the Lord doing some soul searching about your role in the political process of your country? Is God prompting you to a deeper involvement?
2. Write your government representatives letting them know what you think about an issue under debate.
3. Choose several world leaders and make a commitment to pray regularly for them. Make an effort to read articles about these leaders and their lives.
4. Choose one group of missionaries and pray regularly for them. Or choose one nation that is currently hostile to the gospel and pray regularly that God will open doors in that country.
5. Memorize Psalm 33:16-17.

Lesson 5

**GOD’S POWER OVER NATURE**

*(Chapter 6)*

***Developing Trust***

1. Summarize, in our own words, what each of these verses says about God’s role in natural phenomena.
* Job 37:3, 6, 10-13
* Psalm 147:8, 16-18
* Jeremiah 10:13; 14:22
* Amos 4:7-9
1. a. What is your usual attitude toward the weather? Do you tend to complain about it: Thank God for it? Feel that God isn’t responsible?
2. Is your attitude generally pleasing to God? Why or why not?
3. a. What is God taking responsibility for its Exodus 4:11 and 45:7?
4. What are some possible responses to these passages?
5. Which response do you choose? Why?
6. Read John 9:1-3. Explain, in your own words, the reason Jesus gives for the man’s blindness.
7. a. What does God teach us about the conception of children in these verses?
* Genesis 16:2
* Genesis 29:31
* Judges 113:3
* 1 Samuel 1:5
* Psalm 139:13
1. If a couple is unable to have children, how can these verses help them maintain a trusting attitude toward God?
2. The idea that God claims responsibility for deadly earthquakes, droughts, blindness, and childlessness prompts sensitive people to ask questions. Certainly we can’t learn much without asking questions.
3. Are there limits to the kinds of questions we should ask of God? If so, what limits? If not, why not?
4. Can we expect God to answer our questions? Why or why not?
5. What kinds of attitudes are acceptable when questioning God?
6. What kinds of attitudes are unacceptable?
7. Give some possible reasons why God leaves many of our questions unanswered.
8. a. Describe an experience in your life that causes you to doubt God’s control and to ask why.
9. What answers did you get to your questioning?
10. Did anything good come from that experience? If so, what was it?
11. How can coming to grips with the fact that God is in control of nature affect your daily life, especially your current circumstances?

***Trust in Action***

1. Read the book of Job in one sitting. What was God’s answer to all Job’s questioning?
2. Memorize Habakkuk 3:17-19.
3. Get involved in some form of crisis intervention in your community (for example, emergency relief, pregnancy counseling, helping battered women or abused children).

Lesson Six

**GOD’S SOVEREIGHNTY AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY**

*(Chapter 7)*

***Developing Trust***

1. a. Read Nehemiah 4:6-9. In what two ways did the Israelites respond to the threat of attack?

b. What does their response indicate about their understanding of the relationship between prayer and prudence?

1. Meditate on Philippians 4:6-7.
2. Describe a time when you experienced a great deal of anxiety.
3. When you are anxious, do you pray more or less than usual?
4. Is this the way it should be? Explain.
5. a. When we are trusting God and have a peace that comes from Him alone, our prayers are different from when our prayers flow out of anxiety. How are they different?

b. Which way do you pray most often?

c. Choose a difficult situation for which you are presently praying. Write a prayer for that situation from a mindset of trust.

1. a. Since God is in control and His purpose will inevitably prevail, why do we need to pray?
2. Why do we need to make every effort to act with wisdom?
3. Read Acts 4:23-31.
4. What effect do you think this prayer had on the believers who were praying?
5. What specific requests did the believers make?
6. How does Matthew 28:19-20 help explain their confidence in prayer?
7. What specific applications to your own prayer life can you make from the example of this prayer?
8. Read the account of a violent storm, recorded in Acts 27:13-44.
9. When God revealed that He would deliver Paul and all his shipmates. Paul trusted god and His promise of deliverance. Even so, Paul didn’t passively expect God to do the work that He had equipped the sailors to do. Make a list of all the actions that were taken that helped fulfill God’s promise that they would all reach land safely.
10. What relationship does this story show between God’s sovereignty and our responsibility?
11. Read Psalm 127:1.
12. Are you currently involved in building anything? (This need not be a physical building: it could be an organization, a relationship, or something similar.) If so, what is it?

1. How is the Lord involved in your building?
2. In what area(s) of your life are you like a watchman guarding a city?
3. How is the Lord involved in your watching?
4. How do you think you should feel and respond, knowing God’s involvement in these situations?
5. a. Describe a time when you felt very dependent on God.

b. What did you do for yourself at the time?

1. Did any of your efforts make you less dependent on God? Why or why not?

***Trust in Action***

1. Read through the book of Proverbs in a modern translation, looking for lessons on prudence. Copy into your journal those verses that especially speak to you.
2. Memorize Philippians 4:6-7.
3. Start a prayer notebook with your requests and God’s answers. This can be done very simply, with just a few words for each request. From time to time you may want to write out whole prayers to the Lord. The process of writing prayers causes us to think more seriously about what we are saying to God.
4. Before you go to bed tonight, tell God that you entrust each of your current concerns to Him. Name them. Ask Him to give you wisdom in dealing with each one. Then read Psalm 127:1-2, and go to sleep.

Lesson Seven

**THE WISDOM OF GOD**

(*Chapter 8*)

***Developing Trust***

1. How do these verses describe God’s wisdom?
* Psalms 147:5
* Jeremiah 10:12
* Romans 11:33-34
1. Are there any past or present events in your life that tempt you to doubt God’s wisdom? If so, what are they?
2. a. What is the ultimate purpose of all things according to Romans 11:36 and 1 Corinthians 10:31?
3. What does it mean to glorify God?
4. In what ways do you think your present circumstances bring glory to God?
5. Our prayers often seem to go unanswered, yet God is still handling us with wisdom. He knows that the very adversity we long to have removed is His means to help us grow. Read Psalm 119:71.
6. Describe a time when adversity was not removed even though you or others prayed that it would be.
7. Did you experience any personal growth through that adversity? If so, what?
8. What is the logical connection between Romans 8:28 and 8:29? (Notice the word for at the beginning of 8:29)
9. a. Do you think we can fully understand God’s reason for any particular event? Why or why not?

b. What attitude is expressed in Job 42:1-3 and Psalm 131:1?

1. What happens when we let go of our questions and trust God?
2. Is it hard for you to let go of your unanswered questions? Why or why not?
3. We should focus not on the reasons for our difficulties but on the lessons we can learn from them.
4. Read Deuteronomy 8:2-5. What lesson did the Israelites learn from their experience of getting only one day’s food at a time?
5. Why do you think this lesson would be important for them later when they were prosperous in Canaan? (Read Deuteronomy 8:10-18.)
6. As we read in 2 Samuel 24:10-14, David was more afraid of suffering adversity at the hands of men that from God directly.
7. Why do you thin David felt this way?
8. When we are facing adversity from other people, what comfort do Proverbs 21:30 and Romans 8:31 offer us?
9. a. What would you say to a friend who is struggling with the question *why* in the face of difficult circumstances?
10. What kinds of things would you be careful not to say?

***Trust in Action***

1. Memorize Romans 11:33.
2. Share with a friend something God has been teaching you through this study.
3. Next time you hear of a disaster or tragedy, take time to pray for the people involved.
4. Tell God about the situations in your life, past or present, that tempt you to doubt that He knows what He is doing. Ask Him to help you fully believe that His reasons are good, even though He hasn’t shown you what they are. Tell Him exactly how you feel about this situation; then meditate on Psalm 131.

LESSON EIGHT

**KNOWING AND EXPERIENCING GOD’S LOVE**

(Chapters 9 and 10)

***Developing Trust***

1. What observation about God’s love can you make from these verses?
* Psalm 103:11
* Isaiah 54:10
* Zephaniah 3:17

* Romans 8:38-39
1. a. How does God feel about punishing the wicked (see Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9)?

b. Read Lamentations 3:32-33. How does God feel about the afflictions He allows us to suffer when we sin?

1. a. In what event do we see the supreme demonstration of God’s love for us? Read 1 John 4:9-10.

b. Restate Romans 5:6-8 in your own words.

1. a. What experiences in your life have tempted you to doubt God’s love?

b. When you have doubted God’s love, what has helped you regain your confidence in His love for you?

1. a. Based on Ephesians 1:3-6, how does being “in Christ” affect God’s love for us?

 b. How does John 15:1-8 describe our relationship with Jesus?

1. If the Father loves Jesus, when what are the implications for us?
2. What does pruning have to do with love (see John 15:2)?
3. Read Lamentations 3:17-24.
4. What feelings did Jeremiah express in verses 17-20?
5. How did you deal with those feelings (see v. 21-24)
6. How do you deal with your feelings of discouragement and defeat?
7. What could you learn from Jeremiah about handling these feelings?
8. a. What can we learn from Hebrews 12:5-11 about why God disciplines us?
9. When have you experienced God’s discipline? Describe one instance.
10. What lessons did you learn?
11. Did you sense God’s love in the process? Explain.
12. God gives us the grace we need each day. We don’t have the grace today for the ”what ifs” of tomorrow.
13. Describe a time when it was especially important for you to focus on God’s daily grace without looking ahead.
14. What happened when you tried to look down the road to see how you would cope tomorrow?
15. Summarize what God promises in the following verses.
* Psalm 32:10
* Isaiah 41:10
* Isaiah 43:2-3

10. Read Psalm 13.

a. Have you ever felt as David did when he wrote Psalm 13:1-2? If so, describe those feelings in your own words.

b. How did David end this psalm (see verses 5-6).

1. How do you think it is possible to get from the feelings of verses 1-2 to the decision in verses 5-6?

11. a. To what extent do you currently experience God’s love?

1. What do you think is the major barrier keeping you from feeling God’s love for you?
2. How can you start to remove that barrier?

***Trust in Action***

1. Use a concordance to find other verses about God’s love for us. Copy them into your journal.
2. Choose one verse about God’s love and memorize it. Use it when Satan tries to convince you that God doesn’t really love you.
3. Write a letter to someone who needs to know about God’s love for him or her.
4. Write a letter to Jesus thanking Him for His love.

LESSON NINE

**TRUSTING GOD FOR WHO YOU ARE**

(Chapter 11)

***Developing Trust***

1. What truth is being taught in the following verses?
* Job 10:8-11
* Psalm 119:73
* Psalm 139:13-14
1. a. Do you ever struggle with accepting the way God made you? Explain.
2. What is your attitude about your physical appearance?
3. What is your attitude about your personality and inner character?
4. Is your attitude pleasing to God? If it is not, how could you change your attitude?
5. a. What characteristics about yourself do you need to learn to accept?
6. What characteristics should you try to change?
7. To what extent is it all right to try to change your physical appearance?
8. In lesson 5, we looked at Exodus 4:11 and John 9:1-3. How can these verses help us to accept our imperfections?
9. How can 1 Corinthians 4:7 help us keep our good qualities in the proper perspective?
10. Restate in your own words the truths taught in these verses.
* Job 14:5
* Psalm 31:15
* Psalm 139:16
* Acts 17:26
1. How can Jeremiah 29:11 encourage you when life seems overwhelming?
2. a. What advice does Paul give to slaves in 1 Corinthians 7:21?

b. What general truth can we get from this verse?

1. a. According to Psalm 23:2-3, what does God do for us?

b. Describe a time when you felt God’s guidance in your life.

c. List some of the ways God can guide us when we are making a difficult decision.

1. Reflect on the last major decision you made. What method did you use to seek God’s guidance and to make the wisest decision?

10. Read Acts 16:6-10.

1. What specific guidance did Paul and his companions receive?
2. We are not told how the Spirit prevented them from entering Bithynia and the province of Asia, but we know that He did. From these events, what do we learn about God’s guidance?
3. Does God regularly guide you in such an explicit way? Why do you suppose this is so?

 11. a. Which of the daily activities that you are currently involved in do you feel God wants you to be doing?

 b. Which, if any, current activities do you think God may not want you to be doing? What makes you think that?

 12. If you are discontent with your present position, do you need to accept where you are with a thankful heart, or does God want you to pursues something new?

***Trust in Action***

 1. Take some time, in addition to your regular devotions, to be along with the Lord and thank Him for creating you just the way you are. If you are angry about the body, the mind, the skills, the inabilities, ore the personality God had given you, confess your anger and ask God to give you gratitude even for the things you don’t like.

2. Memorize Psalm 139:13-14

3. Make a list of the abilities God has given you. Think about how you are presently serving the Lord. Are you using your gifts and abilities? Can you identify new ways to serve that will better suit your abilities?

4. In Psalm 139:16-18 David expressed his praise and thanksgiving for God’s guidance. Write a prayer expressing your gratitude for the way God has guided you to this point in your life. Thank Him for specific events that helped change your life.

LESSON TEN

**GROWTH THROUGH ADVERSITY**

(Chapter 12)

***Developing Trust***

1. a. Think about the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. How does adversity encourage each of the following:

* Love
* Joy
* Peace
* Patience
* Kindness
* Faithfulness
* Gentleness
* Self-control

 b. Which of these have grown in your own life through adversity?

 c. Did the growth you experienced endure after the adversity passed? Explain.

2. a. Read Romans 5:3-5 and James 1:2-4. What should our attitude be in the midst of adversity and why?

 b. How did Jesus maintain this attitude (see Hebrews 12:2)

 c. How can we cultivate this same attitude?

3. What does Philippians 1:6 say about our spiritual growth?

4. a. What happens when we resist God’s working in our lives through adversity?

 b. What warning is given to us in Job 36:21?

5. a. Have you been drawn to God’s Word in times of adversity? Why or why not?

 b. What portions of Scripture have become especially important to you during trying times?

6. a. According to John 15:2, what is the purpose of God’s pruning?

 b. Even in the church, Christians sometimes seek things that are not true spiritual fruit, such as position, success, and reputation. What counterfeit fruit have you been tempted to seek?

7. What is the connection between adversity (or discipline) and holiness as expressed in Hebrews 12:10?

8. Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 and 12:10. How does adversity teach us to depend on God?

9. a. Hebrews 10:36 and 12:1 speak of the need to persevere. What is the goal of our perseverance?

 b. How can we learn to persevere? (See question 2)

10. a. Why does suffering deepen the fellowship between believers?

 b. Describe a time when you experienced deeper fellowship through suffering.

11. What does Psalm 34:18 say about how adversity affects our relationship with God?

12. Which of the seven results of suffering – pruning, holiness, dependence, perseverance, service, fellowship, relationship with God – which are discussed under “Examining Trust” – have you personally experienced?

***Trust in Action***

1. Memorize James 1:2-4.

2. Contact someone you know who is suffering. Offer to get together to pray.

3. One of the best ways to remember what God has taught us through different experiences is to write down those lessons while they are fresh. If you haven’t started a journal, begin now by recording the lessons God has been teaching you lately. Then, sit down once a month and record your recent discoveries in your walk with God. Over the years this will have a big impact on how well you remember what God has done in your life.

LESSON ELEVEN

**CHOOSING TO TRUST GOD**

(Chapter 13)

***Developing Trust***

1. Read Psalm 56:3-4 and 1 Samuel 21:10-15. Which is the historical setting for the psalm.

 a. What emotions was David experiencing at the time he wrote this psalm (see 1 Samuel 21:10-12)?

 b. How much trust in God did David show in 1 Samuel 21:13? Why do you think this?

 c. When David chose to trust God, how did his feelings change (see Psalm 56:3-4)?

 d. Tradition says that Psalm 34 was written shortly after Psalm 56, after the crisis was over. How do you explain the relationship between David’s statements in Psalm 56:4 and Psalm 34:4?

2. a. Have you had an experience in which you chose to trust God despite your emotions? If so, what happened to your emotions after you decided to trust God?

 b. Why do you think emotions work that way?

3. a. Why is God worthy of your wholehearted trust?

 b. Is it possible for us to be worthy of His trust? Explain.

4. a. What attitude did Job express in Job 23:8-10?

 b. In times of distress we must be careful that our feelings do not mislead us. Do Job’s feelings contradict the truth of Hebrews 13:5? Why or why not?

5. Read 1 Peter 5:7. Is learning to trust God and cast our anxieties on Him something we get better at? If so, how? If not, why not?

6. Sometimes when we are anxious, there are things we need to do. Sometimes there is nothing we can do. Make a list of the things you are anxious about at this time in your life. Which thing do you need to act on, and which things do you need to leave in the hands of the Lord?

7. a. Do you tend to forget to trust God when things are going well? Explain.

 b. In what ways do we need to trust God in good times?

8. a. What contrast is made in Proverbs 18:10-11?

 b. Do you get your sense of security from your achievements and possessions or from the Lord? How do your actions reflect this?

9. a. What does God promise us in Psalm 50:15?

 b. What do we need to do after God answers our call, according to this verse?

 c. In what specific ways might you do this?

10. a. Are you more able to trust God now than when you began this study?

 b. If so, what has helped you most?

 c. What help do you still need?

11. How would you explain to an unbeliever why you choose to trust God?

***Trust in Action***

1. For the next week keep a record of your anxious thoughts. Decide which thoughts should prompt you to action and which ones you need to leave in God’s hands.

2. Memorize Hebrews 13:5 and 1 Peter 5:6-7.

3. Read a biography of a godly Christian leader. Notice especially how this person’s trust in God grew through his or her life. A brief list follows. Check with your pastor or church librarian(?) for other suggestions.

*Adoniram Judson* by Faith Coxe Bailey

*A Chance to Die* by Elisabeth Elliot (about Amy Carmichael)

*Daws* by Betty Lee Skinner (about Dawson Trotman)

*George Miller: Delighted in God!* by Roger Steer

*The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom with John and Elizabeth Sherrill

*Hudson Taylors’s Spiritual Secret* by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor

*Shadow of the Almighty* by Elisabeth Elliot (about Jim Elliot)

*The Tapestry* by Edith Schaeffer (about Francis and Edith Schaeffer)

*William Carey* by Brad Miller

Lesson 12

**GIVING THANKS ALWAYS**

(Chapter 14)

***Developing Trust***

1. a. Read Luke 17:11-19. What two human responses to a blessing are illustrated in this event?

 b. According to Acts 17:24-25 and 1 Corinthians 4:7, why should we be thankful?

 c. Do you have a thankful attitude toward God most of the time, not often enough, or rarely? Explain.

 d. Write a prayer asking God to help you have a more grateful spirit.

2. a. What does Romans 8:28 say about God working in our lives?

 b. How does Romans 8:28 help us fulfill 1 Thessalonians 5:18?

3. a. What was Job’s reaction to the loss of his children and property? Read Job 1:13-21.

 b. What is worship? (A Bible dictionary might be helpful.)

 c. What specifically helps you to enter into a spirit of worship?

4. a. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7. Why was Paul given a thorn in the flesh?

 b. Has God ever used an adversity in your life to counteract your pride? If so, describe the situation.

 c. Why does God cherish humility in us (see James 4:6)?

 d. What are major sources of pride in your life?

 e. How can you change the areas where you are proud into areas of humility?

5. a. How does humility help us deal with mistreatment from other people?

 b. Do you have a hard time forgiving others? Explain.

6. a. What sort of attitude is pleasing to God when we pray for deliverance from some adversity?

 b. Is there ever a point at which we need to stop praying for deliverance? If so, how do we know when we have reached that point? If not, why not?

7. Of the six responses discussed in “Examining trust” – thanksgiving, worship, humility, forgiveness, prayer, and a heart seeking only God’s glory – which one is the most difficult for you? Why is this so?

8. Look at Isiah 42:8. How can your actions better show that glorifying God is your top priority?

9. What are the most important ideas you gained from this study?

***Trust in Action***

1. Write a prayer to God, expressing the ways you hope to trust Him more fully.

2. If there is someone you need to forgive, or ask forgiveness from, make a point of doing it this week.

3. Memorize 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

4. Ask a friend to join you for a brief time of worship. You may want to include Scripture readings, prayer, singing, and silence. Discuss what helps each of you to break past the barriers in your heart to enter a time of true worship.

5. Watch your attitude for one week. How often are you in a negative, complaining state of mind, and how often do you have an attitude of thanksgiving? Keep a record in your journal. Share your results with a friend.