

Can God be Trusted?

We trust a person only to the degree we know that person.

Trust between people is generated through fulfilled promises and open conversation that brings understanding and knowledge of each other's desires and attitudes; both of these are essential in the development of a trusting relationship.

God uses both promises and conversation to build the trusting relationship He desires to have with each of us.

We can find and experience God's fulfilled promises and converse with Him by using one thing, His Word, both the written Word, God's **Handbook for Life**, the Christian Bible and the Living Word, Jesus Christ.

Two facts about the triune God are assumed if not actually stated, in every single Biblical passage.

The first is that He is sovereign, the absolute monarch of His created universe, ordering all its affairs and working out His will in all that happens within this universe.

The second fact is that He speaks to what He has created.

God uses words to express His will in order that it will be fulfilled.

All of God's attributes, including His sovereignty and faithfulness, are understood by what His Word reveals to us about Him.

All rulers speak to those whom they rule over in two ways and for two purposes.

Firstly the ruler will speak to his subjects through laws and regulations which will directly determine the environment within which his subjects must live.

Secondly the ruler will make public speeches in order to establish, as far as possible, a personal link between himself and his subjects, to evoke from them the maximum support and co-operation in the things he is doing.

The Bible depicts in His Word God has the same two-fold approach.

God speaks both to determine our environment and to build a trusting relationship with us individually as His Creation and subjects.

Although God is sovereign over His Creation, He does not want a distant relationship with His created subjects.

Rather the reverse is true; God created us with the intention of having a trusting and loving relationship with us.

God speaks to us through His Word, not only to lead us to obey Him as sovereign, but to enable us to know Him, trust Him and love Him.

God's Word, His **Handbook for Life**, is not only instructive but it is also an invitation to form an intimate relationship with Him.

We first meet with The Word of God in the creation chapters of the Christian Bible.

Genesis 1:3 [NIV] *"And God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light."*

The first recorded words God uttered were to transform darkness [ignorance] into light [revealed knowledge].

God's Word then assures us that He is the Creator of every item of the natural environment in which we exist.

God's Word next addresses the pinnacle of His Creation, the reason for all other creation, the man and woman whom He had just created.

Genesis 1:28-30 [NIV] *"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. **Rule over** the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground – everything that has the breath of life in it – I give every green plant for food.' And it was so."*

As sovereign Creator, God's first word to Adam and Eve were a command to fulfil mankind's vocation of ruling over all the rest of God's Creation.

God then through His Word gives a prohibition to test Adam and Eve.

Genesis 2:16-17 [NIV] *"And the LORD God commanded the man, You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but **you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, for when you eat of it you will surely die."*

Adam and Eve failed the test given to them by their Creator by **not** trusting God's Word and as a result the relationship they first had with their Creator was shattered by this lack of trust.

Genesis 3:1-6 [NIV] *"Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "**Did God really say**, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' " "**You will not surely die**", the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it."*

God's Word then makes a series of promises to Adam and Eve, who depicted all mankind, that were an invitation to them and us to restore that trusting relationship.

Genesis 3:14-19 [NIV] *"So the LORD God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, 'Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.' To the woman he said, 'I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.' To Adam he said, 'Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."*

We have in the utterances of God in the first three chapters of Genesis the basis of the relationship God wants to have with us.

The conditions of this relationship do **not** change throughout the rest of God's Word; they are just amplified, reiterated and confirmed.

- 1 **God is sovereign** and He rules over all His Creation.
- 2 **Man, God's supreme creation** is commanded to live within the environment and the circumstances fixed by His Creator God.
- 3 **God, through promises, gives man an invitation** to experience a trusting and loving relationship with Him.

Two things found in God's Word are the foundation to the trusting relationship God wants us to have with Him.

God's commands are true

Psalm 119:151 [NIV] *"Yet you are near, O LORD, and all your commands are true."*

How are God's Commandments true?

- 1 They have built-in stability and permanence.

They are eternal, customs and cultures may change but God's Commands are always relevant.

- 2 They disclose what is the unchanging true definition of what humanity is like.

Under the influences of Satan [the god of this world] humanity has always followed Satan's attitude of pride and rebellion against his creator, God.

These are the basic attitudes that lead to all that is evil in society, and eventually self-destruction.

God has given mankind a physical body that needs a right routine of food, rest and exercise to function effectively; we all understand and accept this.

Job 32:8 [NIV] *"But it is **the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.**"*

God also gave mankind a spiritual entity, that is **not** governed by physical laws but by spiritual laws.

We are slower to grasp this side of our nature, but God has given us the physical to lead us to understand the spiritual.

We are created to bear God's moral image, His likeness, and this side of our nature also needs a right routine to function effectively.

We need to have the routine of worship, prayer, law-keeping, truthfulness, honesty, discipline, self-control and service to God and our fellow man, all of which we find in God's Word, His Handbook for Life.

When we give up a right physical routine for our bodies, they progressively degenerate and end in early death.

When we give up or don't have a right spiritual routine we progressively degenerate spiritually.

Our conscience becomes inactive, our sense of shame dries up, our capacity for truthfulness, loyalty and honesty is eaten away.

Our spiritual life, our character disintegrates leading to spiritual eternal death.

Our chosen way of life that disregards the spiritual aspect will sooner or later, consciously or unconsciously, become that of a beast not a potential created child of God.

We are only living true human lives just as far as we are labouring to follow God's spiritual laws, no further.

God's promises are true

Hebrews 10:23 [NIV] *"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful."*

God's promises are true because God keeps them.

We as limited human beings cannot always keep our promises, circumstances may be beyond our control.

God doesn't have this problem with always keeping His promises because He is self-existent, self-sufficient, eternal, infinite, omniscient, omnipotent and transcendent.

God is a covenant-keeping God; He has never in the past failed to fulfil His promises to those who put their trust in Him.

The habit of meditating on God's promises, basing our prayers on the promises and walking in faith in our day-to-day life just as far as the promises take us, will lead to the trusting relationship God desires with us.

Psalms 33:4 [NIV] *"For the word of the LORD is **right and true**; he is **faithful** in all he does."*

God is "right", "true" and "faithful".

These are the three things we need to see in a person to be able to trust them.

Although God is sovereign and all powerful, there are three things which God cannot do:

God cannot do wrong.

Deuteronomy 32:4 [NIV] *"He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. **A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.**"*

God cannot do anything that is wrong, He always does what is just and fair.

God cannot lie.

Hebrews 6:18 [NIV] *"God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which **it is impossible for God to lie**, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged."*

God always tells the truth, for He is Holy.

God cannot break a promise.

Numbers 23:19 [NIV] *"God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. **Does he promise and not fulfil?**"*

What God says He does – the Bible calls this His faithfulness.

When we understand and accept these three concepts of God we will not have any problem trusting Him even when we do not understand the circumstances we find ourselves in.

Great example of God's faithfulness

Joshua 21:45 [NIV] *“Not one of all the LORD’s good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.”*

To Israel, God's faithfulness was to them one of God's most important qualities, not one promise failed to be fulfilled.

Deuteronomy 7:9 [NIV] *“Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.”*

God has remained faithful to Israel over the past 4,000 years in all the promises He made to them.

In spite of captivity, mass genocide, slavery, dispossession of the land.

Israel is still around today, unlike all those nations that were around them all those thousands of years ago.

Have you talked to any Hittites, Amorites, or Jebusites lately?

This is living proof of God's faithfulness.

Psalms 145:13 [NIV] *“Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.”*

There are over 7,000 promises made by God in the Bible.

They are like blank cheques waiting to be called on by those who trust in God, who wants us to claim them.

Guaranteed promises that God has made and we can claim

I can depend on God to forgive my sins

1 John 1:9 [NIV] *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

God's forgiveness is based on who God is, not on who we are, but with every promise there is a condition.

God says if you will do this then I will do this; God is a covenant-making God.

Our part is to confess, that is all that God asks.

There is nothing about working for our forgiveness, yet it is in our nature to try to earn our forgiveness from God; we try to bribe, beg or bargain with God for our forgiveness.

I can depend on God to give me guidance

Proverbs 3:5-6 [Good News Bible] *“Trust in the Lord with all your hearts, never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and He will show you the right way.”*

The condition here is to trust in God and look to God.

Far too often we only look to God for guidance when He allows us to get into a major crisis, but scripture tells us to always look to God in all things, never to rely on our own judgement.

God is the only reliable source of guidance, for only He can see clearly into the future, for He is already there.

God gives this guidance through His **Handbook for Life**, the Christian Bible, as we read it or through His servants who know His Word well.

I can depend on God to settle the score

Romans 12:19 [NIV] *“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.”*

When we read the newspaper or watch TV, too often we see injustice, fraud and cheating being committed with the criminal getting off “*Scot free*”, and we say “*that is not fair*”.

God’s response to this is the same as ours such injustice is not fair. Much in life is not fair, but there will come a day of reckoning.

As part of His Plan to create mankind into His likeness and image, God gave to mankind the power of choice, and too often man has chosen to do what is unjust, evil and unfair to others.

Because there is sin in this imperfect world, people do the wrong things and seem to get away with it, but there is going to be a time of reckoning by God. This is why there is a heaven and a hell and a time of judgement.

1 Peter 2:23 [NIV] *“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.”*

God is very much aware of what people do to us or we do to others that hurt them.

But He tells us don’t try to get even or to repay the hurt, leave to Him.

Who do you think will do the best job, us or God, when it comes to rewards?

I can depend on God to reward my generosity

Luke 6:38 [NIV] *“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

Jesus said this and He does not lie.

There are more promises in the Bible relating to giving than any other subject.

Proverbs 3:9-10 [NIV] *“Honour the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”*

If we are not tithing and giving offerings to God we are only hurting ourselves.

Proverbs 22:9 [NIV] *“A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.”*

Proverbs 11:25 [NIV] *“A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.”*

We cannot out-give God, when we give our time our life away to serve others we serve God and we will find great happiness.

Acts 20:35 [NIV] *“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: **It is more blessed to give than to receive.**”*

Proverbs 19:17 [NIV] *“He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done.”*

God will not ever be indebted to us for what we lend to Him by giving to those in need.

I can depend on God to keep me saved

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.**”*

Once we have totally committed our lives to God by offering them as a “*living sacrifice*” God will ensure our future in His Kingdom.

1 Corinthians 1:8-9 [Living Bible] *“God guarantees right up to the end that you will be counted free from all sin and guilt on that day when He returns. God will surely do this for you, for He always does just what He says...”*

2 Timothy 2:13 [NIV] *“...if we are faithless, **he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.**”*

With Christ in us by the Holy Spirit the indwelling Christ will not disown Himself.

We don’t have to worry about losing salvation for we didn’t earn it in the first place; it was a gift from God.

John 10:28 [NIV] *“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.”*

2 Timothy 1:12 [NIV] *“That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because **I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.**”*

2 Timothy 2:12 [NIV] *“...if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us;”*

It is only if we turn our backs on Christ that we can lose what was given to us in the first place.

I can depend on God to remember my service of others

Hebrews 6:10 [NIV] *“God is not unjust; he **will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.**”*

What we do to serve others may **not** receive the thanks or even be noticed by others, but God sees it all.

The kind word, “going the extra mile”, fulfilling the need, praying for another’s success or healing; they are all recorded by God.

Psalm 56:8 [Living Bible] *“You have collected all my tears and preserved them in your bottle. You have recorded every one in your book”*

Every tear we shed for the pain and trials that others are going through is noticed and recorded by God.

The question then is how much time do we give to serving others and not ourselves?

How much is there written in God’s Book about the service we have given to others.

How full is the bottle of our tears shed for others?

2 Corinthians 1:20 [NIV] *“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.”*

All the promises which God has made are “yes”, that is true in themselves and “amen” [so be it] faithfully fulfilled through Jesus Christ to the Glory of God.

“Yes” is the faithfulness of God.

“Amen” [so be it] is His oath, which makes our assurance of the fulfilment doubly sure.

The many promises made by God are **not** for everyone.

These promises are only for those who have said “**yes**” to accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Master.

Those who are submissive to the leading and guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Romans 10:9 [NIV] *“That **if** you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, **you will be saved.**”*

John 14:15-18 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And **I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth.** The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; **I will come to you.**”*

Those who have offered their lives back to God as a living sacrifice, are the ones for whom these promises of God are sure.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

The promises are sure, the choice is ours as to whether we fulfil the conditions to claim those promises and trust God.