

05 TRUSTWORTHY

A Trustworthy Heart

Life is a constant stream of events and encounters. Some are within our abilities to manage, while others are totally out of our control. In every case, we make choices, the results of which determine our destinies. We inevitably trust in something or somebody to validate and secure our choices. The same holds true for those who look to us. They expect us to be people they can trust because our hearts are turned toward the Lord. We will not let them down because we are people who do our best to have hearts filled with the God-given desire to do the right thing. We know that when people choose to trust us, we have the responsibility to honor their choice. This is possible because we have hearts that are sanctified and dedicated to honor Jesus.

The quality of our character will be tested when God gives us people who need us. They may find themselves in situations that appear to be beyond their control and God directs them to look to us. We are the people they will depend upon to help them move beyond whatever has them trapped in their circumstances. They will place themselves in our hands. It's at times like these that God tests our reactions to their trust in us. Will our hearts prove to be trustworthy by not just those people who need us, but also, will we be proven trustworthy in the sight of the Lord?

"I can only trust you if I know that you will make righteous choices on a consistent basis."¹

Bishop I.V. Hilliard

Understanding the biblical meaning of being trustworthy requires us to go to the original Greek language of the New

¹ Bishop I.V. Hilliard, Praise the Lord TV, 08/13/2013.

Testament. We find that the word, “*pistos*” is an adjective that can be translated as “*trustworthy*,” or “*faithful*.” Since both English words are essentially the same original Greek word, they carry the same original meanings. Strong’s dictionary defines “*pistos*” in part, as follows: “*trusty, faithful - of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties; worthy of trust; can be relied on.*”² We have examples of such people in both the Old and New Testaments.

Trustworthy People: Four Biblical Examples

Bishop Hilliard’s statement indicates that we need righteous patterns in our lives that clearly show others they can trust us. In trusting us, they experience the blessings of our faithfulness and fruitfulness.

First Example - Boaz: Fully Trustworthy

The Book of Ruth clearly illustrates that Boaz was a man who could be fully trusted. This manifested in at least three different ways:

First, as you read through the story of Ruth, you will see that Boaz had the goodwill of those who worked for him. They trusted him as their employer and leader. Scripture shows this in their attitudes towards him and his towards them. It is evident in their greetings. They genuinely wished Boaz well, as he did them.

Ruth 2:4 (NKJV) “Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, “The Lord be with you!” And they answered him, “The Lord bless you!””

Second, Ruth, Chapter 3 reveals how tenderly Boaz reacted when Ruth came to him on the threshing floor. This part of the narrative goes beyond Boaz just showing Ruth his tenderness.

² Strong’s Number G3982.

It demonstrates how trustworthy he was. It was apparent that nobody except Boaz was aware of Ruth's presence that night in the place where he was sleeping. When he awakened and was surprised at seeing her there, his reaction was to do the right thing. He could be trusted not to allow any carnal responses bring a reproach on Ruth's reputation. Naomi surely was aware of Boaz character when she sent Ruth to him. His reaction was indicative of what was in his heart. His was a trustworthy heart.

Ruth 3:6-11, 14 (NKJV) "So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. {7} And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. {8} Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. {9} And he said, "Who are you?" So she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative." {10} Then he said, "Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. {11} And now, my daughter, do not fear..." {14} So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, "Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."

The third example of Boaz's consistent trustworthiness was the fulfillment of his promise to perform the duties of a kinsman redeemer. His integrity and his trustworthiness are apparent in how Boaz followed through on his promise to Ruth. Because there was a man who was a nearer relative to Naomi, Boaz was willing to do the right thing, even if it meant he would have to surrender his hopes of marrying Ruth.

- He could always be trusted to do what was right in the sight of the Lord.
- His heart was uncompromisingly filled with faithfulness. It reflected in his actions.

Ruth 4:2b-4, 8-10 (NKJV) "...Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. {4} And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.'" ...{8} Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." So he took off his sandal. {9} And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. {10} Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day."

The biggest issues of trust always concern the well-being of others who trust us. Boaz's righteous choices always reflected that he had Ruth and Naomi's best interest in his heart. Naomi knew she could trust him to do what was right, so they could be redeemed from their loss.

Trust is a commodity of the heart that's not easily gained and must be constantly maintained, but can be spent in an instant. Once this happens, there can be no returning to the past levels of trust. When trust is spent improperly, it cannot be refunded. It will be extremely difficult to acquire it at any level again. As you

can see, having a trustworthy heart is a vital character issue in the Kingdom of God. It's like a stone making ripple in a pond. It makes waves far beyond where it is dropped. God has called us to have trustworthy hearts, for they are a reflection of His heart.

Second Example - The First Deacons: Trustworthy Servants of God

Often, when the ministry workload is too heavy, and God's servants find they cannot dependably handle it, they will look for help. The distinguishing feature of those they will seek is that they be trustworthy. In Acts, Chapter 6, this was the Apostles' issue. It was a very practical one. There were widows, orphans and others in need of help in the church. The Apostles had been doing what they could, but with their other duties pressing in on them, they realized they needed to put others in place to assume the care of these less fortunate people. Because the Apostles had a genuine and deep concern for the people in the church who needed help, they wanted to be sure they could trust those who they appointed to the task. They would have to be men with trustworthy hearts. The qualifications for deacons in the early church give us insight into the quality of people with trustworthy hearts.

Acts 6:1-4 (NKJV) "Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. {2} Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. {3} Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; {4} but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

These Scriptures, above, provide us with the following characteristics of people with trustworthy hearts. First, they must be people who are well thought of by others because of the way they have exhibited godliness in their lives (*“of good reputation”*). Next, they must be people *“full of the Holy Spirit.”* We may understand this to mean that these people have a strong relationship with the Holy Spirit and have surrendered their lives to His presence. This is to be an obvious pattern of their lives. Finally, Acts 6:1-4 tells us that they must be people of wisdom, specifically God’s wisdom that stems from their knowledge of Scripture and their relationships with God. This is a spiritual matter that should reflect on their natural thinking. As the Apostle Paul wrote, they (and we) should be *“filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”* (Colossians 1:9-10).

These three characteristics from Acts, Chapter 6 are reachable for any of us. The demands the three characteristics place upon us are basic and consistent with God’s expectations for every Christian. Their presence or absence is readily apparent. Either way, they reflect our character and can’t be hidden for long.

Third Example - Timothy: A Trustworthy Son in the Lord

Paul knew that Timothy had the character and commitment necessary to lead. Paul had poured a great deal of teaching into Timothy. As a result, Timothy had embraced and established a *“pattern of sound words,”* that he had received from Paul’s mentoring and teaching.

2 Timothy 1:13-14 (NKJV) “Hold fast to the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. {14} That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.”

Paul was confident that Timothy would dependably and successfully perform the task that he (Paul) had assigned him. Paul reminded Timothy that it would require his dependence on the Holy Spirit to enable Timothy to properly steward what had been committed to him. Timothy would not disappoint him. He would be a blessing and assurance to Paul. Timothy was to be a trustworthy link in the progressive chain of stewardship of God's Word and His people in the church. Paul understood this and admonished Timothy to find others who were equally trustworthy, so they could be more links in this dependable chain of leadership. Paul was clear in his instructions to Timothy:

2 Timothy 2:2 (NKJV) "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

A trustworthy heart is a link in the chain of stewardship of God's Word and people, at work in the earth.

Fourth Example - Paul: A Trustworthy Father in the Lord

1 Corinthians 4:15 (HSCB) "For you can have 10,000 instructors in Christ, but you can't have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

2 Timothy 4:7-8 (NKJV) "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. {8} Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

Paul was writing from a Roman prison. It was to be his final epistle and it would have been a time for deep reflection. As he

looked back on his life in Christ, he would have found solace in knowing that he had given all that he had, and had “*kept the faith.*” In the face of his coming death, Paul looked forward to what he knew would be his “*crown of righteousness.*” This must have given Paul a measure of strength, contentment and encouragement. He knew he had been faithful with all that the Lord had trusted to him. Paul was certain he would receive his crown when Christ returns. For any of us who have a correct view of the Kingdom of God, we can expect the same.

Paul knew that he had been a faithful “*father in Christ Jesus*” to Timothy and so many others into whom he poured his heart. God has a special place in His heart for those who are trustworthy with the Gospel and faithfully care for and mentor His people. Paul was such a man. He proved himself to be a fully trustworthy father in the Lord. As he sat in that Roman prison, and his time drew near, he would have the comfort of knowing he was leaving behind many spiritual sons and daughters to take the work of the Gospel forward. What about us? We will not likely suffer the difficulties Paul faced; but can we know that one day we can have the same attitudes Paul had? Can we expect to receive our crowns?

Obstacles to Trustworthiness

The Obstacle in the Road

In ancient times, a king had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the king's wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the King for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way. Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally

succeeded. After the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the king indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway. The peasant learned what many of us never understand! Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our condition.³

The distinguishing characteristic of obstacles is that they are unwelcome and often unexpected. They require us to remove them or take a detour around them. In either case, it requires us to focus our attention on something that stands between our goals and us. In most cases, removing or detouring around obstacles will require us to establish incremental goals, so we can continue on track to what's in our hearts to reach. As in the story you just read about the obstacle in the road, there will be opportunities lying beneath the inconvenience and irritation of these obstacles. Understanding this will help us to see the hand of God at work in our individual journeys toward our destinies.

As you can see, obstacles may hold the key to what God wants to do to help us increase in our abilities; but more importantly, in our reflection of Christ to the world around us. What lies within the obstacles (whether good or not) will be (1) a learning experience through the Holy Spirit; and, (2) the opportunity to become more like Christ. They will strengthen our trustworthiness if we will approach them with faith and determination to remove them.

Romans 8:28 (NKJV) "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

³ www.gabesfascinatingstories.blogspot.com/2013/04/the-boulder-in-road.

In the face of “*all things*” you can refuse to be distracted, deterred or denied. Whatever you face is subject to the authority of God.

Obstacles may hold the key to the challenge of proving to yourself that your heart is trustworthy.

Trustworthy Solutions to the Obstacles

1. Trust in the Lord. His heart is pure and He is forever faithful. Trusting Him to lead you beyond the obstacles will prove to be a sufficient and successful choice.
2. Trust in what He has said in His Word. It's the truth. Take your trust in His Word into your choices and subsequent actions. People will see your heart to be trustworthy and they will find the heart of Christ in what they see. They will join with you and, together, you will conquer the obstacles that were too big for you alone.
3. Trust in your own heart. If you have hungered to have not just the mind of Christ, but His heart, God will honor your intentions to be like Him. You will then have the heart of a lion! A roar of faith in the face of the obstacles will be the prelude to doing what is in your heart. The obstacles will become rubble in the face of your faith in action.
4. Trust in what's right. Refuse any temptation to rely on what's wrong. Give temptation and unrighteousness no place in your heart. When your cause is righteous and just, you will find the strength to persevere until you gain your victory. Why? The answer is that God responds to a righteous, trustworthy heart by engaging your weaknesses with His strength. It's a combination nothing can withstand. With God, you become a majority, regardless of the numbers stacked against you.
5. Trust in the value of perseverance. Never quit. It's not finished until God says it's finished. The only thing finished

was the Devil's plan. This happened at the cross. Take that knowledge and let it become the fuel that drives the engine of your determination to break every obstacle. You can do it. You can make it. With God, all things are possible and nothing is too difficult.

6. Value the trust others put in you. Let their trust in your integrity and care be of more value than any personal agenda. This is an obstacle busting principle that cannot be withstood. A trustworthy heart is the sign of a winner and champion for Jesus. Be one!

**A trustworthy heart is a reflection of God's heart.
It's filled with grace. It's successful to a "T".**