

TRUST MATTERS

The Bible repeatedly admonishes us to trust in the Lord. For example, we are told to *trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding* (Proverbs 3:5, NASB). However, because of our fallen and selfish nature, we are inclined to put our trust in anything or anyone but the Lord.

Consider these cautions about misplaced trust:

Don't trust in other men: *Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength.* (Jeremiah 17:5)

Don't trust in your government: *Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man.* (Psalm 146:3, ESV)

Don't trust in your neighbors or friends: *Put no trust in a neighbor; have no confidence in a friend.* (Micah 7:5)

Don't trust in yourself: *Those who trust in themselves are fools.* (Proverbs 28:26, NIV)

Don't trust in your possessions: *He who trusts in his riches will fall.* (Proverbs 11:28, NASB)

Considering these warnings against misplaced trust and the 70+ admonitions telling us to trust in the Lord, it seems imperative that in order to be good and faithful stewards, we must properly understand exactly what trusting in the Lord means and how to do it.

Difference Between Faith and Trust

First, let's make sure we are clear on the difference between having *faith* in God and *trusting* in God. Faith is a *noun*. It is something you believe. Spiritual faith is confidence in the fact that God is who He says He is and He can do what He says He can do. You *have/possess* faith. Trust, on the other hand, is a *verb*. It is something you *do* as a result of your faith. It is an action. To help you grasp this important difference between *faith* and *trust*, consider this illustration:

You are given the opportunity to watch a world-famous tightrope walker cross over Niagara Falls on a cable. He carefully, one step at a time, inches his way along the tightrope over the raging waters below. Upon reaching the other side, he then repeats the feat and returns. The entire crowd is mesmerized by the daring act. Then, to add even more drama to his show, the aerialist takes an empty wheelbarrow and slowly crosses over the falls again. Upon his return the spectators erupt with applause!

For the grand finale, the high-wire artist has his assistant sit in the wheelbarrow and begins the crossing again. The once-cheering crowd falls silent as he literally holds another person's life in his hands. Once again, he crosses the roaring falls from both sides. As the man and his assistant return, the crowd's silence explodes into cheers and applause at what they have just witnessed!

Once the noise subsides, this amazing man of courage and skill walks right up to you and asks, "Do you believe I can walk across Niagara Falls pushing someone in a wheelbarrow with no harm coming to him?" Of course you do! You just saw him do it with his assistant with your very own eyes. So, with great excitement and

confidence you boldly reply, “Yes, sir! I believe you can do it!” And the whole crowd cheers in agreement with your affirmation. This is faith. You believe and are certain he can do it!

But then, this master tightrope walker leans forward and whispers in your ear, “Then I want you to now get in the wheelbarrow and let me take you over and back!”

You are stunned. Speechless! You can hardly breathe at that mere thought. “Me? Take ME over and back? You want to take ME over Niagara Falls in a wheelbarrow?” What is your answer? Do you trust him to do with you what he has done with others? You see, faith says, “I believe you can do it.” Trust says, “I am going to let you do it with me.”

Let me ask you again, do you really trust in the Lord?

Trust Removes Fear

For most of us, we will gladly sing and pray and speak of our faith in God and how He is able to do all things. But when it comes time to actually get in His wheelbarrow and allow Him to hold our life in his hands and take us to places we could never get to on our own, we often refuse His supernatural invitation and instead prefer a less heroic path—one that we are more familiar with, one that is less risky, less scary, and more well-traveled by others. Unfortunately, instead of exercising our trust in God and getting in His wheelbarrow, we put our trust in our money, in other people, in our own diligence and abilities to get us through to where we want to end up—all of which seems, in the flesh, to be far less risky and more certain than trusting God and allowing Him to determine our course.

It seems as long as we can see it, touch it, count it, plan it, explain it, or eat it, we are fine—but when we live like this, we are placing our trust in everything *but* God. We are trusting in our own abilities, our own resources, and our own relationships. It is not until we are thrown into the sea like Jonah or thrown into a den of lions like Daniel or thrown into a fiery furnace like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that we realize we are no longer able to trust in ourselves, others, or our stuff. It is then, and often only then, that we are finally willing to allow God to carry us. We finally agree to yield and say, “Okay, God, I guess my only option for getting to the other side of these falls is by doing it Your way. And He smiles and says, “Get in my wheelbarrow, and I will take you across!” As we arrive safely on the other side, we wonder why we were so worried and why we waited so long to trust God to handle things for us. As so often happens, once we make it safely over the falls, we realize just what a thrilling and incredible experience it was to cross over those falls in God’s wheelbarrow. Indeed, it was so thrilling, we might even be willing to give it a try again sometime!

Trusting the Lord should not be a cause of fear; it should be what removes fear. Solomon, David, and Isaiah assure us, *But whoever trusts in the LORD is safe* (Proverbs 29:25, ESV); *When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You* (Psalm 56:3); *I will trust and not be afraid* (Isa. 12:2, NIV). Fear is removed when trust is exercised.

A Real-Life Example

A vivid illustration of the power and impact of trusting in the Lord can be seen in the life of George Müller, a godly man who founded an orphanage but never asked anyone to support it. He would just pray to God to meet the children’s needs. Here is one inspiring story from his amazing life:

“The children are dressed and ready for school. But there is no food for them to eat,” the housemother of the orphanage informed George Müller. George asked her to take the 300 children into the dining room and have them sit at the tables. He thanked God for the food and waited. George knew God would provide food for the children as he always did.

Within minutes, a baker knocked on the door. “Mr. Müller,” he said, “last night I could not sleep. Somehow I knew that you would need bread this morning. I got up and baked three batches for you. I will bring it in.”

Soon, there was another knock at the door. It was the milkman. His cart had broken down in front of the orphanage. The milk would spoil by the time the wheel was fixed. He asked George if he could use some free milk. George smiled as the milkman brought in ten large cans of milk. It was just enough for the 300 thirsty children.

Here is the \$64,000 question: how many of us can honestly say, “I want to live like George Müller?” When life is good, our job is secure, our financial situation is sound, our health is perfect, our family is well, and the sun is shining on us, our need and our interest in trusting God can become nothing more than a spiritual afterthought. In fact, we might even ask the Lord to leave us and our current situation alone. We like not having anything in our lives that requires us to trust God. However, it is not only hard, it is really impossible, to learn to trust in God if we never have anything for which we need to trust Him!

Trust: A Sign of Weakness or Strength?

We don't like being in a vulnerable position where we cannot control the outcome. It stresses us out and fills us with the exhausting emotions of fear, anxiety, and apprehension. Here is a critical truth that we must know: Waiting and trusting on the Lord is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength. David tells us, *Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord* (Psalm 27:14, NASB). This verse makes perfect sense once you understand that it is when we are waiting and trusting in the Lord that the greatest strength and courage are required of us. That is why it is so exhausting to trust in the Lord.

Trusting in God is hard work, but it is the kind of work that builds us up, emboldens us, and gives us great peace and confidence as we, time and time again, safely pass over one raging waterfall of life after another. Are you ready for the thrill of a lifetime? Then start exercising your faith and trust in the Lord. Climb into God's wheelbarrow and hang on for the most exhilarating and freeing ride of your life!

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E. G. “Jay” Link has a unique combination of being an ordained minister with a Master Divinity degree in Biblical Theology and a professional Stewardship planning coach who for over 40 years has been working with very affluent Christian families to enable them to optimize their Kingdom impact with all that the Lord has entrusted to them to manage. After retiring from his personal practice, he then served for five years as Director of Taylor University's Stewardship Planning Ministry, which he launched for them. Most recently, Jay founded the Stewardship Resource Group to serve Christian ministries, colleges, and churches to better minister to their highest capacity families. He has written six books, hundreds of articles and has provided extensive training curriculum for hundreds of professional financial and legal advisors in how to provide stewardship planning services for their clients.