

Trusting Others

Many people have been wounded. For them, the world is not a reliable place. Some of you are in a space where you have to learn how to trust again. The reality is that if you don't trust people you will limit your world to only what you can do. You never get to the top by yourself. Interdependence is a mark of maturity. **If you don't trust people you will never pass the ball in sport. If you don't trust people you will never make yourself vulnerable.** You cannot build emotional intimacy without some degree of vulnerability. **You always have a choice: Trust vs Suspicion.** In this message I will outline how Jesus modelled the power of trusting others in how He related to His disciples. From there I will also expound on various scriptures that caution us not to trust everyone and everything.

Find someone close to you and tell them, "You've got this! You are more than capable to do what God has called you to do. You know your story." That's communicating capability trust. **People will often live up to the expectation of the trust communicated to them.** Don't delegate work whilst expressing doubt in the person. A few days ago, before our eldest son went off to Cape Town for University, we gave Samuel a booklet I wrote called 51 Empowering Rules from Your Father. When we had the discussion with him the essence of what we were communicating was, "I believe you have what it takes to make it in this life. We are proud of you." Every young man needs to hear this. Look in scripture how Jesus trusted His disciples. This was a choice He made.

Jesus chose to trust His disciples

1. Functional Trust

Trusting Them to Guard His Time in Gethsemane

- **Matthew 26:36-38** "Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.'"
 - Jesus relied on them to watch and pray during a crucial moment of His ministry.

Entrusting Them with the Preparation of the Last Supper

- **Luke 22:7-13** "Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.' 'Where do you want us to prepare for it?' they asked. He replied, 'As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, "The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.' They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover."
 - Jesus trusted them to handle the logistical arrangements for this critical event. Jesus could delegate.

Trusting Them to Prepare for His Entry into Jerusalem

- **Luke 19:29-31** "As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" say, "The Lord needs it.'"
 - Jesus trusted them to follow His instructions precisely in a crucial moment leading to His triumphal entry.

2. Relational Trust

Jesus demonstrated relational trust in His disciples despite experiencing betrayal at some point. He did not stop trusting the disciples because of what Judas did. Many of us would have created a self-protective policy after such an experience. Imagine Jesus had subsequently banned them from speaking to the priests and others.

1. **John 15:15** "*I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*"
 - Jesus trusted them as friends and shared His heart and mission with them.
2. **Matthew 26:38** "*Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.'*"
 - Jesus trusted the disciples with His emotional vulnerability during His most difficult moments.
3. **Luke 22:29-30** "*And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*"
 - Jesus trusted the disciples with the future leadership of His Kingdom.

3. Capability Trust

Jesus entrusted the disciples with tasks and authority to advance His mission.

1. **Matthew 10:1** "*Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.*"
Luke 9:1-2 "*When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.*"
 - Jesus trusted their competence by empowering them with spiritual authority and sending them out "independently". He mentored them but didn't micromanage them.
2. **Matthew 14:16-19** "*Jesus replied, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.'* ... *Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.*"
 - Jesus trusted them with distributing food to thousands, playing a vital role in the miracle.
3. **John 20:21-22** "*Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'*"
 - Jesus trusted them to continue His mission, empowered by the Holy Spirit.
4. **Matthew 28:18-20 (The Great Commission)** "*Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'*"
 - Jesus entrusted them with the monumental task of spreading the gospel globally.
5. **Mark 16:15-16** "*He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.'*"
 - Jesus placed confidence in their ability to proclaim the gospel to the world. He knew that people would believe as a result of their preaching. Elsewhere He highlights that the labourers are few and we must pray that God sends out more labourers. He trusts us.
6. **John 17:18** "*As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.*"
 - Jesus affirmed His trust in their competence to fulfil the mission God gave Him.

Research on Misplaced Trust

Misplaced trust is a sign of low EQ. Being gullible is a sign of low EQ. It's like going to the hardware to look for a 3-piece suit; you won't find what you are looking for.

1. The Milgram Experiment (Trusting Authority Figures)

- In the **Milgram obedience experiment** (1961), participants were instructed to administer what they believed were painful electric shocks to others.
- Many **trusted the authority of the experimenter** and continued shocking despite hearing distress.
- This highlights how **trusting authority figures blindly** can lead to unethical or harmful actions.

2. The Stanford Prison Experiment (Trusting Social Roles)

- Philip Zimbardo's **Stanford Prison Experiment** (1971) showed how people can misplace trust in a system.
- Volunteers were assigned roles of guards or prisoners, and guards became abusive while prisoners suffered emotionally.
- People **trusted the structure of the experiment**, assuming it would remain ethical, but it led to serious psychological harm.

3. The Madoff Ponzi Scheme (Trusting Charismatic Leaders)

- Bernie Madoff ran one of the largest Ponzi schemes in history, deceiving thousands of investors.
- It was uncovered in 2008, highlighting over \$50 billion in losses for investors over 20 years.
- Many **trusted him because of his charm, reputation, and apparent financial success**.
- This is a classic case of **trusting someone based on status rather than evidence**.

4. Stockholm Syndrome (Trusting Abusive Captors)

- **Stockholm Syndrome** occurs when hostages or abuse victims develop **trust or emotional bonds** with their captors.
- This misplaced trust arises from a survival mechanism but can lead to **defending and excusing harmful behaviour**.

5. Relationship Betrayal (Trusting Manipulative Partners)

- Many people trust **narcissists or manipulators**, only to realize later they were being exploited.
- Gaslighting is a common tactic where someone **trusts their abuser over their own perception of reality**.

6. The False Memory Syndrome (Trusting Faulty Memories)

- Research by **Elizabeth Loftus** shows how people can **misplace trust in their own memories**, even when they are inaccurate.
- This has led to wrongful convictions based on **false eyewitness testimony**.

7. Over-trusting Technology (Automation Bias)

- People sometimes trust **GPS over their own judgment**, leading them into dangerous situations (e.g., driving into lakes or restricted areas).
- **Automation bias** happens when people **over-rely on AI or automated systems**, even when they make errors.

Whom or what are we called not to trust?

1. Do Not Trust in Wicked or Dishonest People

- **Psalm 118:8-9** – *"It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes."*
- **Trusting in people should have a foundation in trusting in the Lord first.** You are trusting that someone is God's destiny-helper sent to you, but God is your ultimate source.
- **Proverbs 26:24-25** – *"Enemies disguise themselves with their lips, but in their hearts they harbour deceit. Though their speech is charming, do not believe them, for seven abominations fill their hearts."*
- **Jeremiah 9:4** – *"Beware of your friends; do not trust anyone in your clan. For every one of them is a deceiver, and every friend a slanderer."*

In collectivist cultures we assume that our relatives are the good ones and strangers from other countries are bad.

2. Do Not Trust in Riches or Human Strength

- **Psalm 146:3** – *"Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save."*
Often, we trust people for the wrong things. It is one thing to trust that someone is reliable and will come to your meeting, it's another thing to trust that person to be your source of joy.
- **Proverbs 11:28** – *"Those who trust in their riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf."*
- **Isaiah 31:1** – *"Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the Lord."*

3. Do Not Trust in False Prophets and Deceivers

- **Matthew 7:15** – *"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves."*
- **2 Corinthians 11:13-14** – *"For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light."*
- **1 John 4:1** – *"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."*

4. Do Not Trust in Your Own Understanding or Sinful Desires

- **Proverbs 3:5-6** – *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."*
- **Jeremiah 17:9** – *"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"*
Sometimes the reason we don't trust others and delegate is because we trust ourselves too much.
We have a conceited view of our own reliability.

How trusting are you?

1. How do you decide whom to trust?
2. What rules do you have about whom you trust and whom you do not?
3. What are your value equivalents of trust?

- 4. Do you treat people as basically trustworthy unless you have evidence otherwise?**
- 5. What evidence do you need?**
- 6. Do you need to see it with your own eyes?**
- 7. Do you believe people are trustworthy if others say so and if so, whose word do you trust?**
- 8. Are there certain environments you trust and others you don't trust?**
- 9. Do you trust people from some environments and not others?**
- 10. Do you trust a person in one context and not another?**
- 11. Do you decide people are trustworthy by what they do, regardless of where they are or whom they are with?**
- 12. Do you pay most attention to a person's beliefs and values before deciding whether they are trustworthy, or do you pay the most attention to the kind of person they are?**
- 13. Are there people God wants you to trust but you are suspicious of them?**
- 14. Are there people you ought not to be trusting but you are?**
- 15. Have you become cynical about most people around you based on a few bad experiences?**

Reflection Questions on Trusting Others

1. What were the top three things you learned from this lesson?
2. What rules do you have about whom you trust and why?
3. Have past betrayals affected your ability to trust others? How do you navigate that?
4. In what areas of life do you struggle most with trust—relationships, work, leadership, or faith?
5. How does a lack of trust limit your personal and professional growth?
6. Jesus entrusted His disciples with responsibilities. What are some ways you can delegate trust to others?
7. How do you differentiate between healthy trust and misplaced trust?
8. How do you respond when someone breaks your trust? Do you give second chances?
9. What biblical principles can guide you in developing healthy trust?
10. What practical steps can you take today to rebuild trust where it has been broken?