

How to become trusting and trustworthy

Trust is an action, a voluntary action which entrusts oneself to another person. There's no backup plan in trust, neither is there an escape door. Trust is difficult, risky, and causes injury easily. However, trust is also essential in life; a lack of trust is just as destructive.

As humans, there are two basic needs we possess which are seemingly conflicting: 1) stability, and 2) adventure. These two basic needs are especially noticeable in relationships – people need stable relationships but, in fact, entering such a relationship is itself an adventure. Marriage is a great example – we desire a lifelong marriage, but nobody dares to say how long marriage would last.

These two needs create a huge tension in people's hearts, but God wonderfully ties them together with 'faith'. Faith is the conviction of things not seen and is an adventure by itself; but who we believe in is the eternal, never-changing God, who is also the uttermost stable. God has made a vow with us, to which we enter by faith – here we enter the eternal stability with a heart of adventure.

Modern citizens are used to instantaneity; we no longer believe in long-term promises. Likewise, a lot of terms and conditions behind commercial products would include disclaimers such as 'these terms are subject to change without notice'. Under this culture, it is much more adventurous than previous generations to trust and be entrusted. As we are confronted by God's faithfulness, however, we are now able to stably enter this adventure. People could hurt us, but our God would never be faithless and hurt us.

As leaders in the Kingdom of God, we solemnly need to inherit God's faithfulness, so that we could become a trustworthy person who does not hurt others. In this aspect, we need to develop these four qualities in our lives:

1. Reliability

Reliability refers to someone who would stick with their promises, someone with principles, with which their actions align with their words and are consistent throughout. A prudent person should have their thoughts, words, and actions aligned, inseparable like fused metal and glue. These words are especially meaningful:

- Those who are sincere are most content –
- because they can be themselves.
- because their actions match with beliefs.
- because what outsiders see are identical with what their family sees.
- because good times and tough times make no differences to them.
- because they are an open book.
- because their value system can be tested in life.
- because they can easily make decisions from their guts.

Sincere people have their yes's and no's be as they are, as Jesus describes in Matthew 5:37.

'It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.' (Ecclesiastes 5:5) Therefore, don't make pledges casually. Don't make promises to others casually; once you have pledged something, make it happen. There are many trustworthy people

in the Bible who are our examples; they have made beautiful testimonies in their lives. 'The righteous who walks in his integrity – blessed are his children after him!' (Proverbs 20:7). Our righteousness would become a blessing to our children.

2. Loyalty

Loyalty means to remain a follower until death and be available anytime. Loyalty is shown when John remained by Jesus' side while he was being crucified, and when Luke accompanied Paul during his imprisonment. As leaders, we should also be loyal to the people we lead and serve during their tough times and sufferings.

A loyal person would not share secrets or things about others publicly – this is a protection to their friends and make them feel secured.

3. Sincerity

Chinese are used to say words politely, which implies saying only good things in front of others and leaving the bad things to be said behind the person. On the surface such culture is harmony; it is destructive to the trust developed between people.

A sincere person is transparent: they would say both good and bad things. There is room for expressing disappointments in a truly secure relationship. There is no need for others to guess what you truly think – which makes you more trustworthy.

Of course, there are skills in expressing discontentment (which would be for another time). Sincere people, albeit saying less nice words, might be more trustworthy than those who are sleek.

4. Willing to put trust on others

You must be willing to put trust on others if you would like to gain others' trust. People might not look like they are trustworthy, but it's equally unfair if we raise questions to people easily – because 'love believes in everything and hopes in everything' (1 Corinthians 13:7). With the love of Christ, we seek to see the good things about others and believe in others. We long to see growth in each other and dream for each other, so that they value their own dreams. Their character and ability will grow because of your trust: those who are valued would develop their character in order to gain more trust and develop relationships in depth and unity. Even when they fail at times, we would be able to gain their full trust if we take the responsibility together with them.