

Obstacles to Trusting God

Ruthless trust is an uncompromising trust that *God loves you*, no matter what you have done or what you may do, and that *God is good*, whether or not He intervenes in the midst of your pain.

It is a child-like confidence that God will never abandon you, that He is at work in your life, even when you don't feel His presence or see His hand.

Brennan Manning writes, "Uncompromising trust in the love of God inspires us to thank God for the spiritual darkness that envelops us, for the loss of income, for the nagging arthritis that is so painful, and to pray from the heart, 'Abba, into your hands I entrust my body, mind, and spirit and this entire day—morning, afternoon, evening, and night. Whatever you want of me, I want of me, falling into you and trusting in you in the midst of my life. Into your heart I entrust my heart, feeble, distracted, insecure, uncertain. Abba, unto you, I abandon myself in Jesus our Lord. Amen.'"

The formula for ruthless trust, according to Manning, is "Faith + Hope = Trust."

Faith is belief that God *is*; **hope** is believing that God *will do* what He has promised, and **trust** is living with *absolute confidence* in the Father's acceptance and unconditional love, and *totally abandoning* yourself to whatever He asks you to do, even when it doesn't make sense.

When you realize you are powerless and helpless in your own strength, with absolute confidence in God's love, then you will be able to totally surrender to His will. Manning writes, "Jesus needs nothing but our humility and confidence to work miracles in us."

It is easy to have faith, hope and trust when life is good, when there's plenty of money in the bank, when friends and family are supportive, and when you aren't defeated by a poor self-image.

But there are many obstacles that will make it hard to trust in God's love and goodness. In his book *Prayer is a Hunger*, Edward Farrell lists amnesia, inertia and mañana as three greatest obstacles to trust. He writes, "We are all subject to forgetfulness of God's faithfulness in the past, laziness to act on the divine promise, and postponing until tomorrow what Jesus is asking of us today: childlike abandonment in trust."

Other obstacles to trust include:

Pain and suffering—Physical and emotional pain can keep you self-absorbed and unsure that God is reliable. Some have been so traumatized, bruised, battered, and betrayed they are barely surviving one day at a time. Manning writes, "Trusting in God's goodness does not mean you will not get hurt. God's goodness brings both pleasure and pain."

Evil—People looking for justice ask these questions: "Why does God allow evil? Why doesn't He intervene? Is He really there? Does He care?" Job struggled to find justice in his suffering. Manning explains, "Though Job is beset by suffering and loss on every side, his trust endures even when understanding fails. The story of Job implicitly states that we can endure the unwanted intrusion of evil when we have experienced a theophany—that is, an insight into the reality of God.

Your own insecurity, inadequacy, inferiority, and low self-esteem—In the book *Inner Voice of Love*, Henri Nouwen writes, "For as long as you can remember, you have been a pleaser, depending on others to give you an identity. But now you are being asked to let go of all

these self-made props and trust that God is enough for you. The root choice is to trust at all times that God is with you and will give you what you most need.”

Health & Wealth Religion—God has never promised that He will provide good health and unlimited wealth as a reward for our faith. He promises to be with us *through* our struggles, the disasters, and disappointments of life. If you are riding the roller coaster of “name it and claim it” (or “blab it and grab it” as Henry Cloud describes it), you may have difficulty trusting God when He doesn’t meet your expectations. God is not a genie in a bottle that grants wishes upon prayerful demand nor a vending machine deity that dispenses treats when you insert the coins of your good works. He desires your simple trust in His ability to work for your good, even through painful circumstances.

Fear—Many people fear what God would ask them to do if they surrendered to His call. They are terrified God might ask them to eat worms in the jungle or live in a cave in Afghanistan. Some worry that they would have to give up their manicures, salon appointments, and health club memberships. “If He would just let me stay in the temple of my familiar, I would entrust myself to Him wholeheartedly,” writes Manning.

God desires your complete trust. What are the obstacles that keep you from totally abandoning yourself to Him?

Perhaps the greatest obstacle is not believing how much you are loved. “You will trust Him to the degree that you know you are loved by Him,” writes Manning.

How incredible it is to be accepted and loved for who you are *right now*, instead of who you could be or should be! Do you believe that with all your heart, or are you holding back in disbelief that God is incapable or that you are unworthy?

In *Above All*, Manning writes, “Our response to Jesus will be total the day we experience how total is His love for us. Instead of our self-conscious efforts to be good, we should allow ourselves the luxury of letting ourselves be loved, not after we clean up our act and get all our ducks in a row, not after we have eliminated every trace of sin, selfishness, dishonesty, and degraded love from our resume, not after we have developed a disciplined prayer life . . . **but right now, right here . . .**”

Take the risk . . . it’s worth it!