

## Trust: What Is It?

By Glenn Lutjens

Sometimes things are very different than they first appear. I remember an incident that took place years ago while trying to sleep at a retreat. In the darkness, I saw something that appeared to be a wild animal – maybe a raccoon on the back of a couch. I didn't want to meet up with it whatever it was, so I stayed in bed. When I got up the next morning, I remember thinking to myself, "Oh, that's what it is." It was someone's jacket bunched up on the top of the furniture. Wow, did I get that one wrong!

Virtually every day, we ask ourselves the same question – "What is that?" We ask it about love, forgiveness, grace, wholeness, and yes, even trust. Sometimes we see it accurately, other times we don't.

So what is it? What is trust? Is it something that develops in a person based upon the trustworthy actions of others? Or is it a decision that's made towards someone or something as an act of the will?

Psalm 22:9 says, "Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast." It certainly sounds like trust in God has something to do with the trustworthy care of a mother towards her child. If that's true, then trust develops from the consistent dependability of another person's actions.

When someone grows up without trustworthy care around them, trust becomes increasingly difficult to exercise. Kids who've been emotionally or physically neglected, children or adults who have been abused, and people who have been abandoned all can struggle with trusting others and God. "He'll let me down if I trust him." "She won't be there for me like everyone else in my life." Instead, we frequently stay self-dependent, not giving anyone the chance to disappoint us again.

If trust hasn't developed in our lives, we can choose to seek out trustworthy people to be around. Though even the most trustworthy people can let us down, we can find that they are more dependable than we previously thought.

Is trust simply a passive experience, something that happens to you if you've been lucky?

Fortunately, it's not. Psalm 25:1 says, "In you, LORD my God, I put my trust." Yes, trust has its passive aspect, but it's also a choice that you and I make each and every day. It's an active decision. Will I make the choice to trust my spouse or my child today? From a larger perspective, will I choose to put my trust in the Lord?

Like many truths, trust is a "both and" experience.



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