

Text: Psalm 56:1-11

Title: “Building Trust”

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION – The place where I sometimes work out has an indoor rock climbing wall that may be 40-50 feet tall. Sometimes I’ll stop and watch the climbers as they move up the sheer face of the rock wall, clinging to and or getting a foothold on little outcroppings as they make their way to the top. Obviously, the higher they go the greater the risk if they lose their grip or footing. Inevitably there will come a point in the climb where, if they are going to keep going higher, they will need to take the risk of lunging for an outcropping that is just out of their reach. But, if you’ve ever watched indoor rock climbing, you know that they usually have a safety system that includes a harness that is connected to a rope that is secured through a carabineer in the ceiling to a person called a belayer on the ground. The climber is freed to take risks way up the wall because they know they are secured by a rope to the belayer below. If they lose their grip, they’ve entrusted themselves to another for their safety.

Open your Bibles to Psalm 56. We’re talking these days about the hope for our homes that is found in the Gospel. Today I want to talk about trust in the marriage relationship ... how it’s built, broken, and rebuilt. But I also want to show you how you can find the courage to take the risk of trusting your mate by finding your ultimate security in trusting God. Now David composed this psalm in a season in his life when he was surrounded by people he didn’t trust. But his trust in God will see him through. Read Psalm 56:1-11.

We’ll come back to this passage in a moment, because trusting God is the foundation for trusting others. God has provided for us to have a sense of security in life through the people He places in our lives, particularly our family. Children can grow confident when they know they can trust their parents. Husbands and wives have security in the trust they find in their relationship with each other. God has designed us to be interdependent. We really do need each other. However, ultimately that’s not where we are to get our primary sense of well-being and security. No human being can be the ultimate source of security for us. Only God can be that for us. Why? Because He is the only one who is completely trustworthy. The Good News for our marriages is that while no human is completely trustworthy, God is. Confidence in His love, grace and wisdom gives us the security we need to be able to give ourselves away in love and trust to another.

DEFINITION - Trust is being able to rely on the character and faithfulness of another so that you can confidently put yourself in their care.

This is what trust in God looks like. You can absolutely rely on His character, His love, His faithfulness ... and you can be confident that when you put yourself in His care He will be there for you. And this is what trust looks like in a marriage ... when you believe that your mate’s character, love and faithfulness is such that you can put yourself in their care and know that they will be there for you.

Note: Stop to think about the fact that the whole concept of submission in marriage is based upon trust. In Ephesians 5 we are told to submit to one another. And wives are to submit to their husbands. That means you can trust someone enough to place yourself under their care.

Students and single adults, someday you hope to be married, and the best thing to do now is to become a person of integrity. Then you bring that into the relationship with you.

I can't overstate the importance of trust in the relationship between a husband and a wife. There are many marriages where there is no unfaithfulness, no adultery, no physical or verbal abuse ... but neither is there that solid trust that leads to the kind of intimacy God intends for us to have in marriage.

So let's talk first about...

1. TRUST-BUILDERS

I think we know what it means to be trustworthy, but just in case it's a fuzzy concept in your mind, here are a few questions that might help you. Jot these down in your notes:

- Do you keep your promises? Do you do what you say you're going to do when you say you're going to do it?
- Do you pay attention to the needs of your mate? Are you really concerned about what meets their needs and makes them happy? Do you really listen? We are drawn to people who listen to us, aren't we. I have to confess that I'm not the most thoughtful gift-giver in our family. Nan and my daughters are much better at that. But I know how important it is to pay attention when Nan says she likes something. So when we're shopping and Nan stops to look at something and says, "That's cute. I like that." When she's not looking I'll go back and snap a photo with my phone. I don't trust myself to remember.
- Are you open with your spouse about your hopes and dreams, your worries and your fears? Can your mate be open with you about their hopes and dreams, worries and fears? We look forward to being around people we trust.
- In physical intimacy are you as concerned about your mate's needs as you are your own? Intimacy only exists where there is trust?
- Do you refrain from gossiping to others about your mate?
- Does your mate have no worries when you're apart? When you trust someone you know that who they are when they are away from you is exactly who they are when they are with you.
- Does your mate know that you will always tell the truth?
- Husbands, does your wife know that you are doing everything you can to provide financial security and physical safety for her.
- Wives, does your husband know that you won't ever try to manipulate him by withholding intimacy?
- When your mate is honest enough to admit their shortcomings do they know you will greet them with gentleness and grace?

All of these things are indications that the trust level in your marriage is high. But there are also things that erode the trust in your relationship. So here are some...

2. TRUST-BUSTERS

What destroys trust in a marriage, and therefore destroys the level of intimacy that you experience together? Jot these down in your notes.

- Inconsistent support. We need each other. God has designed that husbands and wives should be able to depend upon their mate to support them. For example, a wife needs to be assured that her husband will keep her physically safe and financially secure.
- Unkept promises. If you repeatedly say you're going to do something, but never do it, that's a trust-buster. Or if you don't do it in a timely way.
- Inattentive response. You don't really listen to your mate because you are more interested in your agenda and your needs.
- Inconsiderate behavior. I was with a group of people recently where I heard a wife openly ridicule her husband in front of other couples. I could see the embarrassment on the husband's face.
- Irresponsible actions. You don't follow-through on commitments you make. You don't take responsibility for the things you say you'll be responsible for.
- Impulsive reactions. If you're mate opens up to you or is honest with you and you bite their head off for it, they're not going to risk getting that treatment again.
- Inappropriate relationships. Is there someone other than your mate with whom you've become attached, with whom you are inappropriately intimate emotionally or physically?

Now, "trust builders" and "trust busters" are usually not huge, game-changing events. There may be a handful of those in a relationship. Rather building or busting trust is a thousand little things that over time that either establish your trustworthiness or your unreliability.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION – If you've ever been somewhere like Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico or Natural Bridge Caverns here in Texas you have probably heard a park ranger explain how caverns were formed. Caverns are formed when little trickles of water that contains a kind of acid seep down through cracks in the rock. Over time just a trickle of acid water dissolves layers of rock along its path. Because it happens so slowly, and because it happens below the surface it usually isn't noticed that a huge cavern is being formed ... all caused by just a trickle of water with acid in it. That's what happens in many marriages. It's usually not the big relational catastrophes that ruin marriages (though that can sometimes happen). It's usually the little words and deeds that become like the trickle of acid water that dissolves the foundation of trust in a relationship. So pay attention to the little things ... every conversation, every action counts.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION - But, thankfully, the opposite is true as well. The little moment-by-moment acts of trustworthiness are like drops of mineral water that begin to form beautiful formations inside caverns. You've seen this if you've been somewhere like Carlsbad Caverns. Drops of water, loaded with a certain kind of mineral, can drip from the ceiling of a cavern. With each drop of water that lands on the floor of the cavern a tiny deposit is left. Those minerals deposited by millions of tiny drops of water over the span of decades form something beautiful called stalagmites (on the floor) and stalactites (hanging from the ceiling). Typically trust-builders are like drops of water that drip year after year in a cavern. And they form something timelessly beautiful. So with every little conversation or action you are making an investment in something beautiful.

Now, here's the challenge. As hard as we work at trusting and being trustworthy, we are all prone to sin. We're going to hurt and be hurt. We're going to be tempted to pull our necks into the shell like a turtle so we won't get hurt. We'll find ourselves becoming protective and guarded rather than vulnerable and open. In times like that we need the assurance that our identity and our well-being doesn't ultimately come from the trustworthiness of our mates. As much as they may love us there will be times when they fail us. When that happens we need another level of trust operating in our lives ... trust in God.

Now back to Psalm 56. David has learned to trust God when he can't trust the people around him. I Samuel 21 gives us the backstory to Psalm 56. David, in trying to escape from King Saul, went to hide among the people of Gath. But he finds that he can't trust them either, so he has to pretend that he's a madman. But even in this environment where there are no trustworthy people around him, he still has strength and stability in his life because he knows He can trust God. People will fail us, but God never will. And when I'm secure in God I can give myself away in selfless love to others knowing that even if that love and trust doesn't come back to me, my well-being is found in my relationship with God who is totally trustworthy.

What is it about the character and faithfulness of God that allows us to completely and confidently place ourselves in His care?

1. HIS MERCY (vv.1-3)

Psalm 56:1 - Be merciful to me, O God, for men hotly pursue me; all day long they press their attack.

Psalm 56:2 - My slanderers pursue me all day long; many are attacking me in their pride.

Psalm 56:3 - When I am afraid, I will trust in you.

We can trust God with our deepest fears. We can be open and vulnerable with Him, knowing that He understands ... that He is merciful and compassionate.

2. HIS RELIABILITY (v.4)

Psalm 56:4 - In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?

Notice that David says that he praises the word of God. In other words, He knows that God will always keep His word. His word is on the line; he'll come through in time. We can trust God to keep His Word to us.

3. HIS JUSTICE (v.7)

Psalm 56:5 - All day long they twist my words; they are always plotting to harm me.

Psalm 56:6 - They conspire, they lurk, they watch my steps, eager to take my life.

Psalm 56:7 - On no account let them escape; in your anger, O God, bring down the nations.

David is saying, “God, I’m trusting You to make things right.” You don’t have to defend yourself or protect yourself when you know that sooner or later God will make everything right.

4. HIS ATTENTION (vv.8-9)

Psalm 56:8 - Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll— are they not in your record?

Remember that one thing that builds trust is our mate being attentive to our needs, and not forgetting what we need. David knows that God has kept a list of what he needs. God will not forget to be faithful.

Psalm 56:9 - Then my enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this I will know that God is for me.

Remember we are drawn to people who listen to us. Even when our mates fail to listen, God hears us when we call to Him. He listens to our cries.

Psalm 56:10-11 - In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise—in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?

You can take the risk of trusting others when you know you are secured to God. God never intended you to get your ultimate sense of well-being from a human being but from Him.

I think about Jesus who endured great suffering at the hands of His enemies. Jesus couldn’t even trust His closest friends to be faithful. They all deserted Him. But Jesus said on the night before He was crucified, “Trust in God; trust also in Me.”