

## Who Can I Trust?

We are living in times of increased stress and economic uncertainty. Betrayals and failed relationships cause a loss of trust. “Trust” is defined as confidence or calm reliance in the ability, strength, or dependability of someone or something. Trust, optimism and freedom from chronic anxiety yield valuable physical and mental health benefits:

**Born to Trust.** Young children are naturally trusting, and those who believe that people can change and improve are more forgiving and able to trust again when wrongs are committed.<sup>1</sup> Children, youth, and adults who lack trust have increased levels of loneliness and social isolation linked to depression and poor health.<sup>2</sup> The healthiest social relationships are marked by trust, cooperation, and fairness.<sup>3</sup>

### **Trust is Good Medicine.**

- Trusting attitudes stimulate oxytocin, a hormone linked with lactation, social bonding and compassion.<sup>4</sup>
- Attitudes of trust, compassion, hope, and optimism are directly linked to improved immune health, better pregnancies, pain management, and improved cancer outcomes.<sup>5 6</sup>
- Low optimism and high pessimism increases the risk for disease and premature death.<sup>7</sup>
- Chronic mistrust is linked to significantly reduced immune function and suppression of helper and T-cell activity.<sup>8</sup>
- Increased trust is linked to better overall health and positive social ties.<sup>9</sup>
- Trusting relationships with health care providers improves medical outcomes.<sup>10</sup>
- “Team” attitudes of trust in the workplace are linked not only with less sickness, absenteeism and accidents, but also improved service.<sup>11</sup>

**Belief and Trust.** Trust is hardwired in young children and is vital to individual health and social stability. This trait comes from God; His character shows us how to forgive and re-establish trust: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and by no means clearing the guilty."

**Exodus 34:6-7.** We can depend on God: "He is the Rock; His work is perfect. All His ways are just, a God of faithfulness, and without evil; just and upright is He.

**Deuteronomy 32:4.** Here we see a picture of a God who embodies every trait we can trust—and because He is God we can trust Him completely.

**Love and Trust.** God invites us to trust Him because He loves us just as we are, and "we love because God first loved us." **1 John 4:19.** God is love—it is the essence of His nature—a nature that He wants to instill within us. "All love originally comes from God. Love flows from God to us, which in turn enables us to love Him back. This relationship then frees us to have pure God-given love for ourselves. Only when we have pure love for God and for ourselves can we truly love our neighbors. This amazing flow of love promotes life and healing."<sup>12</sup>

**Healing Trust.** "When we accept God's unconditional love for us and wholly trust in His power to transform our lives, we are energized to take better care of ourselves in order to reflect His character to a needy world."<sup>13</sup> Difficult times come to all, and there is suffering and injustice to cope with in this life. Because of sin, Jesus tells us in **John 16:33** to expect this very thing...but only for a time. He will make all things right very soon. He will create a new earth without the stain of sin, and you can be a part of it.

**Revelation 12:10-12.** The more you get to know Him, the more you will trust Him. He will make you strong and wise and give you peace, and even joy, in this life beset with so many trials.

**Sacrifice and Trust.** Author Charles Cowman noted: "You can trust the Man who died for you." The Bible reveals that God's love for man is so great that He came to this world to reveal Himself through Jesus Christ. **1 Timothy 3:16.** Jesus came as "the Word made flesh." He created us, died to redeem us, and will give us power to be like Him. **John 1:10, 12-14.**

**Invited to Trust.** It has been said that you can trust the Lord too little, but you can never trust Him too much. We can lean on God to guide us through all of life's challenges: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own judgment. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." **Proverbs 3:5-6.** "Trust in Him at all times; you people, pour out your heart before Him; God is a hiding-place for us." **Psalms 62:8.**

**Faith and Trust.** The Bible describes faith as the “assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” **Hebrews 11:13**. It is trusting in advance what we may only understand in reverse! Faith is that spiritual anchoring which enables a person to weather the storms of life because they trust God’s promise that He will supply every need according to His riches in Christ Jesus. **Philippians 4:19**. Faith is looking at the situation through God’s eyes as recorded in His Word, the Bible.

Faith is power for the journey, not a lucky charm for perfect results. See **Hebrews 11**. Faith grows strong when battling through obstacles and trials. This could be why Jesus, the “Author and Finisher of our faith” sometimes leads us through difficulties rather than removing them from us. **Hebrews 12:2**.

**It’s Time to Trust.** Although we cannot know the future, we can know that God wants only what is best for us: He invites us to trust in Him. Look to God and allow His love and mercy to calm you—look to His Word, the Bible, to instruct you. Pray. Trust in Christ, your Redeemer, to save you. “Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God I have put my trust; I will not fear.” **Psalms 56:3-4**.

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<sup>1</sup> Psychol Sci 2010;21(5):645-8.

<sup>2</sup> Pers Soc Psychol Bull 2010;36(8):1086-100.

<sup>3</sup> Br J Soc Psychol 2010 Epub.

<sup>4</sup> Physiol Behav 2011;102(2):221-4.

<sup>5</sup> Psych Bull 2003;111:475-489.

<sup>6</sup> Ann Behav Med 2009;(3):239-56.

<sup>7</sup> Brain Behav Immun 2009;23(4):446-9.

<sup>8</sup> Psych Assess 1991;3(4):641-7.

<sup>9</sup> Health Place 2010;16(5):1022-9.

<sup>10</sup> Patient Educ Couns 2011. Epub.

<sup>11</sup> J Interprof Care 2010, Epub.

<sup>12</sup> Creation Health, p. 135.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.