

When You Love a Prodigal, Who Can You Trust?

“You can trust me.”

How many times has your prodigal said that? How long has it taken you to realize that no, you can't trust them?

I had been warned: “If an addict's lips are moving, it's a lie.”

Like the time our prodigal needed to buy something for an upcoming soccer tournament. I let him have my credit card (I know, I know). He returned it to me after soccer practice. When the bill came, his soccer purchase was there—and a tankful of gas, a Taco Bell purchase and some other mysterious and significant charge.

Who Can You Trust?

Our God says: “You can trust me.”

Being able to trust our prodigals may be in the distant future, but what we really need now is to be able to trust God.

It's hard to trust when the fear is real, the pain is intense, the waiting seems endless and prayers seem unanswered.

Brennan Manning's book *Ruthless Trust* has had a profound impact on my life, and he has been especially helpful on this topic of trusting God.

Time and again Manning has sent me to God's Word—and that is where we need to go—so God can reveal to us why and how we can learn to trust Him. And we also look at how that trust will affect our lives and our loved ones.

Manning defines “trust” as “faith in action.” Trust is something we do. Let’s explore what this action of trust is.

God tells us over and over that we can trust Him, and He offers words that will establish our hearts on Him and prepare us to be able to trust Him at all times:

King David affirmed, “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you” (Ps. 56:3).

One of my favorites from David is this: “I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord” (Ps. 27:13-14).

In Deuteronomy we are assured: “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (Deut. 31:8).

And Isaiah promises: “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you” (Isa. 26:3).

Isn’t that what we want? Perfect peace? No fear? To see the goodness of God? To never feel abandoned?

The more we know someone, the better we can judge if they are trustworthy. So let’s get to know God—and I believe we will know we can trust Him. Of many truths about our God, two important ones are His “Godness” and His goodness.

The ‘Godness’ of God

First, I will let God speak for Himself, as He tells us a few of His names.

I AM

“God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: “I AM has sent me to you”’” (Ex. 3:14).

God is the eternal present tense. He has no beginning or ending. He is here with us.

El Emunah—The Faithful God

“Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands” (Deut. 7:9). Scripture also tells us that God must be faithful because He must be true to who He is.

El Gibor—The Mighty God

“For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes” (Deut. 10:17).

In God’s conversation with Moses, when He gives the Ten Commandments a second time, He reminds Moses that He is a mighty God. The children of Israel had just made and worshipped a golden calf—a paltry idol. But we don’t love and serve an idol; we love and serve the true, mighty and awesome God.

Jehovah Tsidkenu—God Our Righteousness

“Say to the Israelites, ‘You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy’” (Ex. 31:13). We know we can’t make ourselves holy, and our loved ones are far from holy. But God imparts His righteousness to us.

Knowing He is God tells of His control and power. But is He evil, or is He good? Where is He in all the pain? Can I trust Him?

The Goodness of God

Over and over, Scripture assures us that God is good, and all

He does is good. Here are just a very few of those promises:

“I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul” (Jer. 32:40-41).

“You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you” (Ps. 86:5).

“For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations” (Ps. 100:5).

“The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made” (Ps. 145:9).

These few verses open our eyes to the “Godness” and the goodness of our God. Beginning with our *When You Love a Prodigal* episode this week, we will over the next month go deeper into the why and how we can trust God.

Judy Douglass is a global writer, speaker and encourager. Her most recent book, *When You Love a Prodigal*, has ignited her new podcast of the same name. She directs *Women’s Resources at Cru*.

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