

When Treacherous Judas Spirits Surround You on Every Side

I'm a trusting person. I don't throw discernment out the window when I encounter new people, but neither do I enter into new relationships with suspicion.

Essentially, I choose to believe the best, to take people at their word and to give people the benefit of the doubt. To put it another way, I trust people until they give me a reason not to.

Most of the time, this mindset lays a foundation for strong, trusting relationships. Sometimes, though, you get blindsided by someone you thought you could trust. Still, I would rather operate with an open, discerning heart than a closed, suspicious soul. I believe this is God's will for our lives.

All that said, there are times when it becomes painfully apparent that you can't trust anyone around you—or at least you've discovered you can't trust most of the people around you, and you're entirely unsure about the rest.

You may be in a season right now when everywhere you look, someone you thought you could trust betrays your trust; someone you thought had your back stabbed you in the back; someone you were closely aligned with forges an alliance with someone who openly stands against you. Why do people do what they do and how should you respond?

Why People Betray You

I have found myself in this sort of perilous situation more than once. Sometimes it's because people's motives were never right to begin with, and I didn't pick up on it because I

chose to believe the best.

Other times it was because people change. People may start off with the best intentions toward you until the enemy finds something in them—whether it's personal ambition, fear of loss or a demonic accusation against your character—and pulls their strings like a puppetmaster.

Still other times, they think they can't trust you and decide to get you before you can get them. I've said this in the past, but it bears repeating: People outside your inner circle persecute and malign you—but they can't really betray you because betrayal implies trust. That brings me back to my original question: What do you do when you can't trust anyone around you?

How do you respond when people you've stood by, opened doors for and displayed loyalty to betray your trust and stab you in the back while saying they have your back? You'll probably get hurt, mad, then really mad. You'll probably relate to David in Psalm 41:9b (MSG), "Even my best friend, the one I always told everything—he ate meals at my house all the time!—has bitten my hand."

Walking Out Psalm 37

If you've been betrayed, you have to forgive. But if you are just discerning that you are surrounded by Judases you can't necessarily get away from, you have to lean in to Psalm 37. Sometimes you need to emotionally detach, walk in love and embrace Psalm 37 at a new level. The Holy Spirit told me once, "Trust in the Lord, and do good" (v. 3). Listen in to some of the rest of this psalm and let it encourage your heart:

Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be jealous of those who do injustice. For they will quickly wither like the grass, and fade like the green herbs. Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and practice faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of

your heart.

Commit your way to the Lord; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of those who prosper in their way, because of those who make wicked schemes.

Let go of anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret—it surely leads to evil deeds. For evildoers will be cut off, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the earth (Ps. 37:1-9).

I don't know about you, but that changes everything for me. God is our vindicator. We can't always trust people, but we can certainly always trust Him. {eo}