

# *Trusting God*

## Shall I Indeed?

by Carolyn Mahaney

This morning during my quiet time I read that familiar story of Sarah's laughing unbelief at God's promise to her and Abraham:

*The Lord said [to Abraham], "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son" (Genesis 18: 10-14).*

I am glad that the Bible does not gloss over Sarah's struggle to believe and trust God. Because I too struggle with unbelief. Sadly, I too sometimes laugh and question in my heart like Sarah: "Shall I indeed \_\_\_\_\_? Shall God indeed prove powerful and faithful?" Even this morning, as I read this portion of Scripture, I was convicted of a specific area where I have not been trusting God.

It is hard to trust God.

I've actually been mulling over this reality for the past several weeks—ever since hearing a sermon by Robin Boisvert where he made this very point: "Trusting God actually takes effort. Trusting God actually takes work. It takes reading the Bible. It takes meditating on Scripture. It takes praying about things. It takes taking our own souls to task and stopping one kind of thinking and turning to another kind of thinking. It takes work. It takes effort."

This is a helpful reminder. I don't naturally trust God. I need the power of the Holy Spirit, and I need to take my soul to task. I need to choose to trust God in all circumstances.

And I'm encouraged to do so by Sarah's example. For despite her initial cynicism and doubt, she too came to believe the promise of God. We learn in Hebrews 11:11 that *"By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who promised."*

Trusting God is hard, but in another sense it is also easy. For when we choose to "consider him faithful who promised" we are putting our faith in one for whom nothing is hard: *"Ah, Lord God! It is you who has made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you."* Jeremiah 32:17

Where have you been tempted to doubt God's faithfulness and power today? Turn, like Sarah, to "another kind of thinking" and trust in Him for whom nothing is too hard!

## False Messiahs

by Nicole Whitacre

Why is it that we so often fail to trust in the God for whom nothing is too hard? Well, for one—and for me this can be a big one—it's because we seek approval from other people.

This morning as I read my Bible, I came to these words of Jesus addressing His opponents: *"I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?"* (John 5:43-44)

My first thought was: how stupid! They believed in mere men who came with nothing but their own name and failed to believe in Jesus who came from God Himself? But then, I realized: that is what I do every time I frantically chase after other people's approval! And it's not just stupid. It's failing to trust in God.

D.A. Carson commented on these verses:

*"The chief judgment on those who deny that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, is not so much that they have no Messiah, but that they follow false messiahs...Like most people then and now, they were heavily dependent on accepting praise from one another; they made no effort to obtain the praise that comes from God."*

Far too often I run after false messiahs, convinced that if I can simply amass and maintain a certain level of approval from others, I will be happy. But when I do so, I am failing to believe that the glory that comes from God is the only glory worth seeking after. I am choosing NOT to trust God.

John Piper says it better than I can:

“Itching for glory from other people makes faith impossible. Why? Because faith is being satisfied with all that God is for you in Jesus; and if you are bent on getting the satisfaction of your itch from the scratch of other’s acclaim, you will turn away from Jesus. But if you would turn away from self as the source of satisfaction (= repentance), and come to Jesus for the enjoyment of all that God is for us in him (= faith), then the itch would be replaced by a well of water springing up to eternal life (John 4:14).”

We can’t be trusting God while trying to garner a little praise from others on the side. No, trust in God requires a wholehearted pursuit of the glory that comes from God—a glory that never fails to satisfy!

## Do I Believe It?

by Janelle Bradshaw

In my daily fight to trust in the God for whom nothing is too hard I often find myself going to my feelings as my starting point. Instead of first consulting the truth of God’s Word I check in with myself. *What do I feel today? Am I tired? Fearful? Angry? Happy?*

My dad describes this sinful tendency in his book, *Christ Our Mediator*: “Even when it comes to our spiritual life, at any given moment we direct and locate our faith in our emotional state rather than in clearly objective truth. We tend to ask God for more ‘experience,’ then assure Him that if He’ll give it, we’ll acknowledge and believe His truth. And one of the tragic results is that we’re seldom amazed by the reality of the cross and of the gracious disposition of God toward sinners that the cross reveals.”

Sound familiar? I have experienced seasons where feelings of fear and anxiety seemed overwhelming and I was tempted to despair. As I pressed more deeply into the Scriptures and sought the counsel of those around me, I realized that I was exalting the truth of my feelings over God’s clear and objective truth. I was placing my faith in my unstable and inaccurate emotions. It was only after I repented and began to fight for faith in the Lord and His Word, that feelings of peace and joy followed.

Martin Lloyd Jones says, “I must never ask myself in the first instance: What do I feel about this? The first question is, Do I believe it?”

Where do you find yourself today? Are you being tempted to put your faith in how you feel about your circumstances? Maybe it’s exam week and you are anxious or maybe you were up all night with a sick little one and find yourself tempted to anger or discouragement. Whatever you might be up to today, I want to encourage you to look first and only to the Lord –and not your feelings--and trust His grace to carry you through.

## Never Dream of It

by Carolyn Mahaney

With all this week’s talk about “trusting God,” I was reminded of a chapter we wrote in our book, *Girl Talk: Mother-Daughter Conversations on Biblical Womanhood*. Though the content pertains to mothering, I hope you will find the following excerpts from “A Mother’s Faith” instructive and faith-building--whatever your season of life:

Several years ago C.J. and I, along with Nicole and Janelle (Kristin was living in Chicago at the time), were interviewed at a parent’s meeting at our church. The moderator asked C.J. and me, “If you could parent your daughters all over again, what would you do differently?” It was not a tough question. While I am aware of numerous ways I would want to be a better mom, one thing stands out far ahead of the rest.

I wish I had trusted God more.

For every fearful peek into the future, I wish I had looked to Christ instead. For each imaginary trouble conjured up, I wish I had recalled the specific, unfailing faithfulness of God. In place of dismay and dread, I wish I had exhibited hope and joy. I wish I had approached mothering like the preacher Charles Spurgeon approached his job: “forecasting victory, not foreboding defeat.”

The Bible says that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Fear is sin. And as my husband has often graciously reminded me—God is not sympathetic to my unbelief. Why? Because fear, worry, and unbelief say to God that we don’t really believe He is “merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Ps. 86:15). We are calling God a liar.

Even in the most trying situations, we have much more incentive to trust than to fear, much more cause for peace and joy than despair. That's because, as Christians, we have the hope of the gospel.

Perhaps your home is a place of peace and tranquility, your fears as insignificant as gnats to swat away. Or maybe trials are washing over you like relentless waves. Your anxieties are consuming and overwhelming. They rob you of sleep and plague your waking hours. But no matter the size or the shape of your fears, may I encourage you to take them to the foot of the cross? The gospel isn't an out-of-date message; it is the good news of a saving God who is "a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). So repent from worry and put your trust in the glorious gospel.

My husband has a Charles Spurgeon quotation as his screen-saver, which we would do well to have running across the screen of our minds: "As for His failing you, never dream of it—hate the thought. The God who has been sufficient until now, should be trusted to the end."

No matter what your temptation to fear or anxiety may be today, remember that the God for whom nothing is too hard can be trusted to the end!

## Trusting God

by Carolyn Mahaney

To conclude our topic on "trusting God" for this week, we want to leave you with a few of our favorite quotes (besides the ones we've included in our posts):

"It is a very easy thing for us to get into a desponding state of heart, and to mistrust the promises and faithfulness of God, and yet, all the while, to look upon ourselves as the subjects of a disease which we cannot help, and even to claim pity at the hands of our fellow-men, and to think that they should condole us, and try to cheer us. Perhaps they should; but, at any rate, we must not think that they should. It will be far wiser for each one of us to feel, "This unbelief of mine is a great wrong in the sight of God. He has never given me any occasion for it, and I am doing him a cruel injustice by thus doubting him." *Charles Spurgeon*

“It is just as important to trust God as it is to obey Him. When we disobey God we defy His authority and despise His holiness. But when we fail to trust God we doubt His sovereignty and question His goodness.” *Jerry Bridges*

“Difficulties heaped upon difficulties can never rise the level of the promise of God...Unbelief looks at the difficulty. Faith regards the promise.”  
*Charles Bridges*

“Where faith is deficient the gospel is sufficient.” *CJ Mahaney*

*He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how shall he not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things. Romans 8:32\**

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