



TRUST
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The Crossing Church
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OPENING

This week we are continuing our study called **Crazy, Stupid Love**. It's about all kinds of relationships and how we can develop long-lasting, respectful and loving bonds with others. We believe that God is a relational God who created us for relationships – and that all relationships get better when we do them God's way.

SCRIPTURE¹

Philippians 2:5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

Judges 16:6-10 So Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued." Samson answered her, "If anyone ties me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not dried, I'll become as weak as any other man." Then the rulers of the Philistines brought her seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, and she tied him with them. With men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the bowstrings as easily as a piece of string snaps when it comes close to a flame. So the secret of his strength was not discovered. Then Delilah said to Samson, "You have made a fool of me; you lied to me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied." Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to death of it. So he told her everything.

Judges 16:17c "No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother's womb." If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man."

1 Peter 4:8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ God forgave you.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Ephesians 4:15 Instead, speaking truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

OBSERVATION

The story of Samson and Delilah is about betrayal. It is about trust being offered before the true nature of the other person is known. This is a perfect example of why the **Relationship Attachment Model** of Dr. John Van Epp is so important if we are to enjoy long-lasting, loving relationships. The model begins with **knowing** someone before we **trust** them; and only then **relying**, **committing** and **touching** them. This model builds respect and love over time. We may be single and not interested in dating or marriage at this time, but this

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture referenced here is NIV

progression is how all healthy relationships work. When we run ahead of these components that are best for us, we end up in sexual situations that have no foundation. This is why God designed the sex for marriage.

QUESTION: As you ponder last week's sermon, what are your thoughts about applying Van Epp's model to your relationships?

APPLICATION

The reality is that we all have trust issues – some of us more than others - but we all have them. There are two reasons why we don't trust people: 1) We don't know them; and 2) we do know them! This week we want to talk about trust from three angles: **1) How do we build trust? 2) How do we sustain trust once it is built? And 3) How do we rebuild trust once it's been broken?**

QUESTION: Who are the people in your life you don't trust? Why?

QUESTION: Who are the people you do trust? Why?

Benjamin Franklin said, "Before marriage, keep your eyes wide open; but afterwards, half shut." The first half of his advice speaks to how we **build trust**. Whether we are dating someone new or building a friendship or developing a business relationship, we need to have our eyes wide open so that we don't assume something is true about a person only to find out that we were wrong. Why didn't Samson question why Delilah wanted to know his secret? He was in Crazy, Stupid Love!! Samson was so smitten that he didn't take time to build the relationship. He missed all of the red flags and maintained his trust in Delilah even after she had betrayed him three times! This is why we need people in our lives who can see those red flags and speak wisdom to us before it's too late.

QUESTION: How many times have you read this story and not realized why Samson and Delilah's relationship failed?

We often think our relationships will get better after marriage; or once we become business partners it will all work out. And so, we discount the red flags that could have warned us about problems ahead. If there are concerns in a dating relationship, marriage will only magnify them. If there is unfaithfulness or substance abuse or physical abuse during the dating experience, those red flags need to be dealt with before marriage.

QUESTION: When have you ignored red flags and wise counsel in a relationship and lived to regret it?

Once we have built trust, how do we **sustain** it? We need to keep our eyes half shut. When we love someone, we need to move their flaws, shortcomings and weaknesses to the background – and move their strengths and positive qualities to the foreground! Love provides the benefit of the doubt. Peter and Paul speak to us about "persevering" in our relationships and how "love covers a multitude of sins."

QUESTION: In what ways have you persevered and loved a person through a multitude of their sins?

Before we make assumptions and jump to conclusions, we need to consider other possibilities. This means giving someone a chance to explain because we love them. This is not naivete. Believing the best in someone and giving them trust does not negate being discerning and wise – they go together. Paul also tells us about "speaking truth in love." Sarcasm is the opposite of this. Some of us think we have the gift of sarcasm. Hurting others this way will eventually destroy relationships we could have valued and didn't.

QUESTION: When have you belittled someone with sarcastic comments? How did that turn out?

Rebuilding trust when it has been broken takes a lot of time. It may be that we have been betrayed and our heart has been broken. How can we trust that person again? Or we may have been the offender who broke the heart of someone else. How can that person ever trust us again? First, we need to understand that there's a significant difference between forgiveness and trust – they are not the same. As Christians, we forgive because we have been forgiven sooooo much. This doesn't mean we stay in abusive relationships. Only that we forgive and consider the betrayal to be in the past. It is a process of letting go and it is undeserved by the offender.

QUESTION: When have you forgiven someone who betrayed you? How did that act of forgiveness help to heal your hurt?

For those of us who have messed up, made a mistake or just blatantly sinned, how can we rebuild trust? We will likely want to resolve the past and "get back to normal" before the offended party is ready. We want the

situation and affiliated shame and guilt to just go away because we feel so remorseful about it. But it's going to take lots of time and new shared experiences to heal that kind of hurt. Also, offenders often want trust to be given without any significant changes in the relationship. Instead, we need to be prepared to give up certain freedoms and accept restrictions for a while so that healing can take place. The people we have hurt are going to put up some boundaries to protect themselves from further pain. This is completely understandable. They need time to see: **1) Truthfulness** with no secrets; **2) Reliability** as we follow through with what we say and do; **3) Consistency** as our actions show that we are consistently caring for their needs; **4) Integrity** as we are the same person wherever we are: at home, at work, with friends - on all occasions. Trust is future-oriented. It is a process of holding on until it is earned.

QUESTION: When have you had to rebuild trust with someone you love? How did you do that?

QUESTION: When you are building, sustaining or rebuilding a relationship, to whom do you go for wise counsel?

QUESTION: Who comes to you for wise counsel? How trustworthy are you in guiding others?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we have been hurt by others and been the offender in hurting others, and we want healing of relationships to occur and to be changed people in Jesus Christ. Help us to forgive those who have betrayed us, and to admit our guilt when we have offended others. Above all, help us to trust You because You are worthy of our trust in every area of our lives as You lead us in our journey toward Heaven. In Jesus' name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

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QUESTION: Who are the people in your life you don't trust? Why?

QUESTION: Who are the people you do trust? Why?

QUESTION: How many times have you read this story and not realized why Samson and Delilah's relationship failed?

QUESTION: When have you ignored red flags and wise counsel about a person and were betrayed by him/her?

QUESTION: In what ways have you persevered and loved a person through a multitude of their sins?

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