

In Part 2 I mention that trust is earned and trust is given - so we went through a few weeks ago what earning trust looks like and the 5 essentials of trust that you can go back and listen to if you want. You can have a very trust worthy person who is earned your trust, but if you are still finding it difficult to give your trust - what to do?

The process of discerning if someone has earned your trust is a cognitive process, but giving trust is a matter of the heart. There can be many reasons you find it difficult to trust, so today we are looking at the topic of **learning to trust again**.

When it comes to the heart, there is this beautiful paradox in scripture, on the one hand, we are told our hearts are fallen and broken, and on the other hand we are told our hearts are precious to God. This multistories nature of our being - **the broken aspect looks like**: its human to go into self preservation mode when we are under attack or when injury has occurred to avoid pain. AND **the divine aspect looks like**, the Jesus in us, reminding us to stay open, because this is the place that the abundant life God promises flows from - in Jesus we are more than have ever imagined.

Trusting again, once trust has been broken, is more than a decision. Its is a dilemma - a choice between equally unfavourable options.

Trust does not always work out the way we want it to. How can I ever get over the belief and/or fear that betrayal, hurt and disappointment will happen again?

We can't know the future, but when can grow in awareness - awareness of others yes, but self awareness is key if you have decided to learn to trust again.

Its a process... Learning to trust again does not happen in an instant - its a process. Its not a clean process, but there are key components in this process.

1. Heal from what happened to you.

When you have been injured you need time to heal. So as Hebrews 12 says "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. The idea here is that when we are injured, we have to get well before we are ready to negotiate rocky paths, in our current injured state, the rocky path might injure us more.

Many times when we are injured we fail to heal, because pridefully we soldier on injured failing to admit that this situation hurt us and in the process getting injured more we become more and more jaded and bitter.

If you are injured you need time to heal.

2. Move beyond bitterness, resentment and anger through forgiveness.

The problem with steps 1 and 2 is that you may need to put 2 before 1 in order to heal.

These emotions, when we have been hurt - anger is normal reaction, its not wrong to feel anger its what we do with it that matters. Unresolved anger leads to more anger and bitterness and resentment.

Many times you need to forgive before you can heal, because just like an infection you have to deal with the infection first. Forgiveness is like the putting disinfectant on the wound cleaning it out before the wound can heal - if your not going to forgive, the wound is just going to get worse and worse and you may loose a limb.

Forgive Adam, well I would if they would apologise, if they would agree with my position, I would if they would meet me in the middle.

You still think that forgiveness is about justice, its about freedom. Your freedom, your cleansing.

To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.

But please know what has been done to you is serious, for some of you very serious, so serious in fact someone has to die for this sin. Someone did die in fact that person is Jesus. Will you let Jesus be the judge about this situation, will you get out of the judgement seat, and let Him do the judging - when you get out of the judgement seat - its actually freeing for your heart.

I believe learning to trust again starts a dance between forgiving others and healing, you'll never trust others again or trust God until you get out of the judgement seat.

People get forgiveness and reconciliation confused. They are two different things, but we will get to that soon but know that, *just because you forgive someone does not mean you trust them*. Remember its a process.

To the degree that you have experienced the forgiveness of God is the degree that it should be able to forgive. Just as the Unmerciful Servant could not pay the forgiveness they has received from their master forward. There is reason to ask the question if they have truely experienced that forgiveness.

So the exposing statement is this: If you can't forgive others, there is reason to ask the question if you have actually experienced being forgiven by God.

I want to be a person who forgives quickly because **learning to trust and unity** is more important than being right.

Because being open not bitter and resentful and open to trusting again is more important that being right.

To Consider if you are free a helpful model I have found is when thinking through my capacity to forgive and find freedom from bitterness and resentment:

1.Tell God: I forgive them

2.Tell them: I forgive you

3.Ask God: to forgive you for the bitterness and resentment you have for the other person

4.Ask the person: to forgive you for the bitterness and resentment you have towards them

3. Ponder what you really want.

This step is NOT to ponder if you will forgive or not - you are going to do that, you are going to give that person the opportunity to apologise... This is now that you are healing and forgiving what would you like going forward.

Pondering what you want unfortunately is not wishing the betrayal never happened, this step is letting go of that wish, seeing reality, and asking yourself "given where we are now, what do I want going forward".

This is not just what you want, but be asking the Father, "what you want me to do going forward, and what is also best for my community."

Lets take a abusive situation when it not physical abuse, but emotional abuse that has been going on for some time. It is possible to say - I forgive you and also at the same time I wish you well and

have no desire for an ongoing relationship or to work with that person or organisation. You may decide not to trust again.

Ecclesiastes 3:5

a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,

The danger in talking this way, is that this level of discussion is not some excuse to quit on people as soon as it gets hard, but there comes a point when you need to some deep soul searching and ponder what God wants for you? And what God wants for you is not always going to be in alignment with others.

Lets face it, its not always going to land in the place where two people in conflict will want the same thing, but sometimes it will - and those are the times its worth fighting for it.

Its in that place you can take a step towards the next step.

4. Figuring out if reconciliation is possible

To be clear reconciliation does not automatically mean trust has been restored, this is just the next step in that direction, as this step will help you see who you are dealing with. Reconciliation is simply forgiveness on your part, plus the other person apologising and owning what they have done so you can return to a good, forgiven place, no matter what you decide to do in the future.

So if reconciliation is possible, we start this by asking a few questions:

1. Do they take responsibility for what they did?
2. Do they see how what they did was wrong?
3. Do they recognise the consequences of their actions & understand how it has hurt you/others?
4. Are they remorseful, sorry, and contrite?
5. Do they repent and apologise for their actions?
6. Are they transparent with information, and do they give you full access to the truth?
7. Are they coming clean with the "whole story"?

If someone is fully honest, remorseful and apologetic - and if they care about what they have done to you and desire to make it right - then your forgiveness can go to the next level: you can be reconciled in the relationship.

Notice I did not say trust again. Not Yet. With forgiveness on your side, ownership and remorse on the other side you can at least return to a place where you are okay with each other.

If the response is:

- Denial
- Lying
- Gaslighting
- Blame
- Excusing
- Minimising
- Rationalisation
- Invalidating
- Entitled to someone else taking responsibility for the problem
- Projection

Any of these behaviours make moving on difficult. The best option becomes, we will have to agree to disagree. Not much you can do in the trusting again process.

Know that this is ok, because even though we are called to the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17) - Because reconciliation takes 2 people - forgiveness only requires 1 person.

So on this not every relationship is reconcilable, but your un-forgiveness will effect every relationship.

Interestingly the bible categorises people when they are corrected and when they make mistakes - namely wise, fools and evil.

The Wise

Proverbs 15:31 - *Whoever heeds life-giving correction will be at home among the wise.*

Proverbs 9:8 - *Correct the wise, and they will love you.*

Being wise is the ability to be able to listen to a confrontation about his or her behaviour, own it, apologise, learn from it and behave differently as a result of being corrected.

The Fool and Mocker

Proverbs 9:7-8

Whoever corrects a mocker invites insults;

whoever rebukes the wicked incurs abuse.

Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you;

People who respond in mocking ways do not come close to accepting responsibility for what they have done or how they have hurt you. In fact they either blame you or someone else for the problem. When confronted or corrected, they are defensive and angry, even attacking.

All people are not the same. There are those with whom you can have a redemptive, constructive conversation and those you can't. When you're thinking about repairing trust, its crucial to know what kind of person that person is being at that juncture in time.

What I mean is, we can all be defensive at times. This often happens when certain buttons related to the areas of woundedness we carry around inside of us are pushed. You push the right bruise, anyone can push back defensively. **In those moments, a calm head from the one reacting and some empathy can return someone to their right mind.** The fool we are talking about here is not a momentary reaction - it is a ongoing stance of unwillingness to take responsibility.

But even when you see this it is still not time to give up.

Matthew 18:15-18

"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

It begins with a one on one convo - if this goes well you have won them over - reconciliation if not don't keep talking about it - they are not listening to you - bring a couple of other people into the convo to help, if that does not work talk to church leadership (not tell the whole church to be clear) - if that does not work, then separation is advised. Its called tough love - sometimes separation finally gets through to them - but sometimes not.

Evildoers

Proverbs 24:1-2

Do not envy the wicked,

do not desire their company;

for their hearts plot violence,

and their lips talk about making trouble.

There is one more category that advises are very different approach. Its important to realise there are some people who not merely defensive or trying to avoid taking responsibility - there are people who actually intend to harm you - and requires a clearly distinctly different response.

This person when confronted will plot violence against you so you must go into protection mode with evil behaviour. To be clear you do not engage or attempt a conversation or confrontation apart from whatever level of protection is needed. This is not a time of reconciliation but authorities, police and lawyers.

Proverbs 27:12

A prudent person sees evil and hides himself;
But the naive proceed, and pay the penalty.

Don't fall for the line, calling the police that's not very Christian! Classic line for the person who has no idea what their action are doing, nor can they even say that line with any integrity so the statement is worthless - and its blame shifting.

Its so important that as we consider to process of learning to trust again and looking at the other person we must also recognise that we are not 100% innocent, mature or competent people. We all have issues that we need to look at too.

By saying this I'm not saying that any betrayal is your fault, as that is exactly what that blaming fool wants you to believe, but in the process its so important to be will to have the spec removed out of your own eye as we look at the others persons potential log.

5. Determine if trust is an option

Well we are back at the start at the 5 essentials of trust. The reason why trust was broken is that one or more of the essentials failed or were weak, and so a reassessment is required, so gaps can be determined if they can be filled, resolved and why overlooked the first time.

1. Understanding

You can trust someone when you feel your needs are understood, felt and cared about.

2. Motive

You can trust someone when you feel their motive is for you, not just themselves

3. Ability

You can trust someone when you feel they have the ability or capacity to deliver what is entrusted to them

4. Character

You can trust someone who has the character or personal makeup needed for what you entrust them with.

5. Track Record

You can trust someone who has a track record of performing in the ways you need them to perform

Track record when it comes trusting again includes looking for evidence of true change:

- admission of need
- Involvement in a proven change process
- A structured approach
- Skilled help
- New experience and skills
- Self sustaining motivation
- Presence of support
- Evidence and monitoring of change
- Total transparency
- Willingness to be questioned

Get help

Two parties directly involved in the breakdown of trust usually cannot restore it by themselves

Remember its a process! You can actually see this process in Josephs story that begins in Genesis 37 with his brothers as he learns to trust again after the brothers sold him into slavery. Definitely worth a read

Restoration and reconciliation in a relationship is a wonderful thing. Joseph himself weeps so loudly upon revealing himself to his brothers that the Egyptians and the household of Pharaoh hear (Genesis 45:2). We see Joseph's heart and his longing to have a close and restored relationship with his brothers. His story also reminds us that rebuilding trust is a process requiring patience and clear "makers" along the way. Joseph was patient in the process.

Learning to give trust again

The premise that we have looked at is leaning to trust again with the person who is the perpetrator or the one who has broken trust.

But what about when my heart is so damaged that I'm struggling to trust anyone, or maybe anyone in the context in which you were betrayed. What do I do?

Misplaced trust happens in the heart and soul like infections happen in the body, so we need to strengthen our immune system.

Here are 5 reasons we may be struggling to trust anyone, or keeping with the germ image, reasons why our immune system is weak

1. The equipment was never installed from an early age (when you grow up in abusive environments all you know is that untrustworthy style of relationships so you go into adulthood trusting abusive people because its familiar).
2. Struggle to trust God (many times because our own fathers were not trustworthy)
3. We don't learn from prior experiences
4. We don't heal from prior experiences
5. We don't forgive prior experiences
6. Lack of boundary setting skills (jump in too quickly too soon)
7. Lack of community that you allow to speak into your world - real friends stab you in the front

Community helps you see when you may be (things that blind me)

Taking the rescuer bait (just because your in the rescuer seat you feel the victim can be trusted)

Someone from the past - bias from thinking you know someone

Needing the Ideal - this person brings such good things to the relationship they must be trusted

Rescue fantasies & Victim thinking - victims latch onto a rescuer or anyone because they see themselves so lowly

Guilt - so plagued by guilt you trust easy to ease the guilt

Trusting God

This trust journey sounds complex and it is, but all of this content as good as it is comes in second place to the reality of placing your trust in Jesus.

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.