

COMMENDABLE CONFIDENCE

Joe Slater

Who can you trust? Politicians pad their pocket-books instead of performing their promises. Preachers pray on the vulnerable rather than praying for them. Even dearest friends let you down now and then. Is there anyone, or anything, you can trust?

Some cynically decide to trust only themselves. But this, too, leads to disappointment. The Pharisees “*trusted in themselves*” resulting in a sickening, hypocritical self-righteousness (Luke 18:9). However untrustworthy others may be, we ourselves are also unreliable. Paul and his companions knew “*that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God . . .*” (2 Corinthians 1:9). Even as an apostle, Paul knew that he, personally, was inadequate. His trust was “*through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God . . .*” (2 Corinthians 3:4, 5).

Material wealth also receives abundant trust that it doesn't deserve. Jesus once exclaimed, “*How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!*” (Mark 10:23). But merely being wealthy isn't the problem, as shown by the next verse: “*Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God*” (v. 24).

The fact is, we tend to trust our possessions. When the bank balance is high and our payments are current, we feel confident. But this trust is misplaced! Paul instructed Timothy to “*command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living god, who gives us richly all things to enjoy*” (1 Timothy 6:17).

By their very nature, riches are uncertain. Jesus spoke of moth and rust corrupting them and thieves

stealing them (Matthew 6:9-11). Those who experienced the Great Depression saw how suddenly wealth became worthless. Besides, there is the ever-present possibility that you will not be here to enjoy your wealth. God's words to the rich fool ring forth: “*This night your soul is required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?*” (Luke 12:20).

You will never be disappointed by trusting in God. Trust not yourself, but God! Trust not your riches, but God who gives them! Especially in matters of salvation, “*trust in the living God, who is the savior of all men, especially of those who believe*” (1 Timothy 4:10).

“*Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!*” (Psalm 34:8).

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Far Away From Fools

Mind your business, delve into your work,

Stay far away from fools who revile and waste;

Worldly ills and deeds will drive you berserk,

Devote yourself to action where you were placed.

Live a quiet life, walk in truth and love,

Learn silence, grace, compassion — see the greater

Plan of God, and fear the Lord above.

We soon will give account to our Creator.

--Randal Matheny (via Bulletin Gold)

Lean On Him!

I've heard it said that "God never gives you more than you can handle," but is it a biblical truth or a feel-good platitude? Yes, 1 Corinthians 10:13 says that we won't be tempted beyond what we can stand, but that doesn't mean that life's circumstances won't be overwhelming.

Paul had an affliction that was more than he could handle, and he asked God to take it away three times. Elijah was threatened with death by the most wicked of royal couples, believed himself to be the last faithful man on earth, and prayed that God would take his life. Job had much more than he could handle when he lost everything and his wife told him to curse God and die. I don't know about you, but I'd classify being stuck in the belly of a giant fish, thrown into a fiery furnace, sold into slavery by my siblings, and asked to sacrifice my child as situations that are more than any human could handle.

God consistently allows His people to experience more than they can handle, and then He asks us to cast those cares on Him so He can handle it for us. He told Paul that His “*grace was sufficient*” and that His “*power is made perfect in weakness*” (II Corinthians 12:9). He gave Elijah sustenance and strength from one meal for a 40-day journey, reassured him of the 7,000 faithful others, and displayed His glory not in the might of wind, earthquake, and fire, but a low whisper (I Kings 19). He reminded Job of His power and might and not only restored but doubled all that he had once he had proven himself faithful (Job 42:10).

Having stress and trials that are more than we can handle are what help us learn to rely on God. That's why James tells us to “*count it all joy*” when we experience trials (James 1:2). There is no greater blessing than being so worn down with burdens too great for us that we have no choice but to finally force our stubborn hearts to let go and lean on God.

--Kari Adams (via Bulletin Gold)