

# What It Means to Trust God

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Reading Time: 5 minutes

We are living in unique times for sure. With the COVID-19 pandemic making its way across the United States, we are facing things most of us never have faced in our lifetime. The only thing that will get us through times of difficulty like this is our trust in God. The Bible highlights the need to trust God over and over again. In every dispensation of biblical history God's people are encouraged to trust in Him no matter what. Notice a few familiar passages that highlight our need to trust in our God:

- The individual who trusts God is blessed (Jer. 17:7-8)
- Trust God instead of leaning on your own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6)
- When we are afraid, we need to trust God (Psa. 56:3)
- We are to trust in the Lord and do good (Psa. 37:3)
- God knows those who take refuge in him (Nahum 1:7)
- It's better to trust in the Lord than to trust man (Psa. 118:8)
- God keeps those who trust in him in perfect peace (Isa. 26:3)

While we may already know passages like these, we are now being tested as to whether we

really believe them or not. It is easy to say, “I trust God” when all is well, but in times of uncertainty or hardship, we will show what we truly believe (Prov. 24:10). Even when the world is panicking, Christians must be joyful and sensible because we trust the one who is invisible (Heb. 11:27). We cannot be as fearful and faithless as our contemporaries while at the same time claiming that we believe in the God who runs the universe. Christians must be reminded that the world is watching us at this time. The world is always watching us but especially in times of hardship people want to see how our faith shapes us.

## What Trusting God DOES NOT Mean

Before we discuss specific ways to trust God, we need to briefly discuss what trusting God doesn't mean. Unfortunately, many people mistakenly believe that if they are people of faith, they are somehow exempt from the commonsense precautions that the rest of the world is taking. Some even mistakenly think that if Christians take *any* precautions, they are showing their lack of faith and they do not trust God to bring them through. Christians should be reminded that there is a difference between being courageous and being foolish. God desires that we be the former and not the latter.

**Trusting God does not mean we do not practice social distancing.** God's people can contract this deadly virus just like anyone else and we should not think that God will miraculously keep us from getting sick just because we are His people. Though Peter was a disciple of the Lord, this did not keep his mother-in-law from getting sick (Matt. 8:14). Likewise, though Paul was an apostle, he was not able to keep his friends from getting sick (and he couldn't always use his miraculous ability to heal them, cf. Phil. 2:25-27; 2 Tim. 4:20).

**Trusting God does not mean we do not alter our public services for the time being.** Many congregations are now live streaming their services because of the imminent threat of contagion among large gatherings. These congregations are not unfaithful nor are they faithless—their shepherds are doing what they can to love their neighbors and keep the members safe. On one occasion Paul was let down in a basket to preserve his life (Acts 9:23-25). Paul knew if he died it was for his ultimate benefit, but he also wanted to live as long as he could to serve his God (Phil. 1:21).

**Trusting God does not mean that we just accept things as they are and fail to pray.** Sometimes people say in times of hardship “Things are happening the way they are because God wants them to and there's nothing we can do.” The truth is there *is* something we can do. The Bible teaches that if we pray, God may intervene and circumstances can change (Jas. 5:16-17).

**Trusting God does not mean that we are not concerned.** On one extreme, we cannot be paralyzed by fear (Isa. 41:10). On the other extreme, we should not be totally oblivious to the things taking place in our times. People who read articles, watch the news, and remain informed are not failing to trust in the Lord. When a famine was going to sweep through the Roman Empire in the first century, the prophets informed the church so that they could respond accordingly (Acts 11:27-30). Being informed does not mean one has surrendered faith.

## How to Trust God

Let me now give a few ways we can affirm our trust in God during these times of pandemic and be sure we do not surrender our faith when we need it the most.

**Continue to Give Financially to the Lord's Work.** If we really believe that God gives all good gifts, and that everything we have is from Him, we will continue to give even in these economically uncertain times. Many people are losing their jobs, the stock market is plummeting, and many are fearful of how the economy will suffer as a result of this pandemic. Kingdom work still must go on and this will only happen as faithful Christians continue to contribute (2 Cor. 9:6-7). Like the widow who gave what she had and trusted that God would take care of her, we evidence our trust when we continue to give to God in times of scarcity and times of surplus (Mark 12:41-44).

**Serve Those Who Have Needs.** Many people start to look inward and focus on their family and their needs when things get rough. God's people must continue to look for ways to serve our neighbors and help those who are in need. One way we do this is by considering those who may be elderly in our community and afraid to go out at this time (Gal. 6:10). We show our trust in God when we continue to serve others as He said we should and not allowing ourselves to be hardened due to the current crisis.

**Speak Confidently About the Future.** While we do not know exactly how things will turn out, we know that eventually they will improve. When Paul was in prison and his future was unknown, he spoke in positive terms of his release and was optimistic about his future (Phil. 1:19, 2:24). We should preface all of our plans with "if the Lord wills," but we must reject the pessimism which behaves as if we will live under a perpetual grey cloud (Jas. 4:15).

**Look at Past Deliverances.** One of the problems with the present is that it fools us into thinking we have it worse than anyone ever has. It also can cloud our vision about what God has done in the past. We can trust God if we look backward at all that God has done in the past and trust Him for the future (2 Cor. 1:9-11). In both the Old and New Testaments, we

find God delivering His people from terrible things. Also, in our own lives we know of valleys from which God has rescued us, and we can lean on those memories for hope. All things work together for God's ultimate good for His people (Rom. 8:28)—and we need to remember that.

Jesus told His disciples that they would have trouble in the world, but because He overcame, so could they (John 16:33). I know it is cliché, but remember to trust in God. “Trust in God at all times” (Psa. 62:8).