

When I was a kid, my parents spoke often about the importance of choosing friends wisely, for good reason. I have often observed, as an adult, how many people become friends by default, choosing to spend time with whoever shows up. This inevitably leads to trouble, as choosing good friends is a lot of work, but being friends by default leads to trusting the untrustworthy. So how should we evaluate the trustworthiness of potential friends, and does Jesus deserve our trust? Let's spend some time thinking about these things this week.

Day 1

Promises Kept

The most important aspect of gaining trust is track record. When evaluating the potential trustworthiness of a person, we must know something about the person's history, and until that happens, it's best to reserve judgment. Fortunately for us, the bible records thousands of years of man's interactions with God, and we find that he keeps all of his promises. One man counted the promises of God in scripture and found 7,487 promises given to man by God. In his estimation, God had never broken any of them. But who is this random guy on the internet to gain our trust? How about the estimation of the wisest man in the world? King Solomon claims in 1 Kings 8:56 that God had kept all of his promises to Israel, and given Israel's track record, that is a pretty incredible thing. What about in your own life? Has God kept all of his promises to you? First, it's important to look at exactly what God has promised, vs. what we wish he would promise. Many times, we assume or wish promises into existence and then try to hold God to them. When God fails to give us the life we want, we will hold that against him, when he never promised any such thing. In addition, we often fail to recognize that our wishes often go in the direction of the desires of our hearts, which are not aligned with God's intention for us. For example, we often are angry at God when our lives are not easy and comfortable, when God never promised to give us easy, comfortable lives and the desire of his heart is not ease and comfort, but righteousness, virtue, and glory. So when we look at the truth of God's track record, it is worth trusting him with our friendship, for he is faithful in all he promises.

Verses: 2 Peter 3:9, Hebrews 10:23, 2 Corinthians 1:20

Prayer Topics: Confidence, Trust, Peace

Day 2

Transparency

Another important aspect of evaluating someone's trustworthiness is transparency. Does the person we are being asked to trust have hidden agendas, or do they come out and say exactly what is on their mind? Do they try to use words to hide their true intentions to gain our trust, or do they speak the truth plainly and let the chips fall where they may? With our God, with Jesus, we know exactly what he intends, even if that is unpopular. Jesus encounters a rich young ruler in scripture, who is eager to know what he must do to gain eternal life, and after assuring Jesus that he has kept the law, Jesus asks him to sell all of his possessions and follow. The man, having great wealth, leaves Jesus, who doesn't try to get him to turn back to him, but lets him go the way he wants to go. Jesus never tries to soft-pedal his message, nor does he try to please his listeners, but instead he makes his intentions clear and is dead honest about the cost of following him. In essence, the difference between Jesus and the world is like the difference between the recruiting tactics of the marines and the army. When I was growing up, the marines always showed how difficult their training was and let you know that you may not be tough enough, because their organization was for the few, the proud, the marines. The army, on the other hand, tried to sell you on all the benefits you would accrue, like money for college and training in some

kind of high-tech field. Jesus can be trusted, because he tells you everything exactly as it is, and allows you the freedom of making a choice that is informed by truth, and if you choose it, the truth sets you free.

Verses: John 1:17, James 1:18, Psalm 86:11

Prayer Topics: Truth, Reality, Honesty

Day 3

Taking it Slow

Jesus does not ask you to perform some kind of super-human feat, but instead asks you to have the faith of a mustard seed. In the bible's record of thousands of years of interactions between man and God, we see over and over that Jesus never asks you to do more than you can, but instead asks you to trust. And when we find trust difficult, he allows us to ask him for help in trusting him. When God calls Abraham out of all of the inhabitants of the earth, he tells Abraham that his descendants will inherit a great land, but he does not expect Abraham to pick up a sword and take the land by force. He only asks Abraham to pick up and go to a new land, not to pick up and conquer a new land. God is patient to wait hundreds of years until he has fulfilled another of his promises to Abraham, the promise to make him a great nation, before asking his descendants to take the land. When he finally asks the descendants of Abraham to take the land, he asks them to trust that he will grant them victory, that although the fighting will be theirs, the victory will be on Him. When they trust that that is the case, God gives them the victory. When Jesus comes into our lives, he never asks us for more than we can give. He lets us know ahead of time that we are promising to give everything, he is very up front about that. But he does not demand everything at once, but works in our lives to help us to give more and more as we are strengthened in our faith, and he is very patient as he works with us. Jesus deserves our trust, because he is gentle and lowly in heart, and he does not demand what we cannot give.

Verses: Psalm 27:14, Isaiah 40:31, Lamentations 3:25

Prayer Topics: Hope, Patience, Fortitude

Day 4

Consistency

You should never trust someone who has violent mood swings. This seems like a truth that doesn't need to be said, but indeed it does. I once knew someone at bible college that was getting married to a very unstable girl, and many people tried to warn him that this was a very bad idea. Fortunately, he was spared a life long commitment to an unstable person, not when he finally believed his friends, but when she tried to walk into interstate traffic the night before the wedding. With Jesus, you can count on who he is, because who he shows himself to be never changes. One of the things you will often hear people say upon a divorce is that they just grew apart, or that the other person changed over the years and so someone found themselves married to a stranger. This never happens with Jesus, who for all eternity has been entirely consistent in his nature and character. Some people will say that God is recorded in the bible as changing his mind, so that he cannot be trusted, but when you look closely at scripture it tells us that God responded to the intercessions and pleading of people's prayers, which is an unchangeable part of his character. No, in fact, God never changes, and we can always count on him. Is there anyone else it makes more sense to trust? Can you even say that it makes more sense to trust yourself than it does to trust Jesus? Consistency and trustworthiness are ultimately synonymous in this case, you cannot do better than to trust in Jesus.

Verses: Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8, Numbers 23:19

Prayer Topics: Steadfastness, Commitment, Character

Day 5

Promoting Others

The final aspect of trustworthiness we will look at this week is the desire to bless others. There are many people who will use you to promote and advance themselves, but there are no other people who will take on your sin and give you their perfect righteousness. There is no greater evidence of the trustworthiness of Jesus than the exchange that he offers you in the covenant in his blood. All of the untrustworthy people you will ever encounter have this in common, that they seek to better themselves at your expense. There is absolutely no one in history who has ever given anyone a better deal than Jesus gives us. There is no person, yourself included, that is more worthy of your trust than Jesus. There is no better friend than Him. Spend some time thinking today about the truth of this fact, and how you might be a better friend to the best friend that has ever existed.

Verses: Luke 6:38, 1 Peter 4:8, Romans 12:14

Prayer Topics: Exchange, Encouragement, Generosity