

IN HIS HANDS

INVITATION

Will you risk it all on who He says He is?

It's common to struggle with certain fears when we think about trusting God. We might begin to ask some important questions — *Can I really trust God with my hopes, dreams, and future? If God is for me, and if God can do all things, why doesn't He fix this situation? He's all-powerful, all-loving, all-knowing, all-everything — so why doesn't He just change my circumstances and make me happy?* We often think we know what is best for us and God does not. We are deceived. God does know what's best for us, even if we don't agree or understand what He's doing or not doing.

In *Feeling Like It's All Up to Me*, we talked about how we can take matters into our own hands and often leave God out of the equation completely. We lose patience and instead of waiting on Him, we grab the reins in an attempt to achieve peace and rest and avoid being hurt. Our way may work for a moment, but it usually creates another set of problems.

Why is it such a risk to trust Him? What are we afraid of? It usually boils down to one of two questions — if not both: *Does God care about me? And Is He good?*

Most Christians know that God can do anything He wants to do, but *Does He want to do good for me? And does He care what I want?*

What we have to face is the emotional need we are trying to have God meet by doing a certain thing. Everything we want and do in life is based on trying to



get a physical, emotional, or spiritual need met. In this lesson we are looking at trusting God for our emotional needs for love, acceptance, worth, and security. Being wired to avoid pain and seek pleasure, we will do whatever it takes to get what we think we need. We usually think we have the best idea and do not even consider God's point of view.

We learned that control is the opposite of trust. So how do we move from trying to control to trust, if we think God does not care or is not good?

If it's really true that I don't have control, can I really trust God with my hopes, dreams, and fears? The more we know God and His character, the more we will be able to surrender to Him and stop trying to control our circumstances.



THE KNOT

It can be hard to let go. *If I trust Him, will He deliver? If I trust Him, will I lose out on what I really want?* God doesn't promise that we will have an easy life or get what we think will make us happy. We live in a fallen world and life has many challenges. Historically, life has not always been easy for believers. Jesus said:

“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

This world is opposed to God and there is going to be tribulation in life. But, in the midst of the difficulties, God says He's going to be with us. He promises us peace in the middle of our chaos, circumstances, and fears. God invites us to take the risk of handing Him our dreams, our hopes, our fears, our jobs, our children, and our very lives.

For example, a person may think that if they get married they will feel loved, accepted, valuable, and secure. They certainly believe that God wants them to feel that way too, so they do everything in their power to meet “The One” who can fulfill their every need. That is a problem. No one can meet the needs of another person. You see, it is God's job to meet those emotional needs. He



certainly uses others to manifest His love, but we need to know that simply by merit of being God's child are completely lovable, acceptable, valuable, and secure - with or without a spouse. He certainly brings others into our lives to enjoy and have relationships with, but not to be *The One* who *meets* those needs.



THE UNTANGLE

While God has never promised perfect circumstances, He has promised to provide all we need for an abundant life. It is by the grace of what God did on the cross through Jesus that all of our emotional needs have been met. Again, He does call us into human relationships and community to experience the fullness of His gift. This brings us to expectations and expectancy.

Expectations vs. Expectancy

What do expectations and expectancy have to do with resting in the fact that God meets our needs? First, let's look at the difference between them. Expectations are predetermined disappointments, whereas expectancy is the hope we have in God for our future.

When we have expectations of God or others in our lives, we are holding them to a specific standard or outcome in the relationship - which often ends in disappointment. We may believe we know the best way and timeline for events to occur in order to get what we need. But what happens when things don't turn out the way we want or in the timeframe we think is necessary?

For example, we have expectations that our spouse will meet certain needs, and our kids will live a certain way. So we may start to make demands, or try to manipulate it into being. The trouble is, it doesn't work. The results are disappointing, relationships suffer, and our efforts produce death rather than life.

However, expectancy is a different thing.



We all have desires, and that's not a bad thing — God gives us desires — but we get into trouble when we start making our desires into demands to fulfill us. Expectancy is telling God our hopes, desires, and dreams and asking Him to provide what we need. Expectancy is the hope and assurance that God is going to do something to meet our needs, but it may not look like our plan. His ways and thoughts are higher than ours.

We have a tendency to decide what we need in order to feel love, acceptance, worth, and security. We make a plan, establish a timetable, and set out to get it. Oh, sometimes we ask God to bless our plans or make them happen, but we try to tell Him how to do it or we try to manipulate it into happening. Expectancy says, “Papa, here are my dreams and I look to You with great hope and expectancy that you are going to take care of me.”

We may be tempted to use our fleshly skills and try to help God. But when that temptation comes, ask God to show you a way out of that temptation.

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Expectancy is focused on the character of God in our day to day journey — not outcomes. It means we don't know what God is going to do, but we do know that He is going to show up and bring about the best result because He loves us. Expectancy is expressing our desires to God and then surrendering them to Him. We then choose to trust God to show up in our desires. God is with us moment by moment to guide our steps as we trust in His character, regardless of the outcome.

If we are too focused on trying to get our needs met through our relationships with others we may end up missing out on a lifetime of experiencing God supplying our every need. Regardless of what God has in store for each of us, we can have an expectancy to experience Him — His peace, love, acceptance, joy, and contentment — moment by moment, every single day. We can be sure that God will show up in amazing ways in our lives.





HEART WORK

We all have expectations. God wants us to be able to recognize these expectations and entrust them to Him. He wants us to enjoy life moment by moment as we trust in Him. He is drawing us into expectancy. Spend some quiet time today identifying your desires and dreams and expectations and expectancies. Ask yourself, am I trusting in my results or in the character of God?

Dreams & Desires

Example

community

belonging

Expectations

Example

Because God designed us to be in community, He should provide it for me: a safe, kind, and accepting group to belong to.

Expectancy

Example

God will meet my intimate needs for security, acceptance, and belonging in His way and His time.

“I don’t know what, how, or when...But He will, and it will be good!”



WRAP-UP & PRAYER

Regardless of the outcome, we can trust in God. Our lives are in His hands and He is for us. When we are trusting the character of God moment by moment, He fulfills the desires of our hearts.

Papa, I know the plan You have for me, to provide a future and a hope. I know that You are very concerned about my well-being. You know what my needs and desires are. You are the only One who can grant me what I need, and You want the very best for me! You actually give me my desires, and when I am willing to let go of my preconceived idea of how that should happen, You give me a new picture that is more than I could ever think or imagine. I trust that You know me better than I know myself and I release my expectations and look to You with expectancy. Thank You that You are good and that You care.

Are you feeling bogged down and tangled up in your circumstances? It happens so easily in this world. Regardless of where you're at in your journey, Life Untangled wants to help you experience the love and power of God in a truly meaningful way. God sees you and your circumstances, and He longs to heal your wounded soul and lead you to a place of hope. If you would like to speak with someone on our team you can do so by contacting www.lifeuntangled.com/contact-us.

We offer a safe place where you can find hope and help on your journey of healing. Our experienced Christian counseling staff helps you discover God's good intentions for your life, especially when your life feels tangled. We guide men, women, and couples through understanding unwanted behaviors, difficult emotions like anxiety, depression and anger, and most importantly, to experience God's design for victory in life.

You are not alone.

References:

All Scripture taken from the NASB version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

