

NEW LIFE FREEDOM

Lesson 5



Our life experiences have shaped our trust. When people have hurt or disappointed us, we may have decided that it's too risky to put much faith in others. Consequently, our views of God have an effect on how willing we are to turn to Him first. If we see Him as harsh, stern and impossible to please, He's the last one we turn to when we've messed up. If we see Him as remote and uninvolved, we won't think He's listening or even cares about our problems. If we see Him as some divine Santa Claus, we won't understand why His answer isn't what we wanted and think He's unreliable. Satan is happy to contribute his lies to distort how God wants to relate with us. Just like Eve in Genesis 3, he wants us to think God is holding out on us and His word shouldn't be trusted. Add in any negative opinions other people have contributed and we end up determined to cope on our own strength. But we can't deny that our security system isn't making our lives better. It's time to take our views about God to the best source of information there is – His own word, the bible.

It's time to examine where we got these beliefs about God. This process can stir up pain and confusion, but Proverbs 3:5-6 gives us a starting point: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." Trusting in our own understanding has kept us from moving forward. **Making the decision to trust God gives us the courage to change.** We stop trying to fix or protect ourselves. We trust God's word to be true and that Jesus has paid for our sins, as Paul says in Romans 10:9: "If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Now we have the power to face the things we've avoided.

It's time to change the way we think about a lot of things. There are lots of voices in our culture encouraging a self-focused way of thinking, telling us we deserve whatever we want. Don't think about the consequences to you or anyone else, just take care of yourself. Paul tells us in Romans 12:2 to stop listening to this advice: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will." Did we ever test our old ways before putting our trust in them? Probably not. God is willing to have His plans put to the test because they are perfectly designed for us. He's the one who really knows us best.

Repentance is part of this transformation. It isn't just telling God we're sorry for choosing other things instead of Him. It involves a deliberate turning from the old ways and moving in the new direction He gives. We stop making excuses for our actions and start acting on our trust in Him.

SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER READING:

Psalms 62:7-8, Proverbs 3:5-6, Romans 10:9, 1 Corinthians 13:11, Romans 12:2, Mark 1:15, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 and 5:17



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