**REBUILDING BROKEN TRUST**

Sunday School Lesson 14

*FORMER THINGS*

Proverbs 25:19

5/8/2022

**Introduction:** We’ve spent two lessons thus far discussing how to rebuild broken trust, yet there are still more truths to be considered this morning on this particular topic. In fact, it’s very likely that we will still have one more lesson next week to ensure that we understand the full scope of how to rebuild broken trust. To start our lesson, let’s review the eight major statements that have already been given. 1.) The trust of every believer must be in the Lord far above any person. 2.) The trust of every believer is not to be blindly given out to any person. 3.) The trust of every believer is in God’s Spirit working in any person. 4.) The trust of every believer is in the truth above any person. 5.) There must be healing of the pain that comes from broken trust. 6.) There must be honesty of the past in order to rebuild broken trust. 7.) There must be honesty in the present in order to rebuild broken trust. 8.) There must be hope in order to rebuild broken trust. We did not get to spend much time on this last point in the prior lesson. Trust and faith are built upon hope. We trust in someone, and we hope that they will follow through on what they say they will do. We trust in the Lord, and He is our hope for eternal life. We are going to continue in this thought of hope and rebuilding trust in today’s lesson by looking at some specific ways to ensure that rebuilding of trust can actually happen.

1. **THERE MUST BE A REASONABLE PATH GIVEN FOR THE REBUILDING OF TRUST.**
2. **Notice that the believer must be reasonable in his expectations as he proves who and what are trustworthy (Gen. 42:15-16; Exodus 16:4; 20:20; Psalm 26:2; Dan. 1:12-14; Mal. 3:l0; 2 Cor. 8:8).** In our second observation in this topic, we recognized that the trust of a believer is not to be blindly given out. We noted that it is the job of every believer to prove all things. Consequently, when it comes to giving trust back to someone who has previously broken that trust, it is a responsible thing to precede that return of trust with some reasonable proving. Notice the use of the word *reasonable*. Not all proving is reasonable. There should be a specific path of proving set forth that is consistent with the offense that was committed, and it must also be consistent with what our Biblical expectations should be. Some situations are easier than others to set the path forward, as the Bible gives clear direction on how to handle the matter. At other times, we must trust the leading of the Holy Spirit to direct us on a reasonable path of proving. When Joseph’s brothers came to him in Egypt, he did not immediately trust them. Instead, he proved them by having them bring his little brother. This was consistent with their offense.
3. **Notice that unreasonable proving will produce anger and frustration (Galatians 2:11-14; 6:1; Psalm 95:9; Acts 15:28-30).** This thought echoes where we ended the lesson last week. The offender needs to have hope that trust can be built. Unreasonable proving does the opposite of that. It makes the person trying to build trust feel hopeless and despondent. It also produces anger and frustration. A great example of this was the way that the believing Jews treated the believing Gentiles. They were very slow to trust these new Gentile converts. Paul tells us in the book of Galatians that Peter and others had required the Gentiles to prove themselves by doing things that they themselves were not doing. Why would the Gentiles be expected to follow all of the administrative aspects of the Law if Peter himself was not even doing that? When giving our trust to someone else, we tend to hold them to a higher standard than our own selves. Is this fair or just? It certainly does not seem so. This is why the Bible commands us to consider ourselves when offering restoration to others. Trust will never be regained if you expect them to never offend or wrong you again. Such an individual would be perfect (James 3:2)!
4. **THERE MUST BE RESTRICTIVE MEASURES PUT IN PLACE TO HELP REBUILD TRUST.**

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1. **Notice that separation from the object of the offense gives confidence to the offended party (Matthew 5:29; Romans 14:1; James 1:14; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; Galatians 5:16-17; Ps. 119:9).** Separation is a good practice for every believer. The Bible shows us the clear progression that leads to sin. It is a result of the lusts of our flesh. Thus, if we want to have victory, we must resist the flesh. We must place boundaries in our lives to help us continue in victory over the flesh. Paul said under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that all things were lawful for him, but all things were not expedient. He would not be brought under the power of any. When we submit ourselves to restrictive measures, it tells others that we are serious about having victory over that offense. If we do nothing but give our word that we will do better, that will not provide sufficient confidence to the one who has been wronged. They need to see that we are abstaining from things that would lead to another offense. This is what Peter told the saints in 1 Peter 2:11-12. Their abstaining was to be the evidence of those speaking ill of them.
2. **Notice that separation from the object of the offense gives confidence to the offending party (Hebrews 12:1-2; James 4:7; 1 Corinthians 10:13).** Separation (restrictive measures) not only gives confidence to the offended party, but it will also help the offender to have confidence that he can get victory and be restored. It is so sad to see a large number of people in this current generation, even Christians, who are defeated and seem to think that there is no way for them to be restored. Their sin has a terrible grip on them. They absolutely can have victory over that sin. Unfortunately, they are not very willing to do that which is necessary to get that victory. They just want it to no longer be a problem. They think that through positive thinking or some other easy measure they can get victory. They do not like the idea of restrictive measures. The reason for this is based in pride. It is humbling to admit that the besetting sin has taken control over us. Yet, if we will acknowledge the reality of the situation and let a combination of Godly boundaries and Holy Spirit leading do their work, we can gain the confidence that comes through true God-guided victory. That will lead us then to rebuilding trust with others.
3. **THERE MUST BE REAL CHARITY INVOLVED IN THE WORK OF REBUILDING TRUST.**
4. **Notice that Godly charity suffereth long (1 Corinthians 13:4; Colossians 3:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Peter 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:16).** Charity is an absolute necessity if trust in a relationship is ever to be built back up. Charity is based on the Agape love found throughout the New Testament. It has a slightly different overall definition from just general love found in the Bible. It is only ever used in connection of believers love toward each other. It is never used between believers and God. The sense of the word is love with benevolence and good will. Some like to regard it as an active love. As it relates to rebuilding trust, we see that one of the qualities of charity is that it suffers long. Being longsuffering is an essential trait of the believer, and it is one that resembles the nature of our holy God. If we are not longsuffering, then we will not provide ample and proper opportunities for those who wrong us to make things right and build back up trust. The world definitely does not understand the idea of longsuffering. They think that Christians are foolish for being longsuffering people. Yet, it allows us to be like Christ.
5. **Notice that Godly charity believeth all things (1 Corinthians 13:2, 5-7; 1 Peter 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:16).** Charity believes all things! That one statement packs a lot for us to consider. What is the Bible conveying to us through it? Are we expected to believe everything that we are told by every person? That is clearly not what is intended. In verse 6, the Bible says that charity rejoiceth in the truth. Obviously, the truth is of the utmost importance. What is the idea than being conveyed with charity believing all things? I think we can find more context from verse 5. It says that charity thinketh no evil. It seems clear to me that the thought is that charity is inclined to believe. It does not immediately assume that every person is lying and a fake Christian. It is not naïve. It knows the truth that there is much wickedness in this world. Yet, it speaks to a certain disposition of the Christian. When a person is converted, it rejoices and believes. When a Christian repents and returns, it rejoices and believes. Charity is hard given the times that we live in (Micah 7:5); nonetheless, we are instructed to have fervent charity.
6. **THERE MUST BE A RESTORATION OF FELLOWSHIP BEFORE FOLLOWSHIP.**
7. **Notice that there is special care to be taken when it concerns the leaders that we choose to follow (Hebrews 13:7; 2 Peter 2:1-2, 15; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9; Philippians 3:17-18; 1 Cor. 4:16-17; 11:1).** We are to take special care when it comes to who we follow in this world. Trusting someone in this regard is different than just rebuilding trust in a relationship. Who we follow determines where we go. Thus, if we follow a false teacher, we will be led in a false way and to a false doctrine. If we follow an ungodly leader, we will be led to ungodliness. When we speak about trust, we must understand that trust in someone that we allow to lead us is a very important object. It should not be given out without considering where that person might take us. When Paul told the churches to follow him, he reminded them that he and his companions had been an example to them. What he was saying is that he and his companions had walked in such a way to earn the trust of the churches to follow after them.
8. **Notice that restoring trust starts with simple friendly fellowship and then may lead back to followship (John 21:15-25; Acts 13:1-4; Col. 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:10; Philemon 1:24;1 Timothy 3:6).** Some people confuse rebuilding trust in fellowship with rebuilding trust in followship. The rebuilding of trust in fellowship ought to be extended to anyone sincerely seeking to walk in the way of the Lord and be a part of the church. That simply means that we trust that person not to bring about harm in the local church. That does not mean that the person is trusted to be a teacher or preacher now. There are certain qualifications as it relates to leadership positions. If a person has not earned the trust of simple fellowship, how could he be trusted to be followed? That person would be considered a novice in ministry. The same applies in other leadership dynamics. We are to follow others in the Lord. We must be able to trust that they are actually leading us in the way of the Lord.