

THE SECRET OF TRUST Ephesians 5:21-33

INTRODUCTION:

One of the hallmarks of a good marriage is intimacy. Likewise, one of the universal goals of brides and grooms is intimacy.

I will tell you that brides and grooms may picture intimacy differently from one another. Brides often picture intimacy as being curled up on the sofa together, sipping a cup of tea, watching a chick-flick and feeling safe, warm and comfortable in one another's presence. Guys often picture intimacy...well, let's just say a little differently than that.

But regardless of your definition of intimacy, both guys and gals want it and I am here to tell you that you will not achieve intimacy without trust. How would you illustrate the concept of trust in a marriage, for instance? I think this may illustrate it.

But however you picture trust, I say again, you will not achieve intimacy without trust. I also want you to know that nothing *destroys* intimacy like the feeling that trust has been violated.

For the last week or so, we've been subjected to a pretty steady diet of the John and Elizabeth Edwards saga. In case you've been living in a cave, former presidential candidate, John Edwards confessed to having had an affair with one of his campaign workers. Now Elizabeth Edwards is promoting an autobiography she wrote that includes her reactions when her husband admitted his infidelity.

Mrs. Edwards has been making the rounds of the talk shows and the news programs on television. This last week on Larry King Live, Mrs. Edwards said, "*I forgive him but he will have to rebuild my trust.*"

That makes perfect sense, don't you think? Trust is vital to intimacy and trust, once violated, must be rebuilt before intimacy can be restored. "*I forgive him but he will have to rebuild my trust.*" That's not a threat; that is reality.

Not only is trust a fundamental element of a healthy marriage, it is a basic ingredient in the recipe for all healthy relationships in the family...and in the church. In a sense, trust is the currency of any relationship. Trust will secure much. But a lack of trust will leave your relationship bankrupt.

The apostle Paul wrote a letter to the church in Ephesus and he told those Christians to live as children of the light. Just exactly how does a Christian live as a child of the light? Well, Paul wrote a little about moral

purity. But he wrote more about relationships in the home. As children of light, our homes should radiate the light of the love of Jesus.

In the context of telling the Ephesians to live like light, Paul told them what that looks like in the home. Will you follow along as I read?

²¹ *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

²² *Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.*

²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

At first blush, that passage may sound harsh. Oh, not the part about husbands loving their wives: we all agree with that. But the part about submitting: that can be hard to swallow! Who wants to submit to someone else? Anyone else?

May I answer that question for you? A person wants to submit to someone else only when he trusts that other person.

- Employees submit to their supervisors when they trust the supervisor’s knowledge, experience, judgment and motives.
- Children submit to their parents when they trust mom’s or dad’s knowledge, experience, judgment and motives.
- Husbands and wives submit to one another when they trust their spouse’s knowledge, experience, judgment and motives.
- Church members submit to the guidance of the church’s leaders when they trust their knowledge, experience, judgment and motives.
- And ultimately, believers only submit to God when they trust His knowledge, experience, judgment and motives.

Is trust really that important? You bet it is! Trust can lift your home from the ordinary to the extraordinary. So this morning, let’s consider how we can build trust within our family – including within our church family.

I. **To Build Trust, Prove Yourself To Be TRUSTWORTHY**

First of all, to build trust, you must prove yourself to be trustworthy.

Michael Josephson of the organization, Character Counts, has observed, *In every organization I work with, people talk freely and frequently about the importance of trust as a crucial business asset. No one seems to doubt how important it is to business or personal relationships, and everyone seems aware of the tremendous costs of distrust. Yet despite enlightened rhetoric about trust, many people in business regularly engage in conduct that undermines it and damages credibility. It's really simple: To be trusted, one has to be perceived as being trustworthy.*

It is really simple isn't it? To be trusted, one has to be perceived as being trustworthy. Whether at work, at school, in the church or in the home, people who wish to be trusted must establish a track record of being people of their word and of being a people who are safe.

When I say that people who want to be trusted must have a track record of being people of their word, I mean that they are known for being truthful, straightforward and candid. They don't spin the truth, shade the truth or distort the truth. They don't tell half-truths (which, by the way, by definition, are really half-lies). They do not deceive by cleverly chosen words and phrases.

Being a person of your word also requires integrity and promise-keeping. Integrity means living by our principles and having the courage to live our convictions. And promise-keeping means that when you commit to doing something, you do it. And if you genuinely cannot keep your commitment, you say so.

I said that proving ourselves to be trustworthy means that we establish a track record of being people of our word. It also means we establish a track record of being safe.

Have you ever bared your heart and soul to someone only to have that person violate your trust by gossiping what you had revealed? People who gossip are not trustworthy because they are not safe.

Have you ever shared something very personal with someone who later used it against you? Maybe you confessed a fear or a weakness or an imperfection only to have that person use what you confessed to try to manipulate you or to control you. Manipulative, controlling people are not safe: they are not trustworthy.

Bullies try to intimidate us and they are not safe people: they are not trustworthy. Those who habitually put us down or who belittle us are not safe people: they are not trustworthy. Anyone who will not respect my boundaries is not a safe person: he are not trustworthy.

You should not trust someone with whom you do not feel safe and you cannot be intimate with someone you cannot trust.

Now if you want to build trust in your home, you must begin with yourself and you must prove yourself to be a trustworthy person: a person of your word and a person who is safe.

Isn't it curious that there are people who would never break their word to a customer, a co-worker or a colleague but who habitually break their word to the members of their family? "Sure, I'll do that job for you" – but it never gets done. "Yes, I'll take you fishing some Saturday" – but it never really happens. "Of course I'll watch a movie with you, go out to eat with you, have a conversation with you, play ball with you..." – but it never comes to pass. People, listen to me: if we do not prove ourselves to be people of our word within our own homes, our family members will soon learn that they cannot trust us.

And that goes for children as well as for parents. Kids, if your parents have learned that you are not always a person of your word, don't be surprised when they don't trust you. Don't lie. Don't tell half-truths. Don't deceive. Don't withhold information that you know you should tell. Young people, be people of your word.

Parents, be people of your word. Husbands, be men of your word. Wives, be women of your word.

And be safe people for the other members of your family. I want you to think about this question: if you treated your friends the way you treat your family, would they still be your friends? An old proverb says: treat your friends like family and your family like friends. Church, that is a way to build trust. Home is supposed to be a safe place and family are supposed to be safe people.

II. To Build Trust, Prove Yourself To Be TRUSTING

To build trust, we must prove ourselves to be worthy of trust. And we also must prove ourselves to be trusting.

Trust is reciprocal. If you want another person to trust you, you must also trust him, you must also trust her. When you begin to let down your guard and open up to the other person, that will give permission for the other

person to open up to you. As you convey that you trust him, he will feel more free to trust you.

For anyone to begin to trust another person involves being willing to take a risk.

Rinatta Paries, a relationship coach, has given ten steps for trusting other people while still staying safe and the first is to assume that any person close to you will eventually hurt you and will continue to hurt you periodically.

Have you ever hurt the people you love? Was it intentional and malicious? Were you sorry afterwards? Did you have trouble admitting your sorrow?

When others hurt you, realize they are just like you. They probably hurt you unintentionally and really wish they hadn't. Within every family, we will all occasionally hurt one another. But we forgive and move on and trust each other again...unless the hurt is intentional and habitual.

In 1967, Bill and Gloria Gaither wrote a song that dealt with the issues of trust, hurt and trusting again. They wrote:

*There've been times when giving and loving brought pain,
And I promised I would never let it happen again,
But I found out that loving was well worth the risk
And that even in losing you win.*

It really doesn't make sense to give and love when giving and loving have brought pain. It doesn't make sense until we remember that that's the way we've been loved. Without meaning to, we've hurt others and we've disappointed others but we want them to love us anyway. In the second verse of that same song, the Gaithers point out that we've hurt and disappointed the Lord but we want Him to love us anyway.

*He showed us that only thru dying we live,
And He gave when it seemed there was nothing to give;
He loved when loving brought heartache and loss,
He forgave from an old rugged cross.*

That's why the refrain makes this commitment:

*I'm going to live the way He wants me to live,
I'm going to give until there's just no more to give;
I'm going to love, love 'til there's just no more love,
I could never, never out love the Lord.*

People, until we are willing to trust others, they cannot trust us. And without trust, there can be no intimacy, no closeness and no cohesion in our homes.

CONCLUSION:

By definition, trust involves risk. That's true in our homes, it is true in the church and it is true in our relationship with Jesus.

In Romans 7:4, Paul writes:

⁴ So, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. (NLT)

The Living Bible paraphrase put it, "*You are married, so to speak, to the one who was raised from the dead.*"

If we want to develop an intimate relationship with Jesus, we must trust him. I want you to know that Jesus has proven himself trustworthy. We can submit our lives to him and we can follow where he leads us.

INVITATION: #593 – "*Where He Leads Me, I will Follow*"