

He Can Be Trusted

Study Questions

“Read this First”

When I was a kid, after the cartoons, pancake breakfast, tether ball and playing in our tree fort on Saturday morning, I would come back in the house, fall down on my stomach in front of the TV and watch Tarzan. I loved that show! But there was one thing it impressed on me. I had a fear of it my entire childhood. Quicksand! It sounds silly now, but it was a true fear.

God knew that in this world darkened by sin, there would be many things we would be afraid of and we could easily struggle with it all our lives. The fears of adults look different than the fears of our childhood. Our fears are the fear of failure, the fear of success, the fear of the future, the fear of death. The word fear is mentioned more than 300 times in the Bible. And over and over again, God says “Do not be afraid.” In this lesson, we will compare and contrast our fear and God’s faithfulness.

1. Think back to your childhood days. What are some of the things you were afraid of? The dark? Storms? A monster in the closet? List those fears here:

2. List here some things that you’re fearful of today:

3. Read the following Bible verse. You’ll find 5 promises that can help you find comfort or relief when you are afraid. Underline the 5 promises.

“...do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

– Isaiah 41:10

Think about each of those promises. Which ones mean the most to you?

4. Take your time with this next part. When you complete it, you will uncover some amazing insights of your own walk with God. You'll need a separate sheet of paper for this.

Read the following chapter in the Psalms of David. Fill in the chart at the end, and as you do, meditate and think on the areas that stand out to you. Are there things that you are not doing consistently? Do you find it hard to trust God with some areas of your life? After you've completed the chart, go back to the chart and highlight or place a star by those areas that you want to do more of, or that you struggle with. Go back through your chart again, and double underline one or two of the promises that mean the most to you. Be thorough.

1 I will praise the LORD at all times. I will constantly speak his praises.

2 I will boast only in the LORD; let all who are helpless take heart.

3 Come, let us tell of the LORD's greatness; let us exalt his name together.

4 I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears.

5 Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces.

6 In my desperation I prayed, and the LORD listened; he saved me from all my troubles.

7 For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him.

8 Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!

9 Fear the LORD, you his godly people, for those who fear him will have all they need.

10 Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the LORD will lack no good thing.

11 Come, my children, and listen to me, and I will teach you to fear the LORD.

12 Does anyone want to live a life that is long and prosperous?

13 Then keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies!

14 Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it.

15 The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right; his ears are open to their cries for help.

16 But the LORD turns his face against those who do evil; he will erase their memory from the earth.

17 The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles.

18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

19 The righteous person faces many troubles, but the LORD comes to the rescue each time.

20 For the LORD protects the bones of the righteous; not one of them is broken!

21 Calamity will surely destroy the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

*22 But the LORD will redeem those who serve him. No one who takes refuge in him will be
condemned.*

What I will do	What God does
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*(write the answers to this chart on the other side of this page. When you complete it thoroughly,
you'll see a beautiful picture of God's love for you and how you can trust Him.)*

5. Record one or two things God said to you from this section of the book. What actions to you plan to put in place based on how God spoke to you?

Chapter 1

Study Questions

I am an instruction reader. I don't like taking the time to read the instructions, but I won't get started on a project without first unfolding the huge instruction sheet that comes with the project, putting on my glasses, and even grabbing a magnifying glass to read it. My husband, Phil, is the opposite. It always amazes me how he begins a project or uses a new product without first reading what needs to be done! What is even more amazing is that almost all of the time, he doesn't need the instructions and it all comes together just as it should. He's just smart like that. But occasionally, he'll start a project and come to a place where he doesn't know what to do next. Using the instructions as a last resort, he'll mutter the directions under his breath and after a slight pause...he'll say the familiar, "Oops". Then, he'll typically have to go back a few steps, or even start over and follow the guidelines to get it right.

Ultimately, instruction readers and non-instruction readers find that they are grateful someone smarter than them took the time to create a guide to follow so that the end result is exactly what the designer planned.

When we are going through a difficult or dark time, it can be a challenge to believe that God has a plan or a purpose in it. But if we will follow God's instruction book, we'll find His design reveals His purpose.

1. Read the following verse from Isaiah 43:1 and write the 5 things you learn about God's relationship to you. The first 2 are done for you.

"But now, O Jacob, listen to the Lord who created you. O Israel, the one who formed you says, Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name, and you are mine."

The Lord created you.

The Lord formed you.

The Lord _____ you.

The Lord _____.

The Lord says you _____.

2. Cross out the name "Jacob" in the verse above and write your own name above it. Cross out the name "Israel" and write your full name above it. Now read aloud the verse with your name in it. Who is the designer of your life? _____

3. What are the 3 statements in the scripture above that show how God values you?

4. Knowing that God has paid the price for you (ransomed you), knows your name and claims you as His own, how does that drive away any fear?

I can't imagine God paying my ransom with the life of His Son if He didn't value me. I don't think I even place that much value on my life, but God does! Thank you, God!

"When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." Romans 5:6-8

5. In the scripture above, at what time did Christ come to die for our sins?

Look again at the scripture and see if Paul, the writer of Romans, says what you must do to be accepted by God?

6. If you were to suddenly find yourself standing before God in heaven, and He asked why He should let you enter, what would you say?

*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, -
and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast."
Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV*

7. From the scripture above, is there anything you can do to save yourself? Why?

8. Have you ever prayed a prayer like the one at the bottom of page 9 in the book? If the answer is "yes", write about it here. If the answer is "no", write what is stopping you.

9. What does it mean to you that God sees you in your darkest moments?

10. Was there anything that you underlined in Chapter 1 that was especially meaningful to you? What actions will you take today based on how God spoke to you?

Chapter 2

Study Questions

I see the following happen in the movies all the time: Someone is suddenly thrust into a desperate time – a financial collapse, impending doom from a meteor headed for earth, the dinosaurs or aliens are getting closer to the hiding place, zombies are banging at the door, sharks are falling from tornados. Someone says, “What are we going to do?” which leads to a panic attack sounding something like this. “What’s going to happen? How can we get away? What about the kids? Are we going to die? You can’t go out there! Don’t leave me! Why is this happening? Who is going to save us?” This goes on until suddenly, someone gets a hard slap across the face. The “slapper” grabs the “slappee” by the shoulders and says “Get a grip!” Then the slapper begins telling the slappee all the reasons why it is going to be ok.

I’m grateful that during my times of panic God doesn’t send someone to slap me in the face, but He has sent prophets to speak and slap me to my senses with their words.

“O Jacob, how can you say the Lord does not see your troubles? O Israel, how can you say God ignores your rights? Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of His understanding. He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:27-31 NLT

1. Imagine that Isaiah the prophet has been hearing someone having a panic attack about what is happening. (What’s going on? Where is God? Doesn’t He see our troubles? Does He even care?) Now, underline the words that Isaiah says after he slaps them in the face and grabs them by the shoulders. (the first 4 sentences)

2. Write all things the prophet Isaiah says about God and why we shouldn’t panic. (the next 4 sentences)

3. Write in your own words why Isaiah encourages us that our panic is normal and it doesn’t distress God.

4. What does Isaiah say it takes to experience all these wonderful things from God? Double underline those 6 words. Circle all the “wills” in verse 31 (the last 4 sentences).

5. What things specifically cause you to panic?

6. Draw a picture of what it looks like to give these things to God. Please don't skip this question because of the words “draw a picture”. Stick figures are fine. Only you need know what it is. And those of you who are “artsy”, you can use colored pencils and create a masterpiece.

Pray about this question before you start drawing. Meditate (think deeply about) the words of Isaiah 40:31 Pray that this drawing can help you put aside destructive thoughts and panic attacks, so that you can trust Him daily.

7. Look back through chapter 2. Did you underline or highlight anything that encouraged or challenged you? Write it here and write what actions you will take.

Chapter 3

Study Questions

My nurses were all so sweet to me in the hospital. Because my cancer was rare and serious, and because my chemo was extremely strong, I was on a special floor similar to ICU. Each nurse and tech only had a few patients, so we all received lots of attention. I really didn't cry a lot, but sometimes at night and I felt lonely, I would turn my head away from the door and sob. As I wrote earlier, I didn't cry over dying because I wasn't afraid about that. But I cried over my 1 year old granddaughter, Emma Jo. If I died, she would never know me. I imagined my family showing her pictures of me saying, "This is your Grandma. She was so nice, sweet and funny. She loved you very much." Yep. That would make me cry.

Anyway, when my techs would come in my room and see me crying, they would always come over and pat me on my leg and say, "Don't cry, babee. Don't cry, babee". (I had a lot of Indian techs.) When they would say it with their cute accent, that always made me smile. A part of me thought, "Don't tell me not to cry! I want to cry!" and then another part of me would love hearing that sweet voice, and I would stop crying, roll over and thank them.

1. Do you have any "why's" in your life? Many times we have more than one. Write them here.

2. How do you feel when you read that Jesus asked "Why?" also. ("My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46 NIV)

3. Paul writes in I Corinthians that we won't know the answers to many of our questions until we get to heaven. But when we get there, we will see all things clearly. He also writes what we are to do in the meantime. Read the following verse and underline the three things Paul tells us to do.

"But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation, trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly, and the best of these three is love." I Corinthians 13:13 MSG

4. Turn to page 30 in the book. Read the scriptures at the bottom of page 30 and the top of page 31. Write all the things God promises you when you trust Him.

5. How do those promises encourage you?

6. Take some of the “why’s” you listed in question number one. Write them here in single line. Now add the word “yet” after each why. Just as Jeremiah listed his complaints and his questions, and then added “Yet, I still dare to hope when I remember this”, I want you to think of a “yet” that praises God in the midst of your why. Here is an example:

“I don’t know why my husband doesn’t get a raise at work and why he isn’t valued at work, yet I will remember and believe that God shall supply all our needs according to His riches in heaven.”

Now your turn. Write as many questions and answers as you can using the word “yet”.

7. One of the absolute best ways to get our eyes off ourselves during a dark time is to pour out love on others. List some things you can do this week (and beyond) that will bless someone else. You can use the things I talked about at the end of this chapter.

8. Look back over this chapter. What is one thing you learned that you didn’t know before?

9. What is God calling you to put into practice from this chapter?

Chapter 4

Study Questions

I grew up in the days when kids could play outside pretty much without fear. There were 6 kids in our family so we always had someone to play with. We would go to the school playground to play tether ball, or play in a partially built tree house, or on the swing sets in a friend's back yard. In my memory, it seemed like we were blocks and blocks from home. We would get engrossed in playing Roy Rogers and Dale Evans (sorry, youngsters, you'll have to google them) or Tarzan and Jane, or Spys. And then at some point in the late afternoon, I would hear the familiar sing-song voice of my mom – "MEL—O---DEEEEEEE". When I heard it, she didn't have to say anything else, I knew it was time to come home. As think back to those days, I wonder how in the world I even heard that call? It's not like my mom won some Su-ee Calling Contest. She would just step out on the front porch, cup her hands around her mouth and call out "MEL—O--DEEEEE!"

Have you ever felt like you've been calling at the top of your lungs to God, and nothing is happening? Or, do you think that because God knows all about us, that we don't need to pray? Or, are you saving your prayer time for when something really big comes along?

"Call to me, and I will answer you. I'll tell you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own." Jeremiah 33:2-3 MSG

1. Circle what would be the reason (or reasons) you don't spend much time in prayer.

No time

don't know what to say

no need

too hard

Feel silly or uncomfortable

don't believe in prayer

doesn't make a difference

2. What invitation does God give to us regarding prayer? (From the verse above). What promise does He give in the same sentence?

3. Look back at the top of page 47. From the first paragraph, fill in the following blanks.

God invites me to pray because _____.

He continues inviting me to pray because _____.

He invites me to pray because _____ and

_____.

What do you think about each of those reasons God invites you to pray?

4. Read all the indented and italicized scriptures on page 49. From reading and meditating on each of these scriptures, what is your statement of faith about God and how He responds? Write it in all caps below.

5. Hebrews 4:16 (on page 51) states the way we are to approach God with our requests. What is that way? Also, what promise does He make when we do that?

6. *"Call to me and I will answer you. I'll tell you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own."* Jeremiah 33:2-3 MSG

In this verse what is the one thing God wants you to do? _____

When you do that, what are the things He will do for you?

That's the kind of relationship I desire to have with God. In all honesty, I don't have it all the time. Sometimes I try to do it on my own, or I take the advice of others, or I just complain and moan about it. But all God asks of me is to call out to Him. When I'm going through a dark time, I do my best to remember that all He wants is a relationship with Him. I envision that He is sitting on the sofa next to me. He's not mad at me or frustrated with me. He gently takes my hand and says, "Talk to me. I'm right here."

Is there anything you would like to talk to Him about right now? If so, write it here. You can write one thing, or as many as you want.

7. God desires for us to live a Kingdom Life. Jesus talks about this many times. He says a Kingdom Life is one characterized by faith and trust. A life lived dependent on God is a life where you recognize the voice of God, where you have a personal relationship with Him, and where He shares with you the great and mighty things He has for you.

You may have figured already figured that out! Maybe God has whispered in your ear some great and mighty things He has planned for you, but you're afraid. In Mark 4:30-32, what does Jesus compare living the Kingdom life to?

A _____.

Since the Kingdom life (trusting God alone) is a mustard seed, it might seem like we should hold on to it and protect it. But what does Jesus say we are to do with that mustard seed of faith? PLANT IT!!!!

You might be in a dark place right now. Don't distress. If you are a believer, and you have even a mustard seed size of faith, you can plant that faith in a dark place – in the soil of God's love and generosity and you will see that faith grow *"and become the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."* Mark 4:32

8. What things in your life make you read the above and say to yourself "Yeah, but..."? Imagine that I am sitting next to you and I say, "I see that God has a book He wants you to write." How would you finish this sentence, "Yeah, but..."

So it may not be writing a book, but it could be any number of things. I don't know what God has called you to, but I bet you know. How would you finish the sentence, "Yeah, but..." What is holding you back? Go ahead, write something here.

9. If you are stuck in fear and can't move forward, I want to challenge you to pray a prayer like this:

Dear Heavenly Father, I hear You speaking to me. And because You know everything, You know that I'm scared of the things You are calling me to. I only have faith the size of a mustard seed, but I'm releasing that mustard seed sized faith to You. I'm planting it in the soil of Your love. Thank You for finding me in my dark place. Help my faith to grow. I want to see great and mighty things in my life. I yield my life to You.

Chapter 5

Study Questions

1. What are some phrases from scripture that you can recall from your childhood, or that you think are in the Bible? You don't have to know the reference or where it is found in the Bible. Write as many phrases as you can think of.

2. From the story of Abraham and Sarah, what was the difficult trial they were going through?

3. In the following scriptures, underline the key phrase that God used to assure Abraham and Sarah He can be trusted.

"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." Genesis 15:1

"When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless." Genesis 17:1

"Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son." Genesis 18:17

"The Lord kept his word and did exactly what He had promised." Genesis 21:1

How can the phrases you underlined encourage you when you face a dark time?

4. The Bible is filled with phrases of God's power, strength, and ability. Write that phrase in each of these scriptures:

Psalms 24:8 _____

Psalms 147:5 _____

Matthew 19:26 _____

Exodus 15:6 _____

Jeremiah 32:17 _____

Ephesians 3:20 _____

5. Do any of the verses above have special meaning to you today? Why?

6. Look at the scripture verse from Lamentations found at the bottom of page 61. Let me show you how to meditate on a verse by answering these questions:

What kind of love does the Lord have? _____

When does His love end? _____

When do His mercies cease? _____

What is "great" about God? _____

How often does God offer mercy? _____

Who is my inheritance? _____

Where do I find my hope? _____

Now it's your turn. Continue to think and meditate on this verse. What other encouragements can you find? Write them below.

7. I would love for you to personalize a verse like I did at the top of page 66. Pick one of the following verses to personalize. (Or pick one of your own.) Write it below.

Joshua 1:9, Lamentations 3:22:23, Psalm 138:8, Ephesians 3:20

Chapter 6

Study Questions

One of the many things I learned from my dad about my spiritual journey was this: Typically right after a spiritual “high” (youth camp, weekend leadership retreats, church mission trips, church choir trips), there would be a spiritual low. And he was right! Almost always when I came back from a time of great fellowship with God on a church mission trip, in the midst of my commitment to honor God and obey His word, I would be tripped up by a selfish act with my siblings, or a stubborn attitude with my parents. My physical cave was my bedroom and my emotional cave was a sullen withdrawal. I noticed it and did not like it! But I felt trapped by it.

After my dad explained this phenomenon to me, I was much more able to be on guard for it. He also pointed me to the story of Elijah that I talked about in Chapter 6. I remember being fascinated by that story and realizing that our enemy, satan, is still trying to use the same trick on us as he did in Bible times!

I want to invite you to stop now and read the whole story of Elijah in I Kings 18 and 19. Do your best to read it in The Message version, or the New Living version.

1. Draw a timeline of some major times in your life. Start with a straight line (birth). Draw the line up to represent good times, and draw the line down to represent bad times. Write the events that caused the line to go up or down. (marriage, deaths, children, salvation, job promotions, moving, illness, etc.)

2. Is your line straight? If it is, then you haven’t lived long enough! I imagine that your line has some ups and downs. Try to remember your emotional or spiritual response in your up times. Write what you thought about in the good times.

3. Write what you thought about in your down times. Everyone has down times, but did you feel alone in yours? Or did you wonder where God was? Write down as much as you can remember.

4. Look at 1 Kings 19: 9-10. What did Elijah answer when God asked him, “What are you doing here?” Where was his focus?

5. In this story, when Elijah wasn't running, what was he doing?

Can you see yourself in this story? When you are down, your focus is on you and your problems. And when you aren't running from your problem, you're sleeping! Sometimes it does feel like you just need a break from your problems. I know you noticed that the first time Elijah rested, God was with him and refreshed him with food and water and told him to rest some more. It is important to get proper nourishment and proper rest when you are in a dark and dire time. But you can't sleep your life away, there is more to do!

6. What does God tell Elijah to do in I Kings 19:15? Just write the first two words:

7. What do you think is the reason you aren't able to hear God in your own dark times? Check one or more:

_____ I talk to everyone else about my problem, not God.

_____ I try to figure it out on my own.

_____ I don't know how to recognize if God is speaking to me or not.

_____ I retreat into an emotional cave and I don't listen to anyone.

_____ Other _____

8. What do you think is the secret to being able to recognize the voice of God?

9. Spending time with God is a challenge in our busy lives. What is the biggest obstacle for you?

I want to encourage you to follow the formula I laid out in chapter 6. Will you pray right now for God to help you with this commitment? I am praying for you.

Will you message me on my website MelodyBoxInspires.com that you have started your own devotional time with God? I would love to hear from you.

Chapter 7

Study Questions

1. When was the last time you cried? Were they happy tears or sad tears? How did you feel after the tears stopped? Write as much as you remember.
2. Read Psalm 56:8. What does David say God does with our sorrows, our tears? How does that make you feel?
3. Read Psalm 56:9-11. What are some other encouragements does David say about God?