



CAN TRUST FOLLOW A LIE?

This is a million dollar question that comes into every marriage where there has been a significant betrayal: “If I can’t trust him/her,” you think, “then I can’t love him/her, stop my controlling, or commit to anything in the future.” These can indeed be paralyzing thoughts.

What about the discovery of pornography? What about adultery? What about chronic lying?

What does trusting your spouse after they have lied really mean, anyway? Does trusting them mean that they will somehow miraculously stop all their sinful behavior? Will they have no more unwholesome thoughts? Will there never be any glances at other men/women? Will there never again be a lie or the distortion of the truth?

The problem with a breach in trust is that **you begin to question the truth about everything.** When the lie of a spouse has been exposed, even everyday kinds of moments get scrutinized. When any area is discovered as a “lie,” it triggers paranoia in the spouse. The spouse assumes the role of a Private Detective. Off they go in search of the facts – secrets they believe that are still being covered up. **The only way to break this cycle is for the party who feels that they have been laid to needs to tell what information they need to know. In order to build trust, the one who is trying to comply should readily supply such information. One caution here: There needs to be a proper motivation for the expectations of full disclosure. The purpose of full disclosure is not to create more trauma and anger and hopelessness. Rather, the purpose is the set a foundation of practicing the truth in love.** (NOTE: IF YOUR SPOUSE HAS USED THE “INSTALLMENT PLAN” TO RELEASE INFORMATION, REALIZE IT FOR WHAT IT IS – A STRATEGY THAT MAKES SENSE TO THE WORLD BUT HAS NO BIBLICAL BASIS. **DON’T BEAT THEM OVER THE HEAD FOR THIS**)

How can trust be rebuilt?

1. The Power of Active Repentance. Repentance is the standard God uses for the first step of turning from sin to a way of righteousness. If we go through Biblical repentance, can we do anything less than Almighty God? When remorse is real, change comes from the heart. A man who repents is different.

2. There must be accountability within the marriage. Restoring trust and credibility comes by willingness to share any and all information, including e-mail passwords and access to text messages as well as credit card bills and daily schedules. It is also important to have accountability outside the marriage. Every woman and every man needs a few friends he/she can answer to every week.
3. Practical Tools for Restoring Trust. To avoid sounding like you are interrogating your spouse, I suggest using a checking-in-process called FANOS, an acronym derived from a Greek word meaning “to shed light upon.” Every day, use FANOS to
 - F – Share a **feeling** you have with your spouse
 - A – **Affirm** your spouse for something he/she has done
 - N – State a **need** you have today
 - o – Take **ownership** and responsibility to apologize for something you have said or done
 - S – Check you **Sobriety** from overeating, rage, criticizing, withdrawing, etc...

TRUST VS. CONTROL

Trusting your spouse means relinquishing their life to allow them to be responsible for their own life and actions. The problem with building your trust based on what you see your spouse doing (or not doing) is that you will always see need for improvement. If you have needs you are convinced only your spouse can meet, you will desperately need him to live a perfectly trustworthy life. A good question to ask yourself is: “What fears and anxieties do I have if my spouse does not meet my expectations?”

TRUSTING GOD

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the noun *trust* as “one committed into the care of another.” Perhaps we have put ourselves into the care of the wrong person as we have worked to build trust. Proverbs 3:5, 6 says *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thy own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.*”

It is easy to find flaws, point out mistakes, and look for imperfections. However, there is also a place to notice what is good in the trust building process. While you work on building a new kind of trust in your life, you will find it helpful to heed the advice of Paul: “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, and whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things” (Phil. 4:8). You have a choice to look for things that are changing for the better or to focus on everything that is going wrong.