

L.I.F.T.

P.O.D. STUDY GUIDE

WEEK FOUR - TRUSTING GOD



INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to “trust God”?

Deuteronomy 1:29–33

But I said to you, ‘Do not be terrified, nor fear them. The Lord your God, who goes before you, will Himself fight for you, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, on all of the road which you have walked until you came to this place.’ But for all of this, you did not trust the Lord your God, who goes before you on your way, to seek out a place for you to make camp, in the fire by night to show you the way by which you should go, and in the cloud by day.

The final letter in L.I.F.T. brings us to **TRUST**. Trust sounds simple when the road is clear. It becomes much more difficult when circumstances seem to contradict what we believe about God. Israel discovered this at Kadesh-barnea. God had delivered them from Egypt, defeated Pharaoh, provided for them in the wilderness, and led them to the edge of the land He had promised. Yet when they saw fortified cities and powerful enemies, Moses identified their fundamental problem: “**But for all this, you did not trust the LORD your God.**”



Their problem was not a lack of evidence. They had an extraordinary history with God. Moses reminded them that God had fought for them and had “**carried**” them through the wilderness “just as a man carries his son.” He had also gone before them in cloud and fire to show them where to go. This helps us understand biblical trust. Trust is not pretending that problems aren't real. Israel's enemies really were powerful. The cities really were fortified. The wilderness really was difficult. Biblical faith does not deny reality; **it interprets reality through what it knows to be true about God.**

The Hebrew Old Testament uses several words that contribute to the biblical picture of trust. One important word is *batach*, often translated “trust,” carrying the idea of relying upon or placing confidence in someone. Another important biblical idea is *aman*, associated with firmness, reliability, and faithfulness and related to our word **amen**. Together they remind us that biblical trust is not positive thinking. **We trust because the One in whom we place our confidence is trustworthy.**

That distinction is essential. Christian faith is not faith in faith. It is not confidence that everything will happen exactly as we want. It is confidence in **God's character, wisdom, presence, and promises even when we cannot see what He is doing.**



GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Israel had seen extraordinary evidence of God's faithfulness and still struggled to trust Him. Why can our present fears sometimes feel stronger than our memories of God's past faithfulness?

2. What is the difference between trusting that God will give us the outcome we want and trusting God Himself *regardless* of the outcome?



I. TRUST GOD BEYOND YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING

Proverbs 3:5–6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

One of Scripture's best-known passages about trust begins with an important contrast: **“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.”**

The passage does not tell us to stop thinking. Scripture repeatedly celebrates wisdom, discernment, and understanding. The warning is against leaning upon our understanding as though our perspective were sufficient to support the full weight of our lives.

Our understanding is limited because we see only a portion of the story. We know what is happening now, but not necessarily what God may accomplish through it. We see the closed door but not what might have been behind it. We see the delay but cannot see what God may be developing during the waiting.



Israel illustrates this perfectly. The spies saw giants, fortified cities, and military disadvantage. Their observations were not imaginary. Their error came in treating what they could see as though it represented **all that was true**.

Numbers 13 reveals the contrast. Ten spies essentially concluded, *We cannot do this*. Joshua and Caleb saw the same land and the same opposition, yet reached a different conclusion because they included God in their assessment. The difference was not eyesight. **It was interpretation.**

This is where Proverbs 3 becomes deeply practical. Trusting God means acknowledging that **God knows something I don't know, sees something I don't see, and understands something I don't understand.**

Second Corinthians 5:7 expresses the same principle: “**For we walk by faith, not by sight.**” Walking by faith does not mean ignoring what we see. It means refusing to make what we see the final authority over what we believe.

Sometimes faith sounds like this: “**God, I do not understand what You are doing, but I know enough about who You are to trust You with what I do not understand.**”



GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Proverbs warns us not to “lean on our own understanding”. In what kinds of situations are you most tempted to lean on your own understanding?

2. The spies essentially saw the same facts but interpreted them differently. Why might two people face the same situation but respond with fear or faith?



LIFE APPLICATION

Identify one situation you are currently trying to completely understand before you are willing to trust God. Write down what you know about the **situation**, but then write down what you know about **God**. What has He revealed about His character? What has Scripture promised? How has He been faithful before?

Trust does not require you to understand everything. **It requires you to know where to place the weight of your confidence when your understanding reaches its limit.**



2. Trust God by Remembering His Faithfulness

Psalm 77:7–14

Will the Lord reject forever? And will He never be favorable again? Has His favor ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever? Has God forgotten to be gracious, Or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion? Selah Then I said, “It is my grief, That the right hand of the Most High has changed.” I shall remember the deeds of the Lord; I will certainly remember Your wonders of old. I will meditate on all Your work, And on Your deeds with thanksgiving. Your way, God, is holy; What god is great like our God? You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples.

One of the great enemies of trust is spiritual forgetfulness.

Psalm 77 gives us a remarkable picture of someone wrestling honestly with God. The psalmist asks painful questions: Has God rejected me? Has His lovingkindness ceased? Have His promises failed?

Rather than pretending those questions do not exist, the psalm eventually makes a deliberate turn: **“I shall remember the deeds of the LORD; surely I will remember Your wonders of old.”**



Remembering becomes an act of faith. This is exactly what Moses attempted to do for Israel in Deuteronomy 1. When they became terrified of what was ahead, Moses directed their attention backward. Remember Egypt. Remember the wilderness. Remember how God fought for you. Remember how He carried you like a father carries his child.

Their history with God was supposed to become evidence for trusting Him with their future. Throughout the Old Testament, God's people repeatedly built memorials, celebrated feasts, told stories to their children, and rehearsed God's acts of deliverance. Why? Because **today's miracle can become tomorrow's forgotten memory unless we intentionally remember.** Trust grows when we develop a history with God and refuse to forget it.

For Christians, this reaches its highest expression at the cross and resurrection. Romans 8:32 asks, “**He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?**” Paul anchors present confidence in God's greatest past act of love. When circumstances make God's goodness difficult to see, the cross remains permanent evidence of His character. This means we do not build our trust merely on the last thing that happened to us.

We build it upon the God who has revealed Himself throughout Scripture, ultimately in Jesus Christ.



GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think Scripture so frequently commands God's people to remember? How does remembering God's past faithfulness strengthen our trust in Him?

2. When have you struggled to see how a situation would work out, but later saw God's faithfulness through it?



LIFE APPLICATION

Create a simple **faithfulness inventory** this week. Write down several moments when God provided, sustained, forgave, directed, strengthened, protected, or carried you through something you once thought you could not handle. Then keep that record somewhere you can return to it.

The purpose is not nostalgia. It is preparation. **Yesterday's faithfulness becomes evidence for tomorrow's uncertainty.** When you cannot see whether God can be trusted with what is ahead, remember how He carried you through what is behind.



3. Trust God's Presence When You Cannot See the Plan

Psalm 37:3–7

Trust in the LORD and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday. Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.

Deuteronomy 1:32–33

Yet in spite of all this, you did not trust the Lord your God, who goes before you on your way, to seek out a place for you to make camp, in the fire by night to show you the way by which you should go, and in the cloud by day.

Perhaps the most remarkable part of Israel's story is that while they were worried about where they were going, **God had already gone ahead of them.** Moses says God went before Israel **“to seek out a place for you to encamp, in fire by night and cloud by day, to show you the way in which you should go.”**

Israel could not see the entire route, but they did not need to. They had something better than a map.



They had God's presence. The cloud and fire meant that Israel's responsibility was fundamentally relational. When God moved, they moved. When He stopped, they stopped. They did not need to know what was fifty miles ahead because God already knew what was there. As your sermon expresses it, when Israel could not see the way, God did not simply give them a map—**He gave them His presence.**

Psalm 37 describes trust in similarly active terms: **“Trust in the LORD and do good... Delight yourself in the LORD... Commit your way to the LORD... Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him.”**

Notice that trusting God is not passive. The person who trusts continues doing good, continues delighting in God, commits the future to Him, and learns to wait.

This is especially important because we often want God to prove His trustworthiness by giving us information. We want the plan, the timing, the outcome, and the explanation. Yet God frequently asks us to trust Him without giving us all four.

Hebrews 11:1 describes faith as **“the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”** Later in that chapter Abraham obeys God's call and goes out **“not knowing where he was going.”** He knew enough to obey because he knew the One who called him.

That may be one of the deepest lessons of trust: **God's presence is more important than possessing the entire plan.**



GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why do we want God to show us the whole plan? What makes it hard to trust Him when we don't know what's ahead?

2. Psalm 37 connects trust with doing good, delighting, committing, resting, and waiting. Which of those expressions of trust is most difficult for you in your present season, and why?



LIFE APPLICATION

Think about an area where you are waiting for God to show you **what happens next**. Instead of focusing exclusively on getting an answer, ask a different question: “**What does faithfulness look like while I wait?**” Perhaps there is something God has already told you to do. Keep doing it.

Perhaps you need to pray and wait rather than force an outcome. Perhaps fear has caused you to stop moving in a direction God has already made clear. You may not need the next ten instructions. **You may simply need enough trust to obey the instruction God has already given you.**



BRINGING IT HOME

TRUST YOUR INSTRUMENTS

Pilots are trained to trust their instruments because there are circumstances in which physical sensations can become unreliable. A pilot can feel as though the aircraft is doing one thing while the instruments reveal something entirely different.

In that moment, training requires the pilot to trust reliable information rather than sensation.

Faith repeatedly brings us to a similar decision.

Our **feelings** may say God has forgotten us. Scripture reveals a God who promises never to leave or forsake His people.

Our **circumstances** may tell us there is no way forward. God's Word reminds us that He sees what we cannot see.

Our **fear** may demand that we know the entire plan. God's presence invites us to take the next faithful step.

Trusting our spiritual “instruments” means grounding our lives in **God's Word, God's character, God's promises, and God's presence** even when our circumstances and emotions are sending conflicting messages. That is the central challenge Israel faced in Deuteronomy 1. They had seen God's faithfulness, experienced His provision, and even held evidence of the Promised Land in their hands, yet fear caused them to interpret God through their circumstances rather than their circumstances through God.



Personal Reflection

- Where am I currently struggling to trust God because I cannot see what He is doing?
- What do I know about God's character that speaks to this situation?
- What evidence of His past faithfulness have I forgotten?
- What is the next faithful step I can take without knowing the entire plan?

This week, when fear, uncertainty, or circumstances begin speaking louder than your faith, intentionally return to your instruments.

Open God's Word. Remember His faithfulness. Rehearse His promises. Seek His presence. Then take the next step He has made clear. You do not have to know everything God knows in order to trust Him.

You only have to know that **He is trustworthy.**



Closing the L..I.F.T. Journey

Over these four weeks, we have discovered four essential movements in our relationship with Christ. We began with **LOVE**, learning that God calls us to love Him with our whole lives and that ultimately He Himself is our greatest reward. Then came **IMITATE**, where we discovered that as we behold Christ, the Holy Spirit forms His character within us until others can increasingly see Jesus through the way we live. We learned to **FIGHT** the good fight of faith—not by fighting people, but by standing in truth, resisting what pulls us away from Christ, laying aside unnecessary weight, and remaining faithful. And now we finish with **TRUST**.

There will eventually be moments when loving God does not explain what He is doing. There will be moments when imitating Jesus becomes costly. There will be moments when fighting the good fight becomes exhausting. And in those moments, we trust.

The Christian life eventually brings every believer to places where the visibility disappears. We cannot see what happens next. We do not understand the route. Our feelings may tell us one thing while God's Word tells us another. That is when everything we have learned comes together.

LOVE Him when He calls you. IMITATE Him as you follow Him. FIGHT when resistance comes against your faith. And TRUST Him when you cannot see the way. We do not have to see everything. We do not have to understand everything. We do not have to know every turn. **We know the One who goes before us.** And the God who gave us **L..I.F.T.** is the God we can trust to bring us all the way home.



Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your faithfulness.
Teach us to trust You not only when the skies are clear,
but when we cannot see what lies ahead. Forgive us for
the times we have allowed fear, circumstances, or our
own understanding to speak louder than Your Word.

Help us remember how You have carried us, provided
for us, forgiven us, sustained us, and gone before us.

When we cannot understand Your plan, teach us to
trust Your character. When we cannot see the route,
teach us to follow Your presence. When our feelings
contradict Your promises, anchor us again in what You
have spoken.

Teach us to love You with all that we are, to become
more like Jesus, to fight the good fight of faith, and to
trust You all the way to the end. We place our lives, our
families, our futures, and everything we cannot see into
Your hands. You have been faithful behind us, You are
present with us, and You are already ahead of us.

We trust You.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

