



Bev Buckingham

It is a joy to share with you this week's devotions on rebuilding trust. They have been written out of seasons of broken trust in my own life, and times of seeking God about how to counsel wounded women when they ask: "Will I ever trust again?" I pray the Holy Spirit will use these devotions to help the hurting—and his servants, who are working with them.

I continue to write the *Hope-Line Devotional* four times a year, and a bi-monthly article for the Grace Brethren Village newsletter. I've written a devotional book: *Hope for the Hurting*, and I'm in the process of looking for a publisher.

I keep busy with my large family, activities, and many ministry opportunities at my church, Community Grace Brethren, and at Grace Brethren Village, Englewood, Ohio, where I live.

The roses my sisters and I hold in the picture above were given to us by our brothers, in honor of our birthdays as we celebrated in September 2009. My sister, Kay, is seated. Standing (from left): my sister-in-law, Marianne; my sister, Becky; and me.

BIBLE READING: Genesis 16:1-16

In today's Scripture we can feel Sarai's frustration and sorrow because she has not yet borne the child God promised to her and Abram. Then, like many of us, Sarai lost patience and took matters into her own hands. She said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her" (v. 2).

As soon as Hagar conceived, she began to despise Sarai. In return, Sarai began to mistreat Hagar, until Hagar fled from her. Their bond of trust was broken. Hagar obeyed God and returned to her mistress, but we read in Genesis 21:8-21 that she and her son were eventually sent away. As Hagar sobs (v. 16b), I wonder if she is asking the same question I hear from hurting and broken people today: "Will I ever trust again?" Perhaps you are asking it, too. If so, open your heart to receive God's Word this week. God did not forsake Hagar, and he won't forsake you.

As we consider steps to rebuild trust, we need to be aware that sometimes these steps overlap. They also take different amounts of time, depending on the offense, as well as the spiritual and emotional maturity of the offended or offender.

SONG: Trusting Jesus

PRAYER SUGGESTION: I long to rise above my circumstances, Father; teach me how to trust again.

—Beverly L. Buckingham

*BIBLE READING: Ephesians 4:26, 29-32;
Hebrews 4:14-16*

How do we react when our life is shattered by people and/or circumstances that break our trust—sometimes leaving us at the mercy of those who would harm us? Most of us experience strong feelings: anger, betrayal, sorrow, fear, guilt, shame. It is not wrong to have such feelings, but it is wrong to deny our feelings, refuse to work through them, and to hold on to them for the rest of our life. God's Word says, "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy....See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many" (Hebrews 12:14, 15).

Some recognize and process their feelings while alone with God—reading the Word, praying, and/or journaling. Others seek godly counsel from a pastor, a Christian counselor, or a Christian friend. Getting our thoughts out in the open changes our perspective, gives us opportunity to release our feelings, and prepares our hearts to receive God's Word. God is pleased when we are honest with him (Psalm 139:23, 24).

Working through this step of rebuilding trust takes time, and it can be painful. But Hebrews 4:14-16 assures us that God is touched by our weaknesses and invites us to come to him to receive mercy and help in time of need. Will we?

SONG: Have Thine Own Way, Lord

PRAAYER SUGGESTION: Bring me to truth in the inward parts, Lord; I want to see myself as you do.

—Beverly L. Buckingham

BIBLE READING; Psalm 51; 1 Peter 2:20-25

When we sin against another person, we become the offender. We need to cry out as David did in Psalm 51: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions” (v. 1). David also repented—he wanted a real change in his inner being: “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (v. 10).

When we find ourselves on the other side—as the offended one—we need to say from our heart: “I forgive you.” This is true even if the offender does not want or ask for our forgiveness. The forgiveness of deep and painful offenses often follows after we work through our feelings. At first, we may only be able to ask God for a willingness to forgive. Meditating on God’s Word and remembering his forgiveness to us will help move us in the right direction.

Jesus not only forgives us and helps us forgive others, he is our example in such suffering. “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly” (1 Peter 2:23). As we work to rebuild trust, we can count on God’s faithfulness to forgive us, and his grace to help us forgive others.

SONG: Lead Me to Calvary

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Forgive me, O Lord, where I have sinned against others, and humble me before you that I might receive grace to forgive those who have hurt me.

—*Beverly L. Buckingham*

Wednesday

June 2

Renew a Right Spirit within Me

BIBLE READING: Psalm 51:10; Romans 12:1, 2

Renew in me a spirit that can trust, O Lord—
Trust for the future and things
Which I must face alone;
Trust for today, tomorrow, and the unknown.
Renew in me a spirit that cares, O Lord—
Cares for those who are hurting
And wounded inside;
Cares to forgive, encourage, and stand alongside.
Renew in me a spirit that is free, O Lord—
Free from fears that keep me in bondage
And hinder your work;
Fear of people, rejection, or being hurt.
Renew in me a spirit that listens, O Lord—
Listens in the inner man
For your voice, quiet and still;
Listens to your Word, your people, and your will.
Renew in me a spirit that leads, O Lord—
Leads men out of darkness to find
Christ's light within;
Leads to wholeness, freedom, and victory over sin.
Renew in me a spirit to receive, O Lord—
I wait upon you
For all you have to give:
Teach me to trust, care, and abundantly live.

SONG: Faith Is the Victory

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Lord Jesus, teach me to rejoice as you renew my spirit. Teach me wisdom in the hidden parts of my inner being that I might become more like you. Some days I feel as if I'll never trust again. I invite you to pick up the shattered pieces of my heart and restore my trust in you and others.

—Beverly L. Buckingham

BIBLE READING: Mark 7:21-23; Philippians 4:6-8

As we read Mark 7:21-23 it's clear that in order to rebuild trust, our thoughts need to change. As Christians, we know that change begins when we first put our trust in Jesus as Savior (2 Corinthians 5:17). But have you noticed how quickly we revert to old thinking patterns after we've been hurt?

We say to ourselves: "That's the last time I'll do them a favor." "Who do they think they are, anyway?" "Just wait. I'll show them what it feels like to be treated this way."

The things we think about are important because thoughts often turn into actions. For example, if we tell ourselves repeatedly that we will never trust again, we probably never will. It's likely that our relationships will become shallow and our attitudes bitter; we may even isolate ourselves from others.

On the other hand, if we allow our thoughts to be reprogrammed by God's Word as he instructs in Philippians 4:6-8, we discover that our evil and unbelieving thoughts lose their power over us. Our hurts will heal, and we will be ready to trust again.

SONG: Trust and Obey

PRAAYER SUGGESTION: Give me the courage, Father, to allow your Word to reprogram my thoughts.

—Beverly L. Buckingham

BIBLE READING: Romans 12:1, 2; Ephesians 6:10-18

Even though we want to rebuild trust, we sometimes become stuck in destructive thinking which may be the result of verbal, physical, emotional, or mental abuse. I happened to fall into this category in my early Christian life, and remember when my mind ran day and night with anxious and depressive thoughts. It was exhausting beyond measure, extremely difficult to listen to others, or to concentrate. It was even hard to perform routine tasks. If this describes you, I encourage you to seek godly counsel, take any medication your doctor may prescribe (even Christians sometimes need it), and develop an intimate relationship with God through prayer and reading his Word.

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4). Put on the whole armor of God daily, and remember that the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). We are told in Romans 12:2a: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

As strongholds break and your mind is renewed your heart will open up to God’s healing and you—who thought it impossible—will learn to trust again.

SONG: Sound the Battle Cry

PRAYER SUGGESTION: O Lord Jesus, I long for my thoughts to be like yours. Hear my cry, renew my mind, and lead me to trust again.

—Beverly L. Buckingham

BIBLE READING: 1 Corinthians 3:10, 11; Hebrews 13:8

It's wonderful to have family and friends in whom we can trust, but it's awesome and empowering to rest on God's promise: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

We all fail and let others down at one time or another. Most of us—if not all of us—experience broken trust. Some breaches of trust simply bring disappointment or misunderstanding. Others leave us devastated. The truth is that human beings are capable of failing or misguiding us at any moment—sometimes intentionally and sometimes not.

Yet, in our deepest sufferings there is a sure foundation on which we can stand. This foundation is God's Son, Jesus! It's the solidity of this truth that allows us to rebuild trust. We can learn to trust again!

Let's start today to be honest about our feelings, to allow God to search our own hearts, and to forgive those who have hurt us. Then as we reprogram and renew our thoughts, let's hold on to the truth that Jesus Christ is the only One who is completely trustworthy.

SONG: The Church's One Foundation

PRAYER SUGGESTION: O God, remind me as I interact with others that I am free to trust because you are unchangeable and your foundation cannot be moved.

—Beverly L. Buckingham